

Preparing our Hearts and Homes

So, Christmas is coming again. We spend a whole year waiting for the day to celebrate with a big meal, lots of presents, and witnessing the joy the season brings. It is a time where many teach their children about Santa Claus, a storybook character, and use him as a model of God, the Father. Santa Claus is busy in his workshop with his elves making toys for all the girls and boys just as God is continually creating/building our world for us to live in. How Santa magically knows what each child wants for Christmas and how he mysteriously brings those presents to us sometime in the night, but not until we are asleep. How sometimes he doesn't bring what we asked for knowing that it isn't the right thing or the right time. How his reindeer can fly through the air and land on the steepest of rooftops. And Santa enjoys a bit of time to sit in the rocker in your living room and take nourishment from the cookies and milk that were left for him. Doesn't that sound like a person who cares so much for this world that he spends all of his time watching out for us, showing that we will be rewarded for the good that we do, that we need to be patient until the time is right? We get little glimpses of Santa in the store or on Medina Square, but most of the year we don't see him. Most of the year, in a child's mind, he has faith that Santa is still out there working away as he has always done. This is a picture of God continually working for us, giving us all of our needs but not all of our wants.

Advent is the time each year when we prepare our hearts and our homes for the coming of Jesus Christ, the beloved son of God the Father. We take these few weeks to reflect on how much Christ has done for us, each one of us. How, even with his own difficulties when he was walking on this earth before, he loved us so much that he endured that pain, and yet will come again to take us home. Do you see the similarities of when we are expecting a newborn baby into our home? All through those nine months we are preparing a room for that little one, we are preparing a chest of drawers full of little clothes, a closet full of bags of diapers, a kitchen full of bottles, and a playroom full of toys. We dream of what our little one will be like, what she will grow up to be. We can't wait to hold him or her in our arms, to guide him or her through this life, to teach the child to live in the world they will have to survive in when we're no longer able to walk with them, and to steady them with all of our love.

There are many parallels in our lives to remind us that Jesus loves and cares for us. When we stray from him, we call upon the Holy Spirit to lead us back to our faith. We continue to wait for the day when we face Jesus Christ, when we will bow and fall to our knees in adoration and thankfulness. Are you ready?

Prayer: Our Good and Gracious Father, we praise your name and give you thanks for all life. We understand that you are loving and caring and wish for us peace and happiness. We look forward to the day when we will be freed from the pull of the sins of this earth. Above all, we thank you for your son, Jesus, who has taken upon himself the sins of us all. All we have to do in exchange is to believe and follow his example. Help us to bring honor to you as we prepare our hearts and our homes for the coming of the Christ Child this Christmas. Send your Holy Spirit to guide our hearts in meditation through this season of Advent. Let us be instruments of your peace as we show those around us your love and care. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Barbara Woodard