

Advent Devotional

by Todd Clark

The Christ Event Announces This Truth

In 1983, my late father preached this wonderful Advent message:

“The Christ event announces this truth: that God Almighty... however we picture or name or call or talk about, the source of Life... the Ground of Being... is intimately connected to human life, human beings... this world. That’s what the Christmas birth and the Jesus person... and the Christly legend... are trying to tell us... that without regard to anything this world—you or I—would consider necessary and proper, fitting and deserving, the Divine source of Everything, enters history... walks into reality... makes itself known... felt in the real world, among real people, in terribly simple, everyday occurrences and events and relationships...

“God moves into a person’s very insides, and says...You!, oh yes...you...it’s OK! ...I understand...It’s all right...even in your little faith...your bad moods, your no small evil...and your guilt...your fear...your terror...I understand...and its all right:

“Now!...there are three things you are released to do:

- **Care**....about people...
- **Work** for justice between groups....
- **Live** as a peace-maker in the world.

“If you do...you...will discover...your own true self. And your dream...will come true. For then, your heart will be in your dreams, and your God...will be within you. And no failure...no hard reality...not aging...not death itself, will separate you from God.”

(Rev. Deene Danforth Clark)



I love this description of Advent.

My Dad had a way to make sense of it all.

“The Christ event announces this truth: that God Almighty...however we picture or name or call or talk about, the source of Life.. the Ground of Being...is intimately connected to human life, human beings...this world.”

He says it so plainly and purposefully. The God of our Understanding is real—and is always here and in the now. Here—in this world. In the world we trudge through and also joyfully dance in—a world of good days and not so good days. Of days when grief and sadness can be overwhelming and also at times when new-found or long-standing friendships can bring immediate joy and big one thousand watt smiles to our faces! The Advent season compels us and beckons us to prepare—to make ready—not simply for a not-so-distant time in the future, but for the now—to make ready for God today—this day.

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That is, I believe that small voice, deep within. The voice that brings us

reassurance and peace- that offers hope and comfort—that reminds us how precious and wonderful we are. A voice that is a God of Understanding. A God that understands and accepts us, loves us, yes—that God—*“God Almighty, the source of Life...the Ground of Being...”*

There is power and meaning in ritual. There are important rituals we choose to make on our own—or with family and friends, in church and in other places that become sacred, and we sometimes need to be reminded that those rituals are more powerful and life—changing than any others, because they truly and deeply anchor us, they ground us, and help us to prepare for Christ’s presence, for the *“Christmas birth and the Jesus person.”*

Rituals.... where we light candles and sing songs together of Silent Nights and Holy Nights, or we simply pause...to hear the Angels sing. If we are willing and truly listening: we can hear the invitation to adore, and to sing in exultation. This is a season where we sometimes also feel a greater urge and a desire to volunteer—to “do some good”, to help someone, to extend ourselves...just because. And those are the deeply healing type of rituals, the helping and caring and giving kind. Not as a badge of honor—or to prove something to ourselves or to anyone really—but simply because to give of yourself is an act of love... to give...of your time...and your energy. To lend an ear or a helping hand. To just quietly, carefully, gently.... be there for someone. This season—make those rituals count, and work to shut down the dull seductive din of artificial bells and whistles, and instead, listen to that still small voice deep within. Do what you can to put the healing, loving rituals first, and give them room. To help you prepare. To make room for Christ’s presence in your life.

“If you do...you...will discover...your own true self. And your dream...will come true. For then, your heart will be in your dreams, and your God...will be within you. And no failure...no hard reality...not aging...not death itself, will separate you from God.”

“Glories stream from heaven afar, Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia. Christ the Savior is born!”