



November 27, 2016

## First Sunday of Advent

### A Reflection

Here we are – we have circled around another church year. I love the church and how we get a nudge, a reminder of who we are and what we are about as people of the way – as birth bearers of God’s words and dreams for us. Father Joe always has a great symbol that draws us into the Sunday scriptures and his sermon. Today, I invite you to direct your eyes to the symbols that have been created in the niche behind the altar.

We have Mary bearing the baby...the labyrinth journey or starburst of the cosmos of creation...desert that at sometimes breaks forth in bloom. Advent comes in the dark time of the year, it comes in a time of busyness and distractions when the church calls us into a time of special preparation and expectation to again await the coming of the Christ among us.

Today’s scriptures bear words of hope even when they were written in times of darkness, and we hear those words of hope today even in times of darkness. But they say: Be Awake, Be Aware, Be Ready. Mary must have been awake when the angel told her she would bear a son – Jesus. Was she ready? Was she awestruck? Was she frightened? Anxious? Did she question? Most likely...she was put in a precarious situation and but she said yes, she trusted in God’s promise and entered into the birthing journey.

Can you remember a time when you were asked to bring forth something new? Giving birth is hard work – whether it is a child, a plan, or working toward a hope or dream. Can you remember the pain, the anxiety, the sweat and tears that came from the teeniest tiniest seed of imagination to the excitement of the flaring forth of the fruition of the hopes and dreams?

During Advent, we are invited like Mary and Joseph to give birth to the holy. Meister Eckhardt asks: What good is it that Mary gave birth to Christ and we don’t give birth to Christ in our lives today.

Like Mary and Joseph we are to wait expectantly to consider what lies dormant within me...what is waiting to come to birth? You know this birthing process can be a hard and dangerous undertaking. Sometimes the journey takes an unexpected detour, or things may not turn out how we envisioned them. Or perhaps the labor may be harder and longer than we expected and we get exhausted and want to give up.

But you know what? I think our church is like a community of mid-wives. We have friends and people who assist us in bringing to birth those seeds of care and healing, of teaching, of working for peace and justice. Mid-wives who encourage us; who breathe with us and weep with us. And then we have the energy and mentoring to walk with others in their journey of giving birth to the holy in their lives Hildegard of Bingen writes: Humanity is called to assist God to co-create.

A song from the Traveling Day Society kept popping into my head as I prayed about this reflection. I have asked Suzanne to sing a couple of those lines:

I hear the voice of my grandmother calling me  
I hear the voice of my Grandmother' song  
She says wake up, wake up...children wake up wake up  
Listen, Listen, Listen

And so I pray:

God of Seasons – keeper of time  
May we so prepare, so aware  
so awakened in our waiting  
that when you prompt us into motion  
our hands will be your hands  
and our purposes your own.  
Amen.