



Advent Reflection

Day #23

Monday, December 21

Song of Songs 2:8-14; Luke 1:39-45

For me, this year Advent came more quickly than I expected – it sort of “snuck up on me” if you will. Because of the coronavirus, I lost track of time. I found myself angry because of all the precautions we had to take due to COVID. I did not like the fact that life as I knew it had changed for me both personally and professionally. Suffering through the pandemic seem to bring out the worst in me.

Then, there it was - a priest encouraging us during his homily at Mass to prepare for Christmas and take advantage of the Advent season.

Many years ago I got into the habit of attending daily Mass so when this priest suggested that we attend Mass every day during Advent, I thought, OK, “been there, done that” - now what do I do? One morning after Mass, I decided to spend some extra time reading scriptures and meditations from my Magnificat and Sunday Missal. I so enjoyed them that I make sure I spend this time reading every day.

The readings make me think about all the things for which I am grateful, things that I normally take for granted. As an example, my mother and I are very close. She lives in New Jersey but for years has spent two autumn months and all of the summer here with me in Chicago. This year of course that could not happen. I have not seen my family for months and this has been the first time ever that I missed Thanksgiving with them. I was feeling shut off from those I care about and very alone.

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However, the extra daily prayer and reflections helped me through these negative feelings. I relish the time I spend reading the uplifting, encouraging and inspiring words that helped me put Advent in its proper perspective.

I thought of what a blessing it is to still have my 80-something year old mother with me even if she and other family members cannot travel to visit. I realize that I spent past Advents in the rush of secular Christmas preparations – decorating the house, purchasing and wrapping presents, cleaning and cooking. However, I wonder (in retrospect) how much time I really spent in celebrating His first coming and preparing for the second coming of Christ.

I realized that I had turned a negative into a positive by spending some extra time alone in prayer, reflection and thanksgiving during my COVID lockdown. The Coronavirus allows me to reflect on Advent and its true meaning and to look for the ways that Jesus is born in my life every day.

This year, while I don't have all the answers and I'm still "preparing", I know that I've spent my time well and whether I'm with family or still locked down from COVID, I will be better prepared and joyful in the spirit of Christ on Christmas morning!

Reflection by Holy Name Cathedral Parishioner Robin L. Brown