

This month's Liturgy; December 2017

The Season of Advent can all too easily be swallowed up in our preparation for Christmas Day itself – while the season is really much richer than merely a lengthy run-up to a one-day wonder (as wonderful as that one day is !)

Advent first of all concentrates the mind and heart on the future coming of the Lord (*the Parousia*) not to fill us with a fear and trembling which will take all the joy and peacefulness from our living, but to put all things into their true perspective and to invite us to reflect upon the graciousness of God, the promises of God and the fulfilment of those promises in the person of Jesus. Having taken the time to reflect on that 'graciousness fulfilled' we are all the better prepared to celebrate the **Word made flesh** over the Feasts of Christmas - Nativity, Epiphany and Baptism.

At Saint Cuthbert's Seminary we often used this reflection at our Advent Carol Service – it may be of use to you in your prayer in this season.....

The voices of Advent speak to us of light and hope, of witness and of commitment. They call us to repentance, to 'prepare a way' for the coming of the Lord.

The tenor of this season demands that we draw aside for reflection and contemplation, at a time when the world clamours for our attention. We become trapped on the express train to Christmas Day from which there seems to be no escape.

But the strength of this time of preparation lies in the ability to provide a respite, a quiet corridor, a moment of peace amid the noise and rush of the day.

Advent, a season as brief as the winter days it encompasses, gives us an opportunity to develop the neglected art of holy waiting.

Happy Advent and Christmas-tide !

Father Philip