

*“O Radiant Dawn, come and shine on those who dwell in the darkness of the shadow of death.”
O Antiphon – December 21*

Have you ever been told not to get your hopes too high? The kind admonisher is trying to protect you. But you, like all human beings, still hope for everything, no matter the odds!

What would it be like if someone told us instead, "Hope for everything! The fulfillment of your hope is guaranteed!"

This is the jubilant assurance carried to us by the Word of God in the fourth week of Advent.

- Luke tells us that God has indeed remembered his promise of mercy.
- The eloquent Song of Songs guarantees us that the winter is past; that the rains are over and gone.
- The psalmist encourages us to lift up our heads and see. Our salvation is near at hand.

After our prayerful Advent, we now stand at the threshold of the sacred, transforming Nativity. As we lift our eyes to behold this glorious God, what shall we see – a miracle, a change in the world around us?

Marianne Williamson, spiritual teacher and author, says this: *“A miracle is just a shift in perception from fear to love.”* The transformative change is within us, not around us.

As we open our hearts for the coming of Jesus, might we be surprised to see that nothing, yet everything, is changed? Will we see Him now in the beggar we bypassed just a month ago? Will we sit gratefully beside Him now in the church where we had ignored our neighbors? Will we recognize Him fully now in an aging parent, a distressed spouse, a demanding child? Will we meet Him now in our own peaceful silence where before we had obliterated Him in a flurry of distractions?

"Behold your God!" is clearly an invitation to bask – awestruck – in Christ, the fulfillment of our hope. It is also a profound invitation to free ourselves of any graceless complacency which hides the ever-incarnate God from our daily sight.