



From the Director

The season of Advent is given to us as a time of preparation. We wait expectantly for the coming of Our Lord amongst us. How often do we let this time slip by without

PREPARING,

listening or

being attentive?

It is easy to let these weeks fly past with little consideration of what gifts it really holds for us. Thomas Merton was a great model of what it is to stay attentive to all that surrounds us. He was an avid photographer and photographed whatever crossed his path- “a battered fence, a rundown wooden shack, weeds growing between cracks, working gloves thrown down on a stool, a dead root, a broken stone wall. He approached each thing with attention, he never imposed, he allowed each thing to communicate itself to him in its own terms, and he gave it its own voice.

Later on when he was out in the woods with a young friend, both with their cameras, Merton reprimanded him severely for the speed with which he approached things. He had told him to stop looking and to begin *seeing*.”

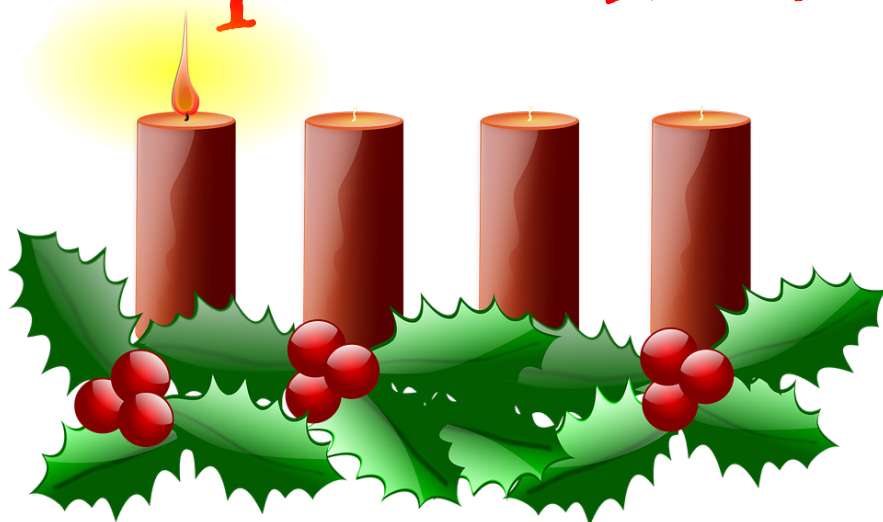
“Because looking means that you already have something in mind for your eye to find: you’ve set out in search of your desired object and have closed off everything else presenting itself along the way. But seeing is being open and receptive to what comes to the eye; your vision total and not targeted.”

Margaret Jones, a minister at the Episcopal Church in Memphis, Tennessee, reminds us that;

“Listening as the prophets listen, is not being able to hear clearly, the way you can hear me. It means listening with what St Benedict calls ‘the ear of the heart’. The ear of the heart hears the voice of God above the voices of the world. It hears the voice of hope in the midst of despair, the voice of calm in the midst of fear, the voice of new life in the midst of death. The Biblical prophets listened with the ear of their hearts, and that is why, when they did speak, people listened.”

Being attentive, receptive, listening and finding some quality time to prepare in these weeks of Advent seem to be the key in recognizing the Lord’s presence in our midst. May we take seriously the words of St Benedict this season of Advent and

‘listen with
the ear
of our heart.’



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