



First Sunday of Advent reflection by Connecticut Chaplain

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The season of Advent has two themes:

1. Wakefulness in the midst of sleepiness, and
2. Greenness in the midst of barrenness.

In the evergreen trees, we find a gentle but steadfast courage. The surrounding world may be asleep, but the evergreen trees continue to bear witness. The Advent wreath is constructed of a circle of evergreen branches with four candles.

These evergreens and the candles show us what our role as a Christian is. It is to be green in the midst of the barren ~ to be awake among the sleeping ~ to be light in the midst of darkness.

We are called to be wide-awake and watchful:

- To be evergreen followers of Jesus Christ;
- To bear witness to love in the midst of hate; peace in the midst of conflict.

Far too many people sleepwalk through life. They have ears but they do not hear, they have eyes but they do not see. God made our human life to be full of excitement, preparing ourselves for the Lord's coming with confidence, vigilance and prayer. But instead we get bogged down in suffering, busyness, complicated relationships, urgent deadlines; there's just too much going on in our lives.

We need to take stock, to be reminded of hope, of a God that loves us so much, of a God that brings good even out of bad. Advent is about contemplating and savoring Christ's redeeming Lordship over human history.

Two things we can do.

1. We can prepare and make a good, sincere confession. The sacrament of reconciliation was given by God to us in order to help us make a fresh start whenever we need one. Confessions are available here at St. Michael's Parish in St Timothy's Chapel every Wednesday from 10am-11am and 3pm-4pm.
2. We can spend more time in prayer. You are welcome to join us at St Timothy's Chapel on every Wednesday for Eucharistic Adoration from 10am-4pm. Only a growing prayer life will enable us to hear God's voice in our lives and find the strength to heed it.

Let me tell you a story:

A poor little girl became sick one Christmas Eve. Some good people found her shivering on the sidewalk and took her to a hospital. There she heard, for the very first time, the story of Jesus, the Lord, the Savior of history, coming into the world as a little baby.

One morning, she whispered to her nurse: *I'm having such a good time here in the hospital, I hope I take a long time to get well.*

Then she asked the nurse: *Have you ever heard the story of Jesus being born?*

And the nurse said: *Well, yes I have.*

The little girl looked up at the nurse with surprise and said: *You know about Jesus? But you look as if you had never heard about Him before.*

The nurse was curious and said: *Why? How do I look?*

The little girl answered: *Oh, just like most people; sort of sad. And I thought you wouldn't ever look sad if you knew about Jesus being born.*

Something should be different in our lives during these next four weeks. There should be a smile in our hearts, in our lives, on our lips. Something should be different in what we think, say or do. Something should be different in our homes, in how we love one another. Something should be different in how we spend our time with our parents, our children, and our spouse. It is a time when we should let the message, of Jesus coming into the world as a little baby, to speak to our hearts, to wipe the self-focused sadness off our faces and hearts and to replace it with love.

This Advent let us not be mere spectators. Let us be active participants. Yes, it is more demanding, but let me tell you, it is also more enriching, exciting and fulfilling. This Advent is a God-given opportunity to make a new beginning as an evergreen follower of Jesus Christ. My brothers and sisters, let us embrace the opportunity to love.

