

ADVENT REFLECTION

DEVOUT AND EXPECTANT DELIGHT

The General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar tell us that the Season of Advent is both a time of preparation for the celebrations of Christ's birth at the first Christmas and a preparation for the day when Jesus will return again in glory at the end of time in his Second Coming. "For these two reasons, Advent is a period of devout and expectant delight."

But how can Advent 2020 be a time of "devout and expectant delight" when we can't see some members of our own families for fear of accidentally giving them the Covid-19 virus and we dare not leave the house without wearing a mask. We hesitate to shake hands with friends, strangers or anyone for that matter because too many have already died in this pandemic. Our Advent and Christmas get togethers will not get together this year at least not in the ways we are familiar with from before. The "Grinch" has stolen Advent and Christmas this year for sure –or maybe not.

On the other hand maybe this will be our best Advent because we really are waiting for something, we really are expecting something good to happen. You can't really wait for something to happen if you already have it. Advent in years past has sometimes been portrayed as a time for pretending that we were waiting like Mary and Joseph and the whole Jesse tree for the first Christmas to arrive. Waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus was rarely mentioned even though the first two Sundays of Advent specifically point that way.

Let me suggest that this Advent may be more a season of devout and expectant delight than previous years exactly because we have so much to wait for this year. We are expecting so much from the development and distribution of the first vaccines for protection from Covid-19. Think of seeing your grandparents again who have been confined in a nursing home for the last nine months! Think of seeing your husbands and wives, parents and children, friends and fellow parishioners again after almost a year of separation! Think of no more anxiety with a job again to pay the rent and feed the children. Think of singing at Mass again with a full voice "Now Thank We All Our God" and "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord." Think of schools reopening for everyone and shorter lines in the parish parking lot for the free distribution of food.

We have great expectations, some are devout and all are delightful. This year we know what it means to be looking and waiting for something very good to happen. When all these good things come to pass we will still only have a taste of what it will be like on that great day when the Lord himself returns. Jesus himself is our ultimate delight.

Monsignor Kerry Beaulieu