

Friends of St. Augustine - Prayer Resource Guide

December 2015

From our Chaplain

Dear Friends,

by the time you read this letter we will have begun the Season of Advent which to most people seems of a slightly paler shade of purple than the penitential period we practice in the days leading up to Easter. The fact is, Advent is not at all about what we have to give up for God but how eagerly we are open to experience what God can do for us. The great gift God has bestowed on us is his own Son. *"May he bring his gifts to perfection in us, since he did not shrink from making his own our tiny beginnings; and may he make us into children of God, since for our sake he was willing to be made a child of man"*. [Sermon 184:2,3]

Advent is a time of emptying so that we may be filled. Just as little children hang an empty stocking at the end of their beds hoping for it to be filled with presents, so we are meant to wait with empty hands and hearts for God to fill us with his spark of grace which illumines our consciousness so that we come to know who we are truly meant to be. It is the exact opposite to the way our consumer society prepares for Christmas with its desire for acquiring and storing up of things. The Christmas to which Advent points is about being emptied out so we can make more progress in discovering our true destiny.

The Jesus "who did not cling to being God," but is like us in all things, models what most of us take the greater parts of our lives to learn: how to "be ourselves". The divinity who comes to us as an infant is the paradigm of how we are meant to learn that to be small is to need, to depend on the other. Smallness bonds us to the rest of the human race and frees us from the arrogant isolation that kills both the body and the soul. Part of our experience of Advent is to recognize a new awareness of our own smallness so that we can identify with those whose emptiness, whose poverty of spirit and paucity of life is involuntary. Then we may become whole human beings ourselves, full of compassion and full of a new consciousness. We may still have to live with our own complexity and general messiness, but we do so hopefully because of our conviction that God is filling us with a share in his very own life. *"Rejoice you just; it is the birthday of the Justifier. Rejoice, you who are weak and sick; it is the birthday of the Saviour, the Healer. Rejoice, captives; it is the birthday of the Redeemer. Rejoice, slaves; it is the birthday of the one who makes you lords. Rejoice, free people; it is the birthday of the ones who makes you free. Rejoice. All Christians; it is the birthday of Christ"*. [ibid]

Advent is our time to make progress in the life we are meant to live

With much love,



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The Purpose of the Prayer Resource Guide

Each of us is on a journey to God like our patron Augustine.

The Friends prayer resource is offered to you as a support in your day to day prayer and will be sent to you 4 times a year.

It is centered on the Gospel readings and quotes from Augustine. Formation material is offered from different sources including a prayer orientated letter from our Chaplain.



Advent Poem...

If you want, the Virgin will come walking down the
road
pregnant with the Holy, and say,

"I need shelter for the night, please take me inside
your heart,
my time is close."

Then under the roof of your soul, you will witness the
sublime intimacy,
the divine, the Christ, taking birth forever,
As she grasps your hand for help, for each of us is the
midwife of God, each of us.

Yes, there under the dome of your being
does Creation come into existence, eternally, dear
pilgrim
– the sacred womb of your soul,
as God grasps our arms for help,
For each of us is God's beloved servant, never far.

If you want, the Virgin will come walking down the
street
Pregnant with light and song.
[St John of the Cross]

