

Good Morning –

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Michelle Corbett. I am a parishioner (normally a 4 o'clocker), a lector, a Communion minister, a "sharing a special story" speaker, a secretary of the pastoral council and above all, a believer in God as part of this Corpus Christi community we call 'the Body of Christ'.

"Be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

Matthew's words ring in my mind every year as we draw closer towards the Advent and Christmas season.

My family, like many others in this day and age, is spread all over the US, from the east coast to the west coast. Three years ago October, I lost 2 aunts in a terrible car accident while making their way to an annual sister's retreat in Myrtle Beach. There were 7 sisters all together. My Aunt Sis was documented as DOA, dead on arrival, and my Aunt Janet died several days later from her injuries. My third aunt, Joanne, who was driving the vehicle, was hospitalized for some time,

but thankfully lived. I am telling this story openly for the first time today – to show – on many different levels – how faith, hope and waiting truly are blessings and how being ‘ready’ means so much.

All of my aunts, along with my mother, were brought up in a very faithful, Catholic home. My grandparents were daily 8am mass goers with 9 children. My 2 aunts that died, Janet and Sis, were very devout their entire lives – going to mass daily and working as nurses and for social justice ministries. To put it plainly – they believed and they were ‘ready’ in all senses of the word.

Now, it’s hard to imagine, but it’s a documented stage of grief, that people want to find blame when there is a loss. And although the remaining sisters were devastated by this tragedy, their faith in God and the love for each other kept that finger from being pointed at my Aunt Joanne that was driving or at God himself. I can’t say that was so for one of my uncles though. He was hurt and decided to take it out on the only other person he thought he could – legally – Aunt Joanne. So

for the past 3 years he has been trying to gain financially from this loss – blaming negligent driving...As if she was not broken up enough about the thought of being the reason her sisters are now gone and worrying about how the rest of the family feels about her. She has and continues to battle many physical, emotional and spiritual hurdles since the accident.

Don't get too upset or depressed yet – I'm getting to the really good part.

It was always thought and understood – piecing together all the information from a massive and chaotic I-95 accident scene – that my aunts were run off the road by a tractor trailer. But no witnesses could attest to that...well, so we thought for 3 years. But, 3 weeks ago when it came time to submit all the final court documentation for trial – it seems that now there was a sworn statement from the State Trooper that was first on the scene, that my Aunt Sis came out of the mangled vehicle to tell him directly that she was run off the road. Let me take

you back – we knew Aunt Sis’s injuries were so great that she was DOA. So how was it that this happened or was possible? Was it really her that spoke to him? An angel? Her spirit?

Bottom line – we’ll never know for sure. But what I can tell you is that faith and hope leads to what I would call divine intervention. Needless to say, the case was dismissed. Who can argue with a statement that says - ‘the woman named Sis told me she was run off the road’???

I know that my Aunt Joanne will always grieve that accident and loss, but it will now be eased by the faith that they all grew up knowing and practicing - The coming of our own death and resurrection in Christ.

Hope and anticipation carry us through our daily lives. And although it has changed from a child looking forward to a wonderful surprise on Christmas day or when they get to go on vacation to an adult who hopes for the health and happiness of their family or peace with other struggles, it should remain a constant thought to be ready for the day when those hopes and anticipation are realized.

It is the hope, and the sharing of that hope, that fulfills the task God has left for each of us.

So let us not forget to share the joy and hope that come while waiting and anticipating during Advent and through the year to come. Because “the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

As the songwriter Tom Booth says -

Find us ready, Lord, not standing still.

Find us working and loving and doing your will.

Find us ready, Lord, faithful in love,

building the kingdom that's here and above,

building the kingdom of mercy and love.