

## The Season of Advent

First Week of Advent – December 3, 2017

The Church begins each liturgical year with the end in mind. That is, the Church is always looking toward the end of time when Christ, at His Second Coming, will reign over the final judgment of the earth and all her inhabitants. The season of Advent is not a vision of gloom and doom but, rather, a time of hope-filled anticipation of the coming of the Lord this year and at the end of time.

This year, I'm a bit more conscious of Jesus' coming at Christmas and at the end of time. Not sure why. Maybe as I look at my grandchildren grow my sense that time is moving at light speed has caught up with me. I continue to see time together with family as Divine gift. Or maybe it is my age. Gray hair seems to insult my sense of time every single day that I look in the mirror. That reality has sharpened my sense of the Divine in my life. It has sharpened my sense that I am closer to death than birth.

I'm not trying to sound morbid. This is a hope-filled message. The approaching Advent Season does give me pause to consider how I might spend the next few weeks, how I might re-prioritize my life. Advent is that time of year when we are given the opportunity to change our bad habits into healthy ones. I'm referring to a change in my spiritual life. Advent is a time when we can wipe the slate clean and start anew. Anytime you get a "do over" it is cause for rejoicing.

Jesus warns us that we are to be vigilant. We are to be watchful. **"Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day the Lord will come."** As the prophet Isaiah says, **"...the Lord's house shall be established as the highest mountain and raised above the hills"**, so too should my life be elevated towards the ideals of this season.

So my goal is to spend more time during the next four weeks of Advent in prayer and reflection. I plan to have a good solid examination of conscience as to how I have done this past year in my relationship with God and with those God has entrusted to my care. Since I am called by the Church to seek the grace of the sacrament of reconciliation, I plan to work that in as well. Not always easy to do....but I'm going to get it done.

God is eternal. Creation has a specific time allotted for each and everything. So I am called to be mindful of the brevity of the material world by taking time to pause, reflect, pray and start again with a renewed sense of my Divine origin.

I have a Savior to welcome into my life once again. Preparation for Christmas 2017 seems timely and important. Preparation for the end of time does too. Advent seems to be the Church's way of helping us reach these goals.

Happy Advent!

Sue Schettler

