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December 1, 2013 ✝ First Sunday of Advent

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## Pastor's Column

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### Advent Awakening

Advent is a time for rousing.  
Human beings are shaken to the very depths,  
so that they may wake up to the truth of themselves.  
The primary condition for a fruitful and rewarding Advent  
is a renunciation, a surrender...  
a shattering awakening; that is the necessary preliminary.  
Life only begins when the whole framework is shaken.

—Alfred Delp

As we reflect upon our lives, and as we remember those tragic events—the sudden death of a loved one, an unexpected illness, financial failure, divorce, or betrayal—we know the truth of these words.

When we are shaken to our roots, when we need to “put it all together” one more time, we then experience our fragility and we see life once again, as for the first time.

When we surrender to this reality, we then begin to really live and take hold of life.

In the Gospel today, as we begin this Season of Advent, we hear Jesus say to us: “**Stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.**”

“The time,” whatever that event may be, will come upon us, and shake us to our roots, maybe for the first time, maybe for the second, third, or fourth time.

Advent is meant to be a season in which we are to prepare ourselves in faith so that we continue to trust in God as we go through what we know we could not go through without God.

The only constant in life is change. All is transitory and imperfect. We are a people waiting for the return of the Lord. One day we will die and will have to give all back to God.

Advent, with the help of the Scriptures, offers an opportunity to reflect upon these realities.

Our present culture rallies against such thinking. These days before Christmas we “medicate” ourselves with parties, food, drink, gifts, and continuous busy-ness; and we do so relentlessly, more than during any other time of year.

It is a challenge, but let us attempt to infuse this Season with Advent reflection. May this be a time in which we do not run away from life, but a time in which we more fully embrace it, with all of its beauty, but also with all of its tragedy and pain.

May Advent shake us to our roots, once again!

Fr. Mike