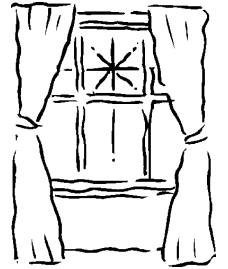


Looking Out My Window, November 19, 2024

Sunday, December 1st. we begin a new liturgical year with the celebration of the First of the four Sundays of Advent. We enter liturgical year C, during which Revised Common Lectionary focuses primarily on Luke's Gospel. The rhythm of the liturgical year brings us to the intersection of two ways of reckoning time. We continue to experience linear time by the measuring of the days, weeks, and months. But, we also experience time as the opportune moment, the ripe season, the moment of God's activity among us and within us.



In Advent that ripe moment involves celebrating the prophetic hope of the coming of a Savior, John the Baptist's prophetic ministry of preparation, and the anticipation of the birth of Christ. We remember, not just by calling to mind those events, but we remember by re-experiencing the reality of our deferred hopes, our cumulative losses and griefs, and our longing for the surprising newness of the presence of Jesus. Will Jesus come into the frayed, weary caughtness of our existence with his freeing love? Will Christ be born in me and in my circumstances? All our unrealized hopes, our ongoing grieving over losses, our persistent health struggles, our anxious fretting over the chaos of our existence—all of these dynamics constrain our daily lives.

In Advent, we join our deferred hopes for salvation with those of the biblical writers. Our discouragement and grieving come to center stage, awakened by the readings on Sundays and by the reliving of the stories of the prophets, John the Baptist, and Jesus' parents. We cross over into their time of hope and their persistent hopefulness crosses over into our time, enlivening our discouragement and giving us resilience when our hope flags.

To hurry toward Christmas would prevent the Advent season from giving us the reality check we need and may prefer to avoid. It's why we defer singing Christmas carols until Christmas Eve. The Savior IS coming—edging his way into our awareness on the heels of our dashed hopes and grieving spirits.

As Henri Nouwen put it so poignantly. "The master is coming—not tomorrow, but today, not next year, but this year, not after our misery is passed, but in the middle of it, not in another place but right here where we are standing." [Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972), p. 97.]

God's peace,

David W. Perlman

Fr David+
Priest in Charge

