

So much of our world is artificial

Artificial sweeteners

Artificial trees

Artificial intelligence

Look at the ingredient list of almost any box of cereal

We even have a false sense of time

Advent is nothing more than a time for Black Friday

Cyber Monday

A time to shop

Have holiday parties

Racing from one thing to another

So much that Christmas itself becomes just a day

A day we simply want over so we can slow down a bit

This is why the Church gives us this season of Advent

A time to look forward

To Christmas morning, yes

But even more than that

It is a time to look beyond this particular Christmas

To the time the Lord will return

Like the Israelites Isaiah is writing to in our first reading

God had made them a promise

He would send them a messiah

They looked forward to his coming

God has made us a promise

Jesus Christ will return a second time

And we look forward to his return

In his writing, Isaiah helped the Israelites anticipate the Messiah

His writings can help our anticipation as well

The mountain of the Lord will be established as the highest mountain

Is this the highest mountain of our lives?

We all have mountains

Things we hold up in our lives

Our families

Jobs

Power or authority

Money

Not bad things in and of themselves

But are they the highest mountains in my life?

Or is the love of God first?

If the love of God reigns in our lives

It gives order and perspective to all the other things in our lives

The good and beautiful things

As well as the destructive things

What is the focus of my private life?

My professional life?

My family life?

Am I preoccupied with the world?

Or am I preoccupied with the Lord?

Do my choices and my will lead me to God

Or away from Him?

The same for my friendships

My passions

All things lead us on a path

Where is my path leading me?

What guides me on my path?

Do I seek Google for answers?

Or do I seek God for wisdom?

Answers and wisdom are not necessarily the same things

One pertains to the world

The other pertains to eternity

The goods of the world are limited

Seeking them opens the door to jealousy, envy and violence

The Israelites were called to go to the Temple

We are called to worship at Mass

Where we can receive Christ into our bodies

So we can receive his infinite wisdom

His forgiveness

His mercy

This is the only way to peace in our lives

Peace in our families

Peace in our nation

Peace in the world

Anything else leaves us wanting

This is true preparation

This is the path of Advent

The path Paul invites us to walk

The day of our salvation approaches

Put away the works of darkness

Drunkenness, promiscuity and lust

Rivalry and jealousy

And put on the armor of light

The way of Jesus Christ

Living his commandments in love

Again, the path of Advent

What is our path this year?

Will I follow the path of the world?

Being filled with the anxieties of the world

Running from event to event

Like those in the days of Noah

Or the two women grinding at the mill

One taken

One left

We are not called to do either / or

It is both / and

It is about perspective and balance

A perspective and balance only Christ can give

We know Christ is coming

We are called to be prepared

Like one knowing a thief is in the area

We don't go off leaving the lights on and the door open

We take precautions and make preparations

So as we enter this season of Advent

Let's see the invitation that is at our door

An invitation to see beyond the artificial beyond the lights of this world

Beyond the presents

All good things

We do not reject any of them

We walk among passing things

Letting them point us to eternal things

Preparing our hearts in anticipation

Keeping all things in the balance of God's love for us

So when Christmas does arrive

We will celebrate the true gift

The gift of Christ's return

The gift of being with Christ

Now and for all eternity