

## THE SPIRIT OF ADVENT, WEEK III: THE SPIRIT OF HOPE

The excerpts below give us the reasons why we hope against hope as Christians. They are what it means to be a Christian; they are what it means to be saved; they are how we are used to be His presence to others, even in our brokenness. If God can heal us by using us to heal others; if God can bring goodness far beyond our limitations as creatures; if God can see the imperfections of our lives and find opportunities in them, not in spite of them: then there really is reason to rejoice and reason to hope!

*Every human act, every Christian act, is an act of hope. But that means you must be men and women of the present, you must live this moment—really live it, not just endure it—because this very moment, for all its imperfection and frustration, because of its imperfection and frustration, is pregnant with all sorts of possibilities, is pregnant with the future, is pregnant with love, is pregnant with Christ.*

—Walter J. Burghardt, S.J.: *Sir, We Would Like To See Jesus*

*Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we must be saved by love. No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as it is from our standpoint. Therefore we must be saved by the final form of love which is forgiveness.*

—Reinhold Niebuhr: *The Irony of American History*

*Our brokenness is the wound through which the full power of God can penetrate our being and transfigure us in God.*

*Loneliness is not something from which we must flee but the place from where we can cry to God, where God will find us and we can find God.*

*Yes, through our wounds the power of God can penetrate us and become like rivers of living water to irrigate the arid earth within us. Thus we may irrigate and arid earth of others, so that hope and love are reborn.*

—Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche: *The Broken Body*