



On this first Sunday of Advent we ask ourselves what is Advent all about and will this Advent be different from past Advents and what must we do to make this Advent a wonderful experience?

Advent commemorates the coming of Jesus as a human being into the world. Yet, this was not a one-day-in-history event. Jesus is born again in every moment if we have the eyes to see him in others, the ears to hear his teaching in daily events, the heart to be in conversation with him in prayer. Advent serves as a reminder to pay attention.

The questions we have to ask ourselves, as Isaiah does, are we the people "who walk in darkness" or have thick clouds? Is the way before us full of valleys or hills? Does it seem that we are in the desert? Are the wild beasts out there who are ready to devour us? Have we lost touch with who we really want to be? Isaiah then proclaims that our God is ready to come and save us. And, none of the things that I see as barriers even matter to God.

Yes, we have work to do. Let's start with understanding what our preparation is. We have to prepare our hearts to be open to inviting God to - "Come, Lord, Lord Jesus!" Our work is to become who we are. Therefore, Advent is a humble season, as season of self-awareness. So, before we start decorating for Christmas, we have to clean up our lives and throw away the false masks we may be wearing. We want to have no illusions. If there is a struggle in our lives- then we need to acknowledge it before God and let the struggle be the door into Advent's graces. The readings open up a whole series of promises, full of powerful images that keep reminding us that God, our God, will come to save us. Our first step therefore, to enter into Advent, is to slow down. To breathe more deeply. To begin to trust that this will be a blessed time. Then, when we let ourselves be who we are and hear the Scriptures, we can begin to quietly pray "Come, Lord, Jesus", come into my life. I trust you don't mind if it is still messy. I believe you love me because I need your love. Come and fill me with a peace and love that only you can give.

God wants to be with us. Advent, therefore is letting God's will be done in our hearts and in our everyday lives.

Have a Happy Advent.

