

Homily 1st Sunday of Advent Year B 2023

Wouldn't you like St Paul to say to you: *"I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received through Jesus Christ. I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways; the witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you so that you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed; and he will keep you steady and without blame until the last day, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."* Being thankful to God for having been invited to be his friend, his brother or sister, is a great way to begin our Advent season. During Advent we hope that the gifts we have been given will blossom and burst into life when Christ is born anew among us. Rather than look for signs of hope around you, become a sign of hope for all those you encounter just as Jesus was in his day. As the temperatures have dropped, let this autumn season speak to you about your Advent preparation. As we have learnt to listen synodally, listen now to the wisdom of autumn:

*Autumn is slipping through summer's branches
and I am listening.
I am listening to the dying,
flowing forth from autumn's being.
I am listening to the life
hidden in the dying.
I am listening to the trees taking off their lush green garments.
I am listening to the trees turning, turning, ever turning.
I am listening to the burning bush of autumn.
I am listening to the falling of this season.
I am listening to the song of transformation,
to the wisdom of the season,
to the losses and the grieving,
to the turning loose and letting go.
I am listening to the surrender of autumn.
I am listening to the music of the woodland's undergrowth,
to the crunch of leaves beneath my feet,
to the miracle of crumbling leaves becoming earth again.
I am listening to the beauty and fragility of aging.
I am listening to the wheel of the year turning
to the cycle of the seasons,
to the call for harmony and balance.
I am listening to the circle of life.
I am listening to days growing shorter,
to the air turning crisp and cool,
to the slow waning of light,
to the stars that shine in cold, dark nights.
I am listening to the growing harvest moon.
I am listening to happy harvest cries,
to hearts overflowing with thanksgiving,
to tables laden with gifts from the earth,
to baskets overflowing with fruit,
I am listening to the bountiful gift of autumn.
I am listening to a call for inner growth,
to my need to let go of material possessions,*

*to my need to reach out for invisible gifts.
I am listening to a call for transformation.
I am listening to the death of old ways.
I am listening to the life force turning inward.
I am listening to the renewal of the earth.
I am listening to summer
handing over to autumn.
I am listening to the poetry of autumn.
I am listening. ~ Macrina Wiederkehr (adapted)*

So, listen carefully!! Advent calls us to listen!

An old man calls his son and says, "Listen, your mother and I are getting divorced. Forty-five years of misery is enough."

"Dad, what are you talking about?" the son screams.

"We can't stand the sight of each other any longer," he says. "I'm sick of her face, and I'm sick of talking about this, so call your sister and tell her," and he hangs up.

Now, the son is worried. He calls his sister. She says, *"Not likely, they're not getting divorced!"* She calls their father immediately. *"You're not getting divorced! Don't do another thing. The two of us are flying home tomorrow to talk about this. Until then, don't call a lawyer, don't file a paper. DO YOU HEAR ME?"* She hangs up the phone.

The old man turns to his wife and says, "Okay, they're both coming for Christmas and paying their own airfares!!"