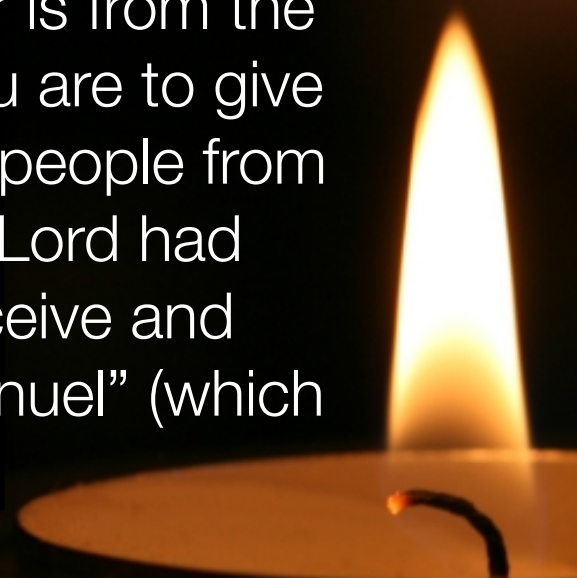


The theological virtue of hope, is the patient and trustful willingness, to live without closure, without resolution, and still be content, and even happy because our satisfaction is now at another level, and our source is beyond ourselves.

Richard Rohr

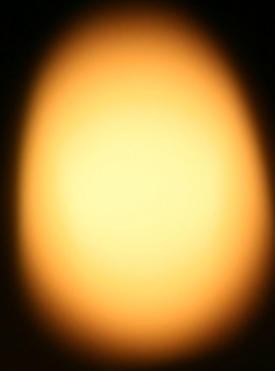
“Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

The Gospel of Matthew



A Holy Longing

Advent 2011



Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, "Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test." Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Isaiah 7 vs. 10-14



This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.



She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”). When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Matthew 1 vs. 18-25



A Holy Longing



*Advent kindles
our desires*



We remain conscious of a desire, which no natural happiness will satisfy. But is there any reason to suppose that reality offers any satisfaction to it. A mans physical hunger does not prove that man will get any bread. He may die of starvation on a raft in the Atlantic. But surely that mans hunger does prove that he comes from a race that repairs its body by eating and inhabits a world where eatable substances exist



I do not believe that my desire for heaven proves that I shall enjoy it, but I think it is really a pretty good indication that such a thing exists, and that some men will. A man may love a woman and not win her, but it would be very odd if the phenomenon called falling in love occurred in a sexless world.

C. S. Lewis



*Advent wrestles
with the tension*



- Here we are in advent stuck with North Korea, the land of lousy options.
- Here are the poor Haitians, their whole country sickened unto death, and half the foreign aid piled up in warehouses for a lack of a distribution system.
- Here is Iraq, where the residents returned to the country two years ago, who are now leaving again in desperation.
- Here is our own country, mired in the most uncivil, negative and adversarial public mood that anyone can remember.



-Here are the shrimpers of our Gulf Coast, almost completely forgotten since the oil spill was plugged up, yet suffering in a heartbreaking fashion.

-How long O Lord, Isaiah cried, is it ever going to get any better?

Advent tells us the bleak truth; there is no human capacity able to rescue this planet from itself.

Fleming Rutledge



Advent cultivates hope



Hope is the way we overcome the lurking suspicion that all of our getting and spending amounts to nothing more than fidgeting while waiting for death.

Andrew Delbanco

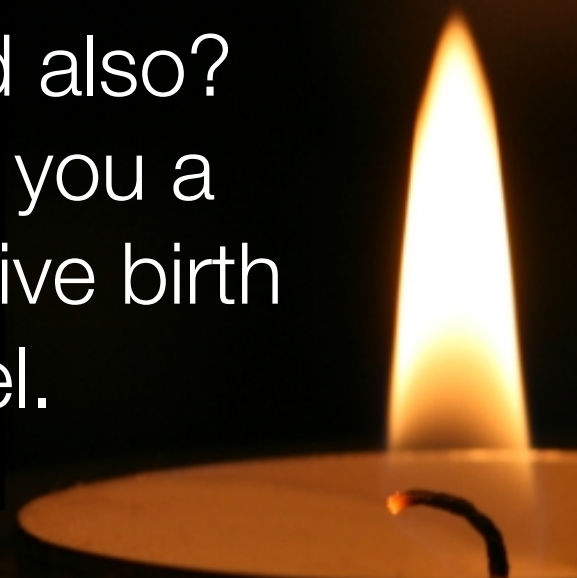


Original prophetic context



Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, “Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test.” Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

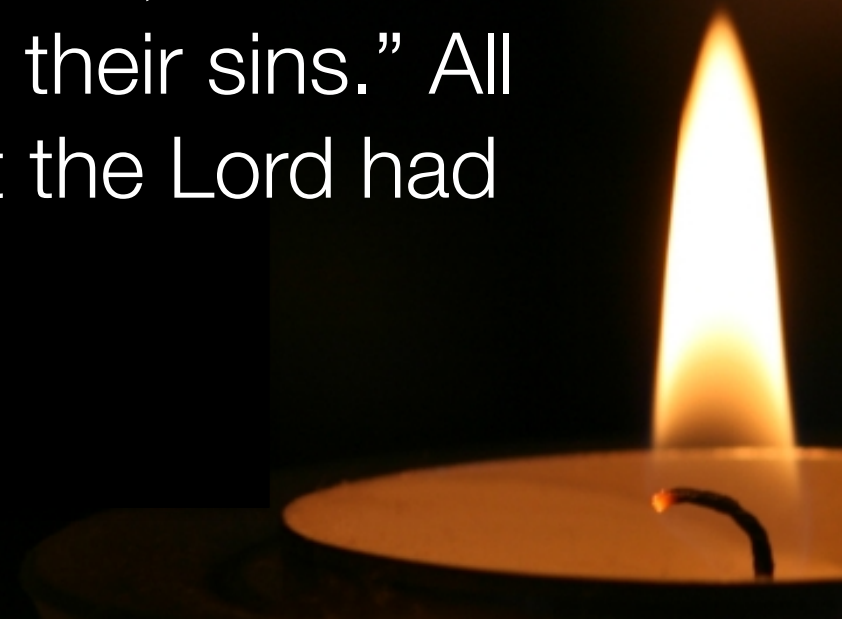
Isaiah 7



The response in Jesus context



But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

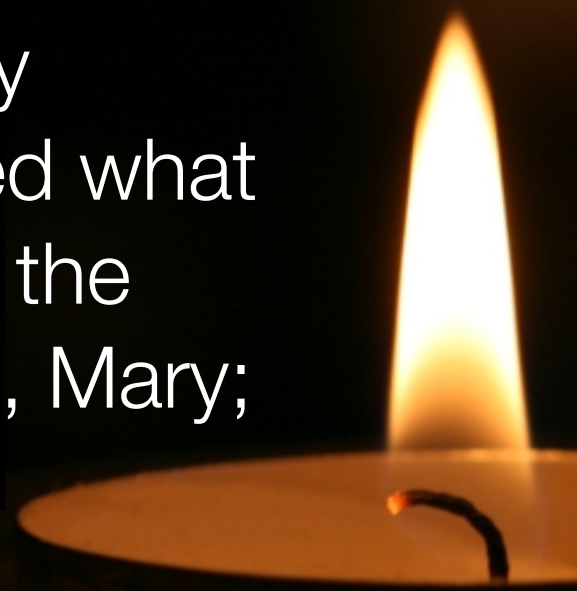


“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” which means “God with us”). When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

Matthew 1 vs. 20-24



In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.



You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.



So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail.” “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

Luke 1



Our response, in our context



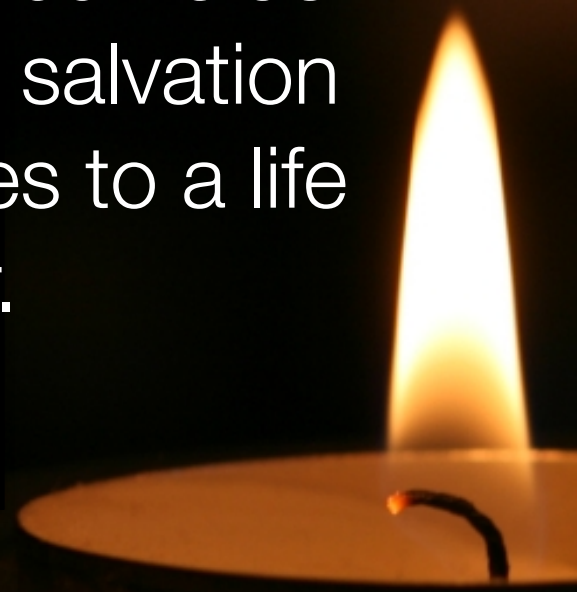
Becoming a follower of Jesus is about more and more learning to say, in the face of the questions and I don't knows, "I will still trust you with my life."

Fred Harrell



God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost isn't a consulting firm we bring in to give us expert advice on how to run our lives. The gospel life isn't something we learn about and then put together with instructions from the manufacturer; it's something we become as God does his work of creation and salvation in us and as we accustom ourselves to a life of belief and obedience and prayer.

Eugene H. Peterson



The theological virtue of hope, is the patient and trustful willingness, to live without closure, without resolution, and still be content, and even happy because our satisfaction is now at another level, and our source is beyond ourselves.

Richard Rohr



In what do you trust?



*What do you need to
surrender this
Advent season?*

