

**What is Advent for you?**

**For that matter, why do we celebrate Christmas?**

**Is it just a memory?**

**A recollection or recognition of Jesus' birth?**

**His birthday**

**While it is these things**

**It has to be even more**

**Because if that is all it is, it can lose its luster**

**When we look at birthdays, their meanings vary**

**For the little babies**

**It is more about the parents, grandparents, siblings**

**Then we hit an age where they are all about me**

**What I get, what I do**

**I think there comes a time where we enjoy them**

**But it isn't about me so much**

**They are important to recognize for others**

**And then we come to a time where we realize**

**Grandma or grandpa may not have too many birthdays left**

**They become important to the family**

**But the birth of Christ is different**

**If the above is all we celebrate**

**We risk missing the entire point**

**Christmas isn't just a celebration of a past event**

**It isn't just an expectation of a future event**

**But even more, it is a current event**

**His coming to life within us in a new and vibrant way**

**An expectation that God desires to do something in my heart**

**And Advent is a time to prepare our hearts for God's greatest gift**

**Isaiah can help us**

**The Israelite people had wandered from their covenant with God**

**They had become like unclean people**

**The Israelite people had turned away**

**They had become like the pagans**

**But they were still His Chosen Ones**

**They were still his children**

**They were still the clay in the hands of the potter**

**He will form them anew**

**He will form us anew**

**But we cannot just sit back and wait for it**

**We have to actively desire it**

**We have to actively seek him**

**St Paul tells us in our second reading we already have all we need**

**The Corinthian's were a people in confusion, much as we are today**

**Immorality, liturgical chaos, doctrinal confusion**

**But St Paul tells them and us**

**God is faithful**

**He calls us to fellowship with his son, Jesus Christ**

**God desires our hearts more than we desire him**

**He has done everything for us**

**Our work is to seek him**

**To use the gifts of baptism and confirmation**

**To embrace our call**

**To be awake and watchful**

**Jesus tells us three times in this short Gospel**

**Watch; stay awake and alert**

**Like servants left in charge of the household**

**Waiting for the return of the master**

**Each with their own job**

**They are warned that he may return at any moment**

**What will he find on his return?**

**Servants awake and busy with their tasks**

**Or servants who have grown tired**

**Indifferent in their work**

**Falling asleep**

**So, yes Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Christ**

**But it is more than a recollection of a past event**

**His actual birth as a child in Bethlehem**

**Even more than the recognition of some future event**

**When he will return in glory**

**It is his entering into our hearts in a new and mysterious way**

**This year**

**In a way he has never entered before**

**And Advent is a time for preparation**

**Turning back to him**

**Preparing the soil**

**How do we do these things?**

**Take some time in the silence of your heart**

**Take some time with your families**

**He speaks to us in Sacred Scripture**

**At the celebration of the Mass**

**Is Sunday the only day we hear the Word of God?**

**How about reading a bit of Sacred Scripture each day?**

**Or taking advantage of daily Mass?**

**He is present in the Sacrament of the Eucharist in a way like no other**

**Perhaps there are relationships that need rebuilding**

**Perhaps more structure or regularity to prayer**

**Finding a good book to read**

**Seeking ways to separate ourselves from certain attachments**

**Even things that may be good in themselves**

**But not leading us closer to Christ**

**Try to become more aware of how he is moving in our lives**

**Each week we light one more candle in the wreath**

**It reminds us that the light of Christ is getting closer and closer**

**Brighter and brighter**

**He has torn open the heavens**

**He has come down to our world**

**Now he desires to come into our hearts in a new and unique way**

**In Word and Sacrament**

**Watch and be ready**

**May this time of Advent be a time of preparation for each of us**

**So our hearts will welcome Christ as never before on Christmas morning**

**May God bless all of you and your loved ones this Advent**