

The readings for this, the first Sunday of Advent, open not with twinkling lights & soft carols but in the midst of this problem: dawn is breaking, yet people are still asleep to it.

Isaiah offers a hopeful vision: nations turning weapons into tools for nourishment, communities moving towards wisdom & reconciliation. But the people of his day cannot see through *what is*, to *what will come*. Their attention is absorbed by the swirl of everyday anxieties they carry.

Paul sees the same thing in the early Christian communities. He announces the beginning of a new day, but the people are groggy, lulled by routines that keep them from recognizing it.

Then, in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus describes people who are simply living their everyday lives — working, cooking, celebrating. They are too preoccupied with the ordinary that they miss the extraordinary unfolding around them. Dawn is rising, but folks are too distracted to notice.

Now, as much as these readings point to our failures — we don't all short-change God in the same ways, but we all short-change him in our own peculiar ways. As much as the reading points in judgement — the whole purpose of the reading is to lead us to wake up.

Notice that Isaiah's vision isn't some distant dream. The prophet gets a glimpse of what is already beginning. His words call the people to step toward it: "Come, let us walk in the light." God's peace is not thrust upon us; it is offered.

We see this also when Paul tells his community, "The night is far gone; the day is near." The transformation they long for isn't something they must force into being: it is already — always — breaking over the horizon. Our task as faithful children of God is simply to learn God's will for us, & to live in God's love, which is to say, to live in alignment with that dawning light — clothing ourselves in hope, courage, & clarity.

And Jesus, even while acknowledging the uncertainty of the future, offers reassurance: what matters most is presence of mind, presence of heart — being awake, paying attention, noticing the subtle signs of change, making our contribution — in a word, taking care.

Because, you know, whether we're ready or not, the light is coming, the dawn is rising.

We recognize the world of these scriptures because it is our world too. Advent is a season of the year, but we must live in expectation to really keep the season. Each day, let us ask God to meet us in the frenzy of this

bustling world, where obligations stack up & many of us feel stretched thin, running from one commitment to the next, rarely pausing long enough to notice how God's grace punctuates our days.

Our global landscape echoes Isaiah's: conflicts simmer & boil over, communities are broken, fears grow bigger than life. The "swords" of our world may look like harsh words, broken trust, polarization, burnout. And in all this busyness, we too can drift through our days half-awake — longing for a more grounded, compassionate, meaningful life, yet unsure how to step into it.

Our world is the same as Isaiah's: we are often asleep to the very things that could heal us.

But here is the good news for this first morning of Advent. Whether it is credited to God, or simply attributed to human goodness & the triumph of love:

People wake up. Responsibility sets in. We stop pointing fingers. Our hearts soften. Christ breaks through.

And what else does it look like when Christ breaks through into our world? Next time you see someone taking their time listening carefully to another, take note — if being present to someone is so easy to offer, why is it so scarce in our world? And next time we start

lamenting our broken relationships, let's also remember what happens when we choose connection over hurry. And when we point out cities in ruin, let us be sure to behold people in those communities rebuilding from the rubble. All this to say, we *will* find glimpses of dawn if we look for them, quiet signs that the world is already under renovation.

Advent, for Christians, is a season of holy expectation. But the invitation it carries is universal:

Pay attention.

Open your eyes to what is good & true.

Notice the light rising now in your own life.

“Walk in the light” (as Isaiah puts it).

There are many ways to accept the Lord's invitation, but I'll identify a few low hanging fruit:

-slowing down,

-honouring what matters,

-choosing to show compassion, even when it's hard,

-receiving each day as a gift rather than a race — time as something to savour as we are able, rather than to squeeze dry.

This is what it means to be spiritually attentive.

Not under pressure, but inspired by possibilities.

Not because we must, but because we believe we can.

Whether this is already your way or something new, hear the Lord's invitation:

Wake up to the dawn breaking around you.
Look for the light that seeks for you.
Choose the small acts that make for peace.
And walk gently into the new world emerging.
As Christians, this means walking with Christ, the Light
who is ever drawing near.

Just be sure that as you keep watch for our Lord, keep
a close eye on others, regardless of their nationality,
their social status, or their religion. I have met non-
believers who walk with wisdom, compassion, &
goodwill to others, not because they believe God
commands them to, but simply because they believe it
is right. Let us not judge those who see the light in their
own terms — in this season, may all the world be filled
with the light of Christ, that all turn to know the Lord.
And may our hearts be filled with the excitement of little
children, as we prepare for the Feast of Christmas.
Amen.