

Advent Message from Fr. Laurence - Week 1



Stay Awake. This is the teaching of Jesus in the gospel for the first

Sunday of Advent ? the preparation time for Christmas.

I have been travelling in S America and Asia in the past few weeks and have seen the various effects of the global financial crisis. In retrospect it's obvious that we slept-walked into the crisis, allowing the oscillation between greed and fear that controls the market place to induce a dangerous dream state.

The bubble burst. Reality dawned . And the awakening has been hard; and, as always in financial matters, hardest for those who have least and are the most vulnerable. In personal life also we frequently lurch from sleep-walking to rude awakening. Is there a way that we can stay awake? Can we avoid the extremes that cause so much suffering and confusion? Often when we are at our most inflamed and hyper-active we are in the deepest sleep.

Meditation ? morning and evening ? is the best antidote known to humanity to keep us awake, clear-minded about the illusions that lure us and the fears that control us. And to keep us attuned to the beauty and freshness of reality as each day invites us to be more awake, more real.

We know when we are awake because we maintain the same calm spirit of attention between all changing activities and sensations.

If your meditation has become lazy or more irregular of late, think of this training time of Advent as an opportunity to restart and renew the practice.

A good lectio practice would be to memorise these words from the Gospel and allow them to clear the mind at stressful times of the day, morning noon or night:

"Stay awake, then for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight or in the morning. And what I say to you I say to all: stay awake".
(Mark 13: 34)

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Advent

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