

2020 Advent Reflection

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As you probably know, the calendar of the church year doesn't start with January; it begins with four weeks of Advent. Our new church year is about where we are going spiritually, while also keeping an eye on where we have been...what life has taught us so far. The word ADVENT means "coming to"; like when someone has been unconscious and is waking up; we say she is 'coming to'.... Advent is a 'coming to' time. To what? St John starts his gospel with, *A light shines in the darkness, a light that darkness cannot overcome*. **Advent is about 'coming to' the *Light*.**

Advent is a time of yearning, longing for that *Light*, which is Jesus, a time of engaged expectation; engaged; not a sitting-here-idle or business-as-usual time. Advent means, Wake up!

What does that *Light* look like? Jesus announced his arrival to the folks of his time with the words, "*The reign of God is here, among you, now.*" Well, we note, it took Jesus' disciples years to figure out what that *reign of God here and now* looks like and how they fit into it. They recalled Jesus' declaration, he is the vine and they are the branches. It took time for them to integrate, even embody Jesus' Spirit and sacrificial service. They learned that being disciples of Jesus has its success-times and its cost-times. They learned that being *branches on the vine* is like throwing a green log on the fire. Green logs burn longer and hotter than dry ones, but they sizzle for a time before reaching their kindling point. When we are the Lord's green logs and the calling sizzles a bit, the saints call this the *fire of love*. It was Jesus' journey and it is ours.

So Advent is a time of listening to scripture so we become more and more living branches, green logs. Think of Advent as a re-membering time; a 'coming to' time, a waking up time, such that we are re-membered, graced anew. This is Jesus' second coming, every day into our lives, right up to the end time. Once the disciples got this, and likewise when we get it, the *reign of God* will be here, now in our towns and state and nation. ***A Light shines in the darkness, a light that darkness cannot overcome.***