

Advent reflection

Beginning the Church's liturgical year, Advent (from, "ad-venire" in Latin or "to come to") is the season encompassing the four Sundays (and weekdays) leading up to the celebration of Christmas.

The Advent season is a time of preparation that directs our hearts and minds to Christ's second coming at the end of time and also to the anniversary of the Lord's birth on Christmas. The final days of Advent, from December 17 to December 24, focus particularly on our preparation for the celebrations of the Nativity of our Lord (Christmas). Advent devotions including the Advent wreath, remind us of the meaning of the season.

May this Advent be a time of spiritual awakening and renewal for you as you prepare to celebrate the birth of the Savior of the World.

Are you attentive to Christ? Though this is a profoundly important question, there are many who may not even fully understand what this means. Yes, on the surface it is clear: Being "attentive" is being aware of the presence of our Lord in your life and in the world around you. So are you attentive? Are you watchful? Are you looking, seeking, waiting, anticipating and preparing for Christ to come? Though Jesus came to Earth over 2,000 years ago in the form of a little child, He continues to come to us today. And if you are not daily aware of His profound presence, then you may already be somewhat asleep, spiritually speaking.

We "fall asleep" on a spiritual level every time we turn our interior eyes to the passing, unimportant and even sinful things of this world. When that happens, we can no longer see Christ Himself. Sadly, this is becoming increasingly easy to do. Violence, sickness, hatred, division, scandal and the like plague us day in and day out. The news media daily competes to present us with the most shocking and sensational news possible. Social media daily seeks to fill our short attention span with sound bites and images that satisfy for but a moment. As a result, the eyes of our soul, our interior vision of faith, is darkened, ignored, forgotten about and dismissed. And as a result, many in our world today no longer appear to be able to cut through the growing chaotic noise so as to perceive the gentle, clear and profound voice of the Savior of the World.

As we begin our Advent season, our Lord is speaking to you in the deepest depths of your soul. He is gently saying, "Wake up." "Listen." "Watch." He will not shout, He will whisper so that you must give Him your full attention. Do you see Him? Hear Him? Listen to Him? Understand Him? Do you know His voice? Or do the many voices all around you take you away from the deep, profound and transforming truths He wishes to communicate to you?

Reflect, today, upon the fact that God is speaking within the depths of your soul each and every day. He is speaking to you now. And what He says is all that really matters in life. Advent is a time, more than any, to renew your commitment to listen, to be attentive and to respond. Do not remain asleep. Wake up and diligently be attentive to the profound voice of our Lord.

Come, Lord Jesus! Come! May this Advent be a time of deep renewal in my life, dear Lord. May it be a time in which I strive with all my heart to seek out Your gentle and profound voice. Give me the grace, dear Lord, to turn away from the many noises of the world that compete for my attention and to turn only to You and to all You wish to say. Come, Lord Jesus, come into my life more deeply during this Advent season. Jesus, I trust in You

