Dear friends in Christ,

The call to Advent is a call to watch the darkening sky. There are more night hours in this season than any others. I normally embrace this season wholeheartedly but I have to confess that I am beginning to feel a bit weary with COVID, too many deaths of people I know and the election turmoil. Advent calls us to wait - even when we are impatient, to say prayers even when we doubt, to gather - even while we are isolated and to look for the first glimmer of new light which promises to come.

Jan Richardson wrote that “how we feel about darkness can be a matter of privilege. To a large extent I choose which center is at 11 come at least physically. I have enough money to pay my light bill’s, to buy candles to light every corner of my home, to keep my oil lamps full. We often find ourselves at times in the dark of our own, or another’s making. Our work is to name the darkness for what it is and to find what it asks of us: whether it is a darkness that asks for justice to bring the dawn of hope to a night of terror, or for a candle to give warmth to the shadows, or for a blanket to enfold us as we wait. In these Advent days of darkness and waiting, it may seem like God’s face is hidden from our sight. But the sacred presence is there, breathing the shadows. This is when we learn to trust senses other than sight and to seek the face of God beneath our fingertips.”

May these resources help you journey through the darkness and lead you to the light of Christ.

Blessings,

Rev Deb

Art and Faith: Loyola Press

Prepare for Christmas and deepen your experience of the Advent season this year with Arts & Faith: Advent. Each week we’ll provide a video commentary about a work of art inspired by the Sunday Scriptures. Use these videos to take a new look at this season of hope and preparation through the lens of sacred art.

http://www.oursaviourpv.org
For your convenience, video transcripts are included. Commentary is by Daniella Zsupan-Jerome, assistant professor of liturgy, catechesis, and evangelization at Loyola University New Orleans. She holds a bachelor’s degree in theology from the University of Notre Dame, a master’s degree in liturgy from St. John’s University in Collegeville, a master’s degree in religion and the arts from Yale Divinity School, and a Ph.D. in theology and education from Boston College. Her unique background in faith and art brings to life a new way of celebrating Advent and understanding the season on a more personal level.

Week 1 of Advent

Watch the video found at: https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/advent/arts-and-faith-advent/cycle-b/first-week-of-advent-cycle-b-video/

At the start of Advent, the Gospel calls us to vigilance—to watch and be ready for the Lord of the house, awaiting his return. William Holman Hunt’s The Light of the World offers us one image of what this arrival might look like. The Light of the World is deeply symbolic, showing Christ arriving at a door at night. It’s an allegory for Christ seeking entry at the door of the human heart. His way to the door is lit by a lantern, casting a soft light on the door to show that it is overgrown with plants; it has not been opened in a while. The plants also show that it is not only a late hour, but late in the year—they are dry, past harvest, and ready to crumble away as winter comes.

Hunt’s image softens any apprehension about the coming of the Lord, as he presents, through the choice of colors and in the representation itself, a warmth and gentleness that shows Christ’s deep love for us as the reason for his coming. A crowned and robed stately sovereign, Christ the King ventures into the darkness and the mess of brambles to seek entry into our hearts. This majestic King whose arrival would be expected to be announced by fanfare instead taps gently at the door to request entry. Our humble King seeks encounter instead of fanfare, our conversion instead of our confinement to darkness.

One of the boldest symbols of the image is the lantern Christ holds in his left hand, which shows Christ as the One that disperses the dark and illuminates the dead places within our hearts. A subtle detail is the fruit on the ground—a symbol of Original Sin, of our fall into the darkness of deception. Yet Christ does not leave us out in the darkness but comes for us, as our Light, into the dead of night.

Finally, a significant detail of the door is its lack of a handle or knob. This is Hunt’s way of showing that the door can only be opened from the inside, through our faithful response to Christ’s steadfast invitation. Watching and waiting for his coming calls us to attentiveness to encountering the Lord above all, even as this busy and frantic season gets underway.

Advent Devotional from Living Compass

We received hard copies of the Advent Devotional from Living Compass. Please let me know if you would like to come by the church and pick one up or have one mailed to you. They are also available online for free at https://shop.livingcompass.org/products/living-well-through-advent-2020-printed-edition?variant=32912727408683