

ADVENT



It's that time of year, a time when days at first grow shorter, but then grow longer. The outside light fades rapidly until December 21, the winter solstice, but then it returns. A similar thing happens as Advent draws near. Going and coming! Advent, a penitential season, begins with sober reflection upon the dark places in our lives, but then welcomes the coming of the "Light of the World".

Often, this "changing" time in nature is something we are barely aware of, except for feeling the need to turn the lights on a little earlier. Sometimes, though, it is a "down" time, with a subtle feeling of inner darkness, as well as outer darkness. We do not hibernate as some animals do, but we may retreat a bit and turn inward. If we experience this, it is good to seek some perspective on it. Perhaps, it is more that the season. Is there an emptiness in our lives that needs to be filled? The goals we have pursued may have been attained, or may not. The question really is not our measure of success, but whether our goals are appropriate and still worth pursuing. Are they what we most want now, or have our values changed?

Advent can become a time of healthy growth. We can grow stronger with firmer roots. When the light around us fades, we can discover the inner light that is part of our very being. Often, we find it difficult to see this within our selves, but see it clearly in others. One person seems to be optimistic and hopeful. Another always expresses warmth and caring. Would we like to capture some of that spirit? All of us have this potential and God can help us to utilize it. There are ways of restoring that inner light.

In this "going and coming" season, we do well to recognize both our problems and our potential. We do have dark places in our lives, but God can help us to join those who overcome the darkness. We accept the fact that we are in need, but God provides help to meet the need and move on.