



## THE CANDLE OF HOPE

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My thoughts were written before the uplifting news of COVID 19 vaccines.

Until a few weeks ago, hope wasn't something I had experienced much of in the last year. In fact, last March I drove to the local ER with what I thought were stroke symptoms, after lots of tests I was told it was probably anxiety "Don't feel foolish" the intern said, "we're seeing this now" and went on to tell me of his own fears.

I changed habits, limiting the news to once in the evening, I sat on my balcony watching birds at the feeder and looking at the small lake below, while sometimes reciting the 23rd psalm especially repeating the part about God "restoring my soul". Peace and calm were the focus, Hope got lost somewhere.

Being invited to light the candle of Hope this Sunday and to share a story of Hope, gave me a chance to take a closer look at this year, beyond the fear and sadness of division in families, mounting numbers of COVID cases and deaths (some of those hit especially hard), and outrageous conspiracies which would be laughable, if not so many believe.

Looking beyond, showed me angry but peaceful demonstrations, exhausted but steadfast health care workers swabbing noses in snaking lines of cars or working two and three ICU shifts, volunteers (some are right here) carefully loading food in car trunks, teachers and students teaching and learning in isolation and so many more actions I was too distracted to recognize as Hope.

Thank you, God, for allowing a second look.