

### ***Pay Attention***

Advent is ordinarily thought of as a time of waiting for the coming of Christ in our midst. And so it is. But Advent is just as much a time of watching.

We spend plenty of time watching. Some spend endless hours watching television, in front of computers or fixated on the smartphone. In this time of pandemic we are zooming and trying to communicate virtually, which is to say, in large part, visually.

We watch our children grow. We watch our parents become frail as they age. We watch the clock ticking endlessly as we await the results of medical tests. How we watch depends on what we are watching. So, we watch TV differently, with a different sort of alertness, than when we watch someone we love suffering.

“Watch”: A word that echoes throughout the scripture. During Advent we are invited to a kind of watching that is filled with joyful expectation while trying at the same time to be open to the unexpected. We are to live with eyes wide open, watchful and attentive so that we might be ready for the coming of God in our midst in myriad ways.

Living with eyes wide open is not easy. How much easier it is to become absorbed in the many demands of day to day living. Our vision gets blurred. All too often our vision is out of focus because we are distracted. And how easily we are distracted!

Sometimes life's events come at us in such a way that we are simply overwhelmed and cannot help but be distracted from our course. But it is also true that we often look for distraction. Can we reflect in honesty during this Advent season and ask: What is the source of our discontentment that drives us to constantly seek distractions?

Moving from distraction to watchfulness is our gift and task during this Advent season. Taking a stance of watchfulness, we stand ready to live with open eyes, alert to the vital forces of God's own life in human life, in the world, and the church.

What in our line of vision might be blocking the horizon of God's coming this Advent season?

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