

Advent Preparation

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It has been my experience that December 26th finds many of us back in the stores because Christ arrived in the wrong size or color. As the Rev. John Gaudreau noted, decorating for Christmas is not the same as preparing for the arrival of Christ.

For some, preparation will take the form of the ancient and persistent longing to find substance over fantasy. For them life is a fundamental mystery with “reality” simply the name for the incidental point where we happen to be. Such folks will find in Advent the possibility of seeing anew the emerging presence of God.

Some people will prepare by exploring Advent as the hoped for future horizon. These souls seek an all-encompassing transfiguration of life into the new heaven and the new earth. Advent potential takes the shape of readying society and culture for a significantly different future where God’s peaceable kingdom allows the lamb to lay down with the lion.

Others’ preparations will be more personal as they look for what has proven an elusive personal fulfillment. Such souls will need to turn inward even with the risk of finding a false self which is experienced as emptiness, invisibility, loneliness, or rejection. For these folks Advent can be the time of discovering that the birth of Christ is within them: a birth which invites wholeness and expansion of the soul.

Some will need to enter Advent preparation with honest confession. These tender spirits have discerned that deep within them is the will to dominate in order that they might survive. They have spent their life “doing” in order to justify themselves. Advent comes as purgation, for the loving and graceful intervention of God through Jesus the Christ redeems lives lost to self-indulgence.

Than for some Advent preparation will drive them deep into just “keep on keeping on.” Already overloaded by the daily routine, the addition of the holiday expectations becomes yet another burden. Advent will not solve any problems, rather it will be endured and this enduring will become the very act of protest and authenticity in the face of the banalities of the season.

The ancient wisdom of Advent is that if we don’t prepare we will miss the coming of Christ into our lives. My prayer is that our Advent is active and full of the preparation that is needed so when Christmas arrives we might join our voices with the angels in proclaiming “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and good will among all.”

