

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT, NOVEMBER 29, 2015

"STAND ERECT AND RAISE YOUR HEADS BECAUSE YOUR REDEMPTION IS AT HAND. BEWARE THAT YOUR HEARTS DO NOT BECOME DROWSY FROM CAROUSING AND DRUNKENNESS AND THE ANXIETIES OF DAILY LIFE....BE VIGILANT AT ALL TIMES AND PRAY...."

AND A SIMILAR NOTION FROM A LITTLE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE -

ONCE UPON A TIME A DISCIPLE ASKED THE ELDER,

**"HOLY ONE, IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO MAKE MYSELF
ENLIGHTENED?"**

"AS LITTLE AS YOU CAN DO TO MAKE THE SUN RISE IN THE MORNING."

**"THEN OF WHAT USE," THE DISCIPLE ASKED, "ARE ALL THE PRAYERS
AND SPIRITUAL EXERCISES?"**

**"TO MAKE SURE," THE ELDER SAID, "THAT YOU ARE NOT ASLEEP WHEN
THE SUN BEGINS TO RISE."**

**"TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE NOT ASLEEP WHEN THE SUN BEGINS TO
RISE....."**

YOU DO NOT WANT TO BE ASLEEP WHEN THE SUN BEGINS TO RISE.....

**ADVENT IS ABOUT MAKING SURE THAT YOU ARE AWAKE WHEN THE SUN
RISES.....**

**ADVENT - BEGINS WITH THE LETTER A - IT IS ALL ABOUT WORDS THAT
BEGIN WITH A.....E.G. AWARE, ALIVE, ATTENTIVE, ALERT AND
MOST OF ALL, AWAKE.....**

**IT IS ALL ABOUT BEING AWAKE.....ESP. SO WE DON'T MISS THAT SUN RISE
NOT MISSING THE APPEARANCE OF THE SON IN OUR LIVES...**

AND WE KNOW THAT WAKING UP IS A PROCESS.....

*AND WAKING UP - LIKE BREAKING UP, IF YOU WILL - IS SOMETIMES
VERY HARD TO DO.....ESPECIALLY, THESE COLD, DARK MORNINGS....
YOU JUST WANT TO GO BACK TO SLEEP - DON'T BOTHER ME!!!
WAKING UP - WHEN DO YOU WAKE UP?
IS IT WHEN YOU FIRST GET OUT OF BED, WHEN YOU'VE TAKEN YOUR
SHOWER, WHEN YOU'VE HAD THE FIRST CUP OF COFFEE....
OR WHEN YOU FIRST STEP OUT INTO THAT COLD NOVEMBER MORNING?
WE ALSO KNOW THAT THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF WAKING UP...
AND DIFFERENT KINDS OF GOING BACK TO SLEEP....
I THINK IT IS PRETTY WELL ACCEPTED THAT WE LIVE IN AN ADDICTIVE
CULTURE...
ADDICTIONS PUT US BACK TO SLEEP...
ADDICTIONS MAKE US LESS CONSCIOUS - LESS AWARE
WE EVEN TALK ABOUT CULTURE AT TIMES AS A CULTURE OF "DRUGS,
SEX AND ROCK AND ROLL".....
OF COURSE, IT GOES BEYOND THAT INCLUDING EATING, PRESCRIPTION
MEDICATION, ALCOHOLICISM, WORKAHOLISM AND CONSUMERISM.....
THIS TIME OF YEAR, CONSUMERISM - ADDICTION TO SHOPPING IS
RAMPANT....
WHATEVER, THE ADDICTION WE MAY HAVE - AND WE ALL HAVE SOME
TYPE OF ADDICTION, DON'T WE?.....
IT IS REGRESSIVE...REGRESSION INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS.....
THEY PUT US ASLEEP.*

IT IS AN ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH OUR PAIN, OUR EMPTINESS....

WE DON'T WANT TO KNOW OUR OWN THOUGHTS OR FEEL OUR OWN

FEELINGS, FEEL OUR OWN PAIN....

WE JUST WANT TO FEEL BETTER - NOW -

EVEN IF IT IS ONLY FOR A FEW MINUTES

BUT YOU KNOW WHAT ADDCTION DOESN'T WORK.....

IT'S ALWAYS SHORT TERM - AND THE RELIEF GETS BRIEFER ALL THE

TIME.....

IN THE LONG RUN ADDICTION BRINGS TEN TIMES MORE PAIN THAN YOU

WOULD EXPERIENCE BY ACCEPTING THE LEGITIMATE PAIN OF BEING

HUMAN, FEELING LONELY, FEELING SAD OR EMPTY...OR WHATEVER .

HERE IS WHERE OUR RELIGION, OUR FAITH, ADVENT CAN HELP US.....

HELP US BEGIN TO TRANSFORM OUR PAIN IN A POSITIVE MANNER...

HELP US WAKE UP!

HELP US BECOME MORE CONSCIOUS, MORE AWARE

ANSEL ADAMS WAS A FAMOUS PHOTOGRAPHER - I THINK HE DIED A

YEAR OR SO AGO....

HE WOULD WAIT DAYS AND HOURS FOR THE PERFECT CIRCUMSTANCES

AND IDEAL LIGHT TO TAKE HIS ICONIC PHOTOS...

HE SAID: "CHANCE FAVORS THE PREPARED MIND" (REPEAT)

ISN'T THAT TRUE.....

THAT IS SAYING THE SAME THING AS - WE PRAY AND CARRY OUT OUR

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES SO THAT WE WON'T MISS THE SUN RISE....

*THAT IS WHY WE DO ADVENT - SO THAT WE WON'T MISS THE SUN RISE....
AND BECAUSE WE BELIEVE ANSEL ADAMS -*

"CHANCE FAVORS THE PREPARED MIND" (and HEART)

*IF WE'RE PREPARED, WE HAVE A MUCH BETTER CHANCE-OF BING LUCKY
WE DO ADVENT BECAUSE WE DON'T WANT TO MISS OUR CHANCE....*

WE WANT TO BE PREPARED....ADVENT IS ABOUT PREPARING

*IT IS ABOUT WAITING, PREPARING FOR "CHANCE", SOFTENING OF OUR
HEART, THE DEEPENING OF OUR INTENTION AND DESIRE, THE*

*READINESS TO REALLY LET GO - AS WELL AS THE RECOGNITION THAT I
REALLY DO NOT WANT TO LET GO, THE ACTUAL WILLINGNESS TO*

*CHANGE - OUR READINESS IS THE WORK OF ADVENT - FOUR WEEKS OF
OPENING OURSELVES TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN OUR LIVES....*

AS RICHARD ROHR SAYS,

"THE KEY IS TO BE WILLING RATHER THAN WILLFUL"

*SO WE EMBARK UPON ADVENT TODAY - TO MAKE SURE THAT WE ARE
NOT ASLEEP WHEN THE SUN RISES....*

WE KNOW IT WILL ARISE ON CHRISTMAS DAY IN A SPECIAL WAY

*WE TAKE MARY AS OUR MODEL FOR MAKING SURE WE ARE AWAKE WHEN
THE SUN RISES.... WHEN CHRISTMAS ROLLS AROUND....*

WE PREPARE OURSELVES FOR THE RISING OF THE SUN -

THE COMING OF THE SON IN A SPECIAL WAY ON CHRISTMAS DAY....

WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS....

WE MAKE SURE THAT OUR HEARTS ARE NOT DROWSY....

NOT OVERWHELMED BY THE ANXIETIES OF DAILY LIFE....(SEE SI)

WE TAKE DEEP BREATHS....WE BREATHE IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.

INHALING THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST....

AND EXHALING, LETTING GO OF THOSE ANXIETIES OF OUR DAILY LIVES

WE COME TOGETHER EACH SUNDAY - FULLY AWAKE -

A LITTLE BIT MORE AWAKE EACH SUNDAY

TO THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST COMING IN WORD AND SACRAMENT

AS WE MOVE TOWARDS CHRISTMAS DAY -

CELEBRATING THE COMING OF CHRIST INTO OUR HUMAN HISTORY IN A

VERY SPECIAL WAY - AS ONE OF US - AMONG US

ENABLING US TO BREATHE IN THE SPIRIT OF CHIRST IN A SPECIAL WAY

AND EXHALE THE ANXIETIES OF OUR DAILY LIVES....

ENABLING US IN THIS EUCHARIST TO CONSUME THE BREAD AND THE

WINE.....

TO CONSUME THE BODY AND BLOOD OF OUR GOD AS ONE OF US

WE ARE NOT ASLEEP... WE ARE FULLY AWAKE

AND WE PRAY THAT WE WILL ALWAYS BE AWAKE WHEN THE SON RISES...

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