



November 30, 2025

The First Sunday of Advent Year of Grace 2026

"You know the time; it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep."

Romans 13:11



Dear Friends,

Medieval philosopher and mystic Mechtild of Magdeburg (1212-1282) wrote: *"The day of my spiritual awakening was the day I saw and knew I saw all things in God and God in all things."* Today's readings, this First Sunday of Advent, invite us to awaken to the presence of God in the world around us.

Too many of us approach God from an either/or mindset. This mindset sees all things in opposing dyads; matter/spirit, saint/sinner, good/bad, beautiful/ugly, right/wrong, true/false. When we get caught up in this kind of thinking we can miss the presence of God, who in Christ, draws near to us in many ways. We can't fathom that God chooses to exist in the messiness of our world. Like Peter we respond, *"Leave me Lord for I'm a sinner."* God in Christ befriends our sinful selves. Because God also sees our original goodness.

Incarnation shows us the humility of God. God empties Godself of divinity to be found in the form of one like us. God chooses to meet us in our humanity. So, what of our humanity? Science tells us that the universe is still evolving. It is not yet finished. That means that neither are we finished. God is still shaping and molding us by grace. We must be patient.

It is God who shapes us, not us. One of the things that prevents us from seeing God working in our lives is the idea that we earn our way to salvation. This often gets expressed by perfectionism. The demand for perfection is an enemy of the good. It grows out of the either/or mind. People who strive for perfection often become angry at the world's imperfections and their own perceived flaws. But we don't come to God through perfection but through love.

When we fail, when we crash and burn, these are the very things that can lead us to God and deeper love and patience. Instead of trying to be perfect we are invited to embrace our contradictions this can open us to mercy and forgiveness. The experience of failure can free us from the constant pressure of success. Life goes on even when things do not go according to plan.

The Scriptures remind us that God's coming is not an abstract myth. God enters the world through human stories with real struggles and real hopes. We are but a small but important part of God's plan. Advent invites us to look honestly at our own history: where is God breaking into our life, our family and our community? What feels unfinished or for what are we yearning?

Advent is a season of hope. Hope is not a passive waiting for someone else to do something. It means actively preparing our hearts, straightening the crooked, softening the hardened, leveling out the path, and making peace. In Advent: reconcile with someone, return to prayer, offer kindness, simplify, forgive, and slow down. Preparing for Christ means making room for him to enter the messiness of our world and our lives. Come Lord Jesus!

Peace,

Fr Ron

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