

An Advent Message from Our Pastor...

Be Vigilant!

On one of our early winter jaunts my friend suddenly and silently pointed ahead. Not 50 metres away a pheasant, its brown-grey feathers blending in among the greys and tans of the bare trees and dried foliage, scratched and pecked at the frozen ground. I felt privileged to have seen this part of nature. I could easily have missed it if we had been noisy and less attentive.

Around us right now nature is going into a period of restfulness, a time of interiority. Gone is the exteriority of spring, where life is pushing forth in an exuberance of buds, of plumage, of blossoms, of mating calls. Gone is the exteriority of summer where life pushes forth in full foliage, in the whine of mosquitoes, in the riot of floral colour, in the swelling on the vine, in picnics at the park. Gone is the exteriority of fall where life pushes forth in ripe fruit and vegetables, in the fiery blaze of leaves, in the honk of the geese. With us now is the interiority of winter, where life appears to subside, withdraws into itself, becomes still, hushed. However, we should be careful not to think of this season of interiority as somehow less than the seasons of exteriority. No, there is much going on in the stillness, in the quiet but it takes more vigilance, more attentiveness to notice it. Nature still reveals herself but in a more subtle way.

It is in this season that we come into Advent. Like nature around us, Advent speaks of quietude, passiveness, of interiority. We should be careful not to think that this interiority as somehow less than the exteriority of colourful lights, of festive music, of shopping, of parties. No, there is much going on in this stillness. It was in the stillness of Mary's womb, 2000 years ago, that Christ first became present to us in a unique and special way. It is in the stillness, now, that Christ desires to make himself present to each of us.

As this Sunday's Gospel states, God entrusts to us a particular task as we journey through Advent. Its simplicity is disarming. We can easily overlook it in the external busyness of the season. "Beware, keep alert!" says Jesus. Like nature around us, let us allow the interiority of the season to come upon us; and, in that quietness let us be vigilant, attentive to Christ's presence alive in us, growing in us. Let us be attentive to Christ's presence alive outside of us, in the people and events surrounding us. The Advent season this is short this year, it can so easily pass us by. What Jesus says to us, he says to all, "Keep awake!" His promise is sure, he will come to us. And, Oh! What a blessing it is! When he does, will we be ready, will we notice him?

Advent blessings,

Father Dominic

Season of Advent

Awaiting the Arrival of Christ

