



## First Week of Advent

*Reflection by Ayanna King*

As the saying goes, “from the mouths of babes,” but perhaps more fittingly, Psalms 8:2 reminds us, “out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, you have ordained strength.”

One Sunday, several years ago, my husband, son and I attended our regular service at Eastern Star Baptist Church, a place deeply rooted in my upbringing in the heart of Indianapolis, IN. In the Baptist tradition, Communion is served on the first Sunday of the month, a sacred ritual we know well. Though over seven years have passed, this particular Sunday remains a beacon in my memory.

With energetic praise and music enlivening the air, the ushers moved down the aisles in order to distribute Communion: a sealed cup of grape juice, with a wafer placed neatly on top. As our pastor guided us through the ritual, I noticed my six-year-old simply sitting, not following directions.



I leaned over, gently asking him why. His response made me giggle but later, with reflection, it provided me with exactly what I needed: He looked up and said “*I don’t need it now. I’ll save it for when I need it.*”

The disciplinarian in me wanted to tell him to follow the directive, but the mom in me understood his statement’s layers of meaning; he understood something profound that sometimes we

adults forget. Worship fills us with peace, hope, and renewal. But what happens *after*? When hope falters, when our spirits feel battered and weary, how do we refuel?

My son's innocent, yet profound perspective reminds me that faith and renewal aren't just during moments of Communion and fellowship: they are reserves we draw on during life's valleys, those moments when the journey tests our strength.

The Gospel calls us in vigilance to "beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap" (Luke 21:34). Too often we allow our anxieties to overcome our faith and maintain a space of idolatry in our minds. Thankfully, my son taught me a profound lesson during Communion: to save what we need for moments like these. When this euphoria of fear clouds my judgment, I either say aloud, or sometimes only in my heart, but always with conviction: *but God!*

- Today is not what I wanted it to be, *but God!*
- I am overwhelmed, *but God!*
- I'm unsure, anxious, and weary, *but God!*

These two words have the power to shift my focus from despair to hope, from the temporary struggles of life to the eternal strength of my Creator. This proclamation of trust, a reminder that God's power, love, and grace transcend every fear, every setback, and every moment of uncertainty. It centers me in the truth that God is sovereign and ever-present, no matter what circumstances I face.

In this Advent season and always, let us look to God for the hope we need. When anxieties grow heavy and hope feels distant, let us declare with confidence: "But God!" For in Him, we find strength, guidance, and the assurance that no challenge is beyond His reach.

### Questions for Reflection

- When you feel hopeless, what can you do to fill your heart in remembrance of God's word? Do you have a phrase that snaps you from the anxieties of life to remind you to be hopeful?
- How can you use your faith to promote positive change in your home, your work, your community, and in our world?

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