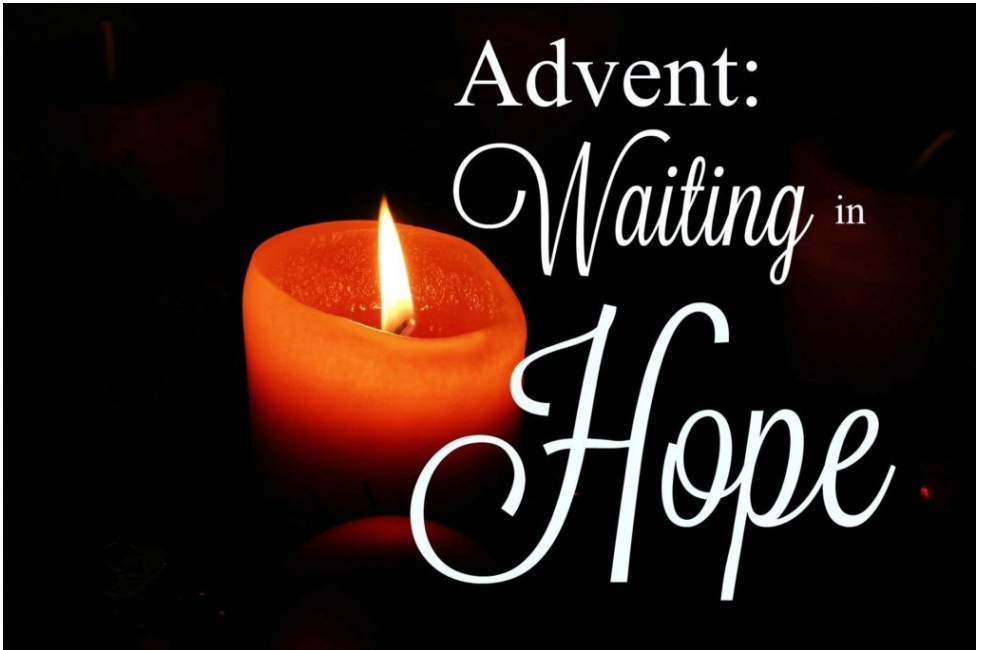


Lectio Divina – Be on your guard



Lectio Divina – Listening to God's Word with our hearts

"And the word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us"

In Imaginative Contemplation we pray with the Scriptures, allowing Christ in the Scriptures to speak to us through our imagination. In Lectio Divina we pray with the Scriptures by dwelling on God's word by listening with our heart. In Imaginative Contemplation, Jesus' words, actions, teaching and relationships with people become familiar to us when we enter into the Scripture passage using our imagination. In Lectio Divina, God's word becomes familiar to us by listening with our hearts and dwelling on His words. Listening with our hearts is something we do automatically in everyday life when we for example dwell on the beauty of nature or listening to someone we love or recall a poignant memory.

Lectio Divina or divine reading has four parts: reading, repeating, responding and resting.

Reading: Begin by reading the Scripture Passage slowly until a word or a phrase resonates with you. Then stop for the moment.

Repeating: Dwell on the words you have chosen. Repeat them again and again as though God is saying them to you. Try not to analyse them, just let them speak to you. Savour the words.

Responding: Allow God's heart to speak to your heart. He wants to be close to you so ask yourself what this invitation could mean. Speak to God with your heart. Be open to what he is trying to reveal to you. Share with God whatever is coming into your heart and mind.

Resting: Rest in the embrace and love of God. It is God's response to us. Your whole being is focussed on God so dwell in the moment. When you feel ready, move on.

As you listen to the following passage, note which parts move you but don't analyse anything. Then when you are ready, **read, repeat, respond** and **rest** and when you have dwelt on the words that initially resonated with you, continue on reading the passage and repeat the process.

Prayer

We acknowledge we are in the presence of God so let us say:

Direct O Lord and guide and influence all that is happening in my mind and heart during this time of prayer: all my moods and feelings, my memories and imaginings; my hopes and desires; may all be directed and influenced to your greater glory, praise and service and to my growth in your Spirit.
Amen

Let us pray that during this Advent Season that we keep our focus on Christ. Let us be awake to what he wants us to see so that when Christmas comes, we can see God has come in a new way.

Reading Mark 13:33-37

Jesus said to his disciples 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come.

It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake.

So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep.

And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!

Questions for Reflection

As you slowly read this Gospel passage allow Jesus' words to soak into your mind. You may want to ponder the advent candle at the top of the page or perhaps light your own Advent candle as you reflect on the passage. You may also want to ponder on the words of Pope Francis who tells us on this First Sunday of Advent that "The person that takes heed is one who, in the noise of the world, doesn't let himself be overwhelmed by distraction or by superficiality, but lives in a full and aware way with concern, first of all, for others."

1. What is this passage saying to you?
2. What word(s), sentence or phrase in this Gospel passage most caught your attention; most touched your heart; most challenged you; most comforted you? Is there anything Jesus said in this passage that you found uncomfortable?
3. What task has Jesus left you in charge of? What work is he calling you to do? What are the thing in your life that are keeping you awake as wait for Jesus' return?
4. How can you, during this time of Advent, prepare your heart for the coming of Jesus at Christmas? In what ways can you be more attentive to the presence of Jesus in your every day life?
5. Who are the people (door keepers) who help to bring Jesus into your daily life? How can you be a doorkeeper and help others encounter Jesus in their lives? In what ways can you share your faith with others, particularly as you prepare for Christmas?

Let us now spend 10 minutes reading, repeating, responding and resting and then share what we thought, felt etc. only if you are comfortable to do so.

End Prayer Suscipe of St. Ignatius of Loyola

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
my memory, my understanding,
and my entire will,

All I have and call my own.

You have given all to me.

To you, Lord, I return it.

Everything is yours; do with it what you will.

Give me only your love and your grace,
that is enough for me.

Scripture texts: from the Jerusalem Bible 1966 by Dartington Longman & Todd Ltd
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