

Homily 3rd Sunday Advent Year B 2023

Benedict XVI "Advent is concerned with that very connection between memory and hope which is so necessary for us today. Advent's intention is to awaken the most profound and basic emotional memory within us, namely, the memory of the God who became a child. This is a healing memory; it brings hope. The purpose of the Church's year is continually to rehearse her great history of memories, to awaken the heart's memory so that it can discern the star of hope. It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope."

Edward Hays: "Advent, like its cousin Lent, is a season for prayer and re-formation of our hearts. Since it comes at winter time, fire is a fitting sign to help us celebrate Advent... If Christ is to come more fully into our lives this Christmas, if God is to become really incarnate for us, then fire will have to be present in our prayer. Our worship and devotion will have to stoke the kind of fire in our souls that can truly change our hearts. Ours is a great responsibility not to waste this Advent time... Take time to be aware that in the very midst of our busy preparations for the celebration of Christ's birth in ancient Bethlehem, Christ is reborn in the Bethlehems of our homes and our daily lives.

Take time, slow down, be still, be awake to the Divine Mystery that looks so common and so ordinary yet is wondrously present.

An old abbot was fond of saying, "The devil is always the most active on the highest feast days. The supreme trick of Old Scratch is to have us so busy decorating, preparing food, practicing music and cleaning in preparation for the feast of Christmas that we actually miss the coming of Christ. Hurt feelings, anger, impatience, injured egos — the list of clouds that busyness creates to blind us to the birth can be long, but it is familiar to us all."

Advent is the perfect time to clear and prepare the Way. Advent is a winter training camp for those who desire peace. By reflection and prayer, by reading and meditation, we can make our hearts a place where a blessing of peace would desire to abide and where the birth of the Prince of Peace might take place.

Daily we can make an Advent examination. Are there any feelings of discrimination toward race, sex, or religion? Is there a lingering resentment, an unforgiven injury living in our hearts? Do we look down upon others of lesser social standing or educational achievement? Are we generous with the gifts that have been given to us, seeing ourselves as their stewards and not their owners? Are we reverent of others, their ideas and needs, and of creation? These and other questions become Advent lights by which we may search the deep, dark corners of our hearts. For that is where Jesus wishes to be born:..... **in our hearts!**

Robert Louis Stevenson "Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be your children, and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen!"

A policeman is waiting outside the bar at closing time waiting to catch someone

Sure enough, at 2am a man stumbles out to his car. The policeman watches as he fumbles to get his keys out, struggles to unlock and open the door, and drops the keys repeatedly before finally starting the car. As soon as he pulls onto the street, the policeman pulls him over.

"Sir, how much have you had to drink tonight?"

"Nothing, I've just been drinking soda all night."

"Sir, I have reason to believe you're intoxicated. Please step out of the car."

The policeman uses the usual sobriety tests - reciting the alphabet, walking the white line, touching the nose - and the man passes them all. The policeman then uses a breathalyser, and it clearly shows a zero. He's completely sober.

Policeman "I am amazed. I watched you stumble out of that bar, fumble your way into your car and drop your keys trying to start it. Yet here you are stone cold sober. What happened?"

Man: ***"Oh, tonight I'm the designated decoy."***