

A Message From Our Rector
December 2008

How are we to experience a 'holy Advent' when it seems that the world around us is falling apart?

Almost everyday, I am involved in or overhear comments like...

“I have lost over half my savings.”

“Business is slow...very slow.”

“This is really frightening. I'm not going to have enough to live on.”

These are very real everyday fears.

The 'backdrop' for these comments is a world in which Corporate greed has helped cause a breakdown in the American economy that has affected the economies of the world.

There are bombings and loss of life in India and Iraq. Pakistan and Iran are looming threats to the rest of the world. There are fears that terrorists will...in the next five years...have the capability to launch attacks with biological weapons that can wipe out hundreds of thousands of people.

How do we enter a 'holy Advent?' How do we 'keep' awake' when it is so much easier to pretend that the world around us is still nice and safe? Ignoring or denying what is happening around us is not an option. We have not felt the full brunt of the economic collapse, but it is only a matter of time until it affects us all in some way.

In times like these, we do well to embrace the message found in today's readings.

From 2 Peter 3:8-15a

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God. But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Here we find part of our answer, we enter into a Holy Advent by repenting..by recalling all of our resentments, our grudges, or our dislikes of people in our lives. We allow ourselves to retrieve those things we've done that take us out of a life of integrity and into a life that is just a little bit off the mark. This may be admitting the 'little white lies' we tell or the half-truths...yelling at our children...or our parents...our spouse...or our friends. In general, treating others with a lack of respect.

When we allow these times to 'bubble up' in memory, it is painful. Yet, to examine them honestly and with remorse is to allow God's grace to forgive, heal and relieve us of a great burden. From relief often flows the desire to make amends with another...to 'get right with God and our neighbor.'

This is, in part, what Advent is about.

The delight of Advent is also about living in or experiencing the 'thin space.' The 'thin' space comes from the Celtic spiritual tradition. It refers to a place, or state, in which one experiences only the thinnest of veils between a person and God. It is a place of presence, of wholeness, of connectedness.

Repentance and forgiveness brings us closer to the 'thin space.' Most of us have experienced such a space in our lives. A space where God's presence is palpable and we feel deeply connected to our Creator and to all of Creation.

The season of Advent is a time to slow down, repent, and take on a practice that helps move us to a 'thin space.' It can be within a time of quiet meditation, prayer, walking the labyrinth, sitting in a hunters 'blind' out in the woods, or singing a hymn in church or seeking confession and absolution.

However, we must enter Advent with the 'intention' of drawing close to God and doing whatever it takes for that to happen.

As I Peter states, God is patient with us. We live in the hope that one day, we will live in a new way with one another where all walk with integrity and all divisions cease.

Until that day, let us strive to be at peace, without spot or blemish, and regard the patience of our Lord as our salvation.

Amen