

Advent

*A Season of Hope
& Expectation*

Have you ever noticed the changing of the colors of the leaves on the trees? People from other parts of the country come up north each year to drive along and look at the beauty of the changing of seasons. Those autumn colors indicate something different is happening. The winter approaches and the summer is at least for now behind us.

The Church is showing its color change to indicate something different. The violet color of the vestments, the seasonal music, and decorations indicate that the Church is entering into the holy season of Advent. The wreath and its candles keep a vigil during these weeks of preparation. It's a time of waiting and watching for the Lord's coming into our hearts and minds at Christmas.

Now we know that Jesus came into the world two thousand years ago in Bethlehem born of the Virgin. Why do we go through the motions each year of watching, waiting and keeping this holy vigil? The answer is that like the first Christians, we need to be reminded that when we least expect, the Lord will come. Before the flood, the people forgot the law of the Lord and were living lives of sin and selfishness, far from the covenant made by God through Moses. We too, often forget how we are supposed to live our lives, in union with Christ in His holy church. We wander through the desert seeking to find our own way without the light of the New Born Savior. We become those people who walk in darkness.

This season is one of hope and expectation. It reminds us of the promise of God to always remain with us. Throughout history the Lord walks with us to guide and protect His people, leading them along the path to salvation.

We like the people spoken of by Isaiah the prophet are called to change when he says, "They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not raise sword against nation; they will train for war no more." The time for our conversion is now. God's mercy and forgiveness is abundant and freely given in the Sacrament of Penance. As Paul says in his letters to the Romans; "this is the time to awake, for our salvation is now nearer than when we first believed; the night is almost over, and day is at hand. Let us discard therefore, everything that belongs to darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." The coming of Christ although not in Bethlehem of Judea in a manger can and must happen in you and me. The Savior of the world needs to be born in us again this year. Let us use this holy season well to prepare the way of the Lord and make straight His path until he comes.

Peace,

Father Robert