

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2020  
"HOPE AND A SMILE"

By Kim Sheard

*Our God, make us strong again!  
Smile on us and save us.  
Lord God All-Powerful,  
how much longer  
will the prayers of your people  
make you angry?  
You gave us tears for food,  
and you made us drink them  
by the bowlful.  
Because of you,  
our enemies who live nearby  
laugh and joke about us.  
But if you smile on us,  
we will be saved. ~Psalm 80:3-7 (CEV)*

When today's Psalm was written, the Israelites were having a tough time. It is unclear, even to Biblical scholars, exactly what the trouble was, but it is not particularly relevant. They asked for—hoped for—God to make them strong. They asked for God to “smile on them” and save them.

The Contemporary English Version of the Bible is the only one that worded it this way, and I really like it. I can picture God smiling down on them and making everything better. And by the end of the passage, it seems they don't just HOPE that God will save them. They say, “If you smile on us, we WILL be saved.”

You may wonder what any of this has to do with Advent. Well, this first week of Advent, we lit the candle of hope. We remember the hope of the Israelites, fulfilled by Jesus' birth, and acknowledge our own hope that God will smile on us and save us now and at the time when Jesus comes again.

*Thought for Today: Smile with God; you have hope!*

Prayer: Our God, if you smile on us, we will be saved. Help us keep hoping in you. Amen.