

Companions on the Journey

December 1, 2019

Dear Friends,

Today we begin the holy season of Advent. Sometimes I feel like I am a little bit torn at this time of the year. In the malls, on the roads, on the radio and television it is All Christmas; All The Time. Red and green and lights galore. Christmas Music everywhere. Then at Church everything is purple and low lighting and a reflective mood. We sing O Come, O Come Emmanuel. It is all forward looking. This reminds us that we await the day of celebration. It is not yet. We also await the final Day of the Coming of the Lord in triumph.

The whole Christ Event has dimensions of that Already But Not Yet built right into it. Yes, the Lord has come. Yes, the battle has been waged. Yes, the victory has been achieved. Yes, salvation has been secured. But our part is not finished yet. The renewal of the face of the earth is underway and the Lord wants you and me not only to participate but to make a contribution to the whole renewal process. The Lord desires us to want to participate in making this world a better place. The Lord chooses to enjoin us and the gifts we bring and the dedication we apply and the accomplishments we are able to achieve through His grace. The first creation though marred by sin is not to be jettisoned. The new creation is unfolding in such a way that it can be superimposed upon the old order and it becomes a perfect fit but in this new order there is grace everywhere rather than sin.

Advent is a time designated by our Church to give us an opportunity, away from the fast paced, results-oriented world in which we live and move and have our being day in and day out, to remember this simple truth. We are asked to become more thoughtful, more mindful, more attentive, and more intentional about the way we live, the way we interact with people, with each other. We are to strive to carve out moments of solitude in each day so as to contemplate the Lord who has saved us by dying on the cross. We are to spend some time thinking about the kind of God who holds nothing back, who sends his beloved Son to be one of us, one like us in all things but sin. We are to mull over the great gift of the Spirit which empowers us and enables us to live the Way that Jesus lived.

And we are to sharpen our focus on the meaning of his choice to come among us as a child, to enter this world in exactly the same fashion that we all come into this world. As a little one, needing everything, totally dependent. Vulnerable. In need. Why wouldn't he come another way? With less stress, less risk, less exposure? There is a rationale, a game plan, a design that is unfolding in this sin-darkened world. The light has come. The light is coming again. We all know the effect of the darkness but we yearn to see the light, feel the light, open to the light, and become the light ourselves. It all happens in Christ. So as you drive around and you begin to see the homes decorated with Christmas lights, let the lights remind you of the Son of God who is the Light of the World. Invite his Light into your own soul. Let his Light abide there and slowly begin to shine forth from deep within you out into the world in which you move each day. Then He will have come again. And Christmas will come more than once each year.

Peace,
Msgr. McHenry