

ALL ACCESS ADVENT

This Advent season, we move into a liturgical time of preparation. Access is everything! God is inviting us to uncover our ability to access the mystery. It is a mystery of promise and hope, a mystery of joy and celebration, a mystery of peace. God wants us to access what has been revealed for all ages and become new in this present moment. More now than ever as we are confronted with restrictions on gathering and schooling, as we suffer and grieve and think about how we support the core of who we are, God is all access. What was spoken of the prophets came in time and changed the world. God is accessible and what was revealed of the Father is made true by the words of the Son. The Son will tell us the truth and share undisputed wisdom and love.

So, in this first week how do we access Advent? This week in the First Reading from Isaiah we are told that God is like no other. Access comes from waiting. Access comes from realizing we are the clay and He is the potter, we are the work of His hands. This imagery is one of connection and touch. There is a unique relationship between an artist and the canvas, the potter and the clay, the writer and the words. Access comes when we allow ourselves to be drawn into that place where we feel created in the image of God and in constant relationship with Him. Where do we find this? We might begin by first acknowledging all that we are and are becoming, all of our creativity, resilience and perseverance comes from the creator God. Access begins with an acknowledgment of the Creator. We are all in this stage of life and God is the one who offers us this time to live and act and empower and bring about a response in others. What a beautiful prayer space to be when we realize our lives are shaped and reshaped by God. He longs to shape and reshape us. Access begins here.

But we also have to allow God to have access to us. How does God find us? The prophet begs us to be doing right and good things when God renders the heavens. *"Would that you would find us doing right, that we were mindful of you in our ways!"* The Gospel will reiterate that by telling us to stay awake, how better for the Lord of the house to find us waiting than asleep. When God enters our lives, when He has access to our hearts and we let Him in; He is to find us following the great commandment of love He gave us. We are to be found as forgiving and compassionate. We are to be found doing the right thing. So often it seems we do the right thing when we know we are being watched. I slow down when I see a police vehicle on the side of the road. I am much more focused at the eye doctor when I am having a vision test than just a check of pressure. Sometimes our habits change when we are watched. God is watching all the time. God longs to have access to our hearts. In an Advent of all access, it is not just about having access to God but allowing God to have access to us.

In this first week, may we allow God to shape and reshape our lives by His love.



Father John Ouper