

Piercing Darkness

Advent is the time to prepare for Christmas. On this we are all agreed. Diving a little deeper we see that Advent is a season of desire. It is a time of waiting. Of anticipating. During these long days of a seemingly never-ending pandemic our desire is smoldering. For some it has been snuffed out. We're numb. Who or what can shake us out of the doldrums?

Time and again, the scriptures tell that a time of intense turbulence is a wake-up call. Advent is such a time to wake up to God's promise: We will not be left comfortless.

We think that God is near when prayers are answered, when things go our way, when we and those we love are blessed with good health and prosperity. But God dwells in our dark days no less than in the light. And often against all odds, where and when we least expect, light pierces the darkness. God's presence and action, God's very life, is to be found between the cracks of a world and a life splitting apart. Christian spiritual guides throughout the ages advise: If you want to be sure of the path you tread, close your eyes and walk in the dark.

In these dark times, the eye must learn to see anew. How to look? Where to look? All too often we look in the wrong places. Advent is a wakeup call to see that God comes in the vulnerable, fragile human flesh of the Infant in that littlest town of Bethlehem at a time of unrest and uncertainty. But dare we imagine that God may be found in our own turbulent times? In our own dark days? In our own trembling flesh?

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