

This reflection by Jesuit Father John F. Kavanaugh, is from the booklet, *Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Advent and Christmas*, by Liguori Publications.

A Reflection on the First Week of Advent

Advent: A Forced Time of Year?

As a child, I thought that Advent was an artificial thing. It seemed a forced time of year, a concoction to get us excited about the coming of Christmas. It felt fake.

After all, the birth of Christ had happened a long time ago. What was the point of pretending that it hadn't? It was like going through the motions of contrived expectancy when we knew the outcome in advance.

Now I am beginning to see Advent differently. The cycle of the seasons that we as a worshipping people live through each year is not an exercise in "let's pretend" at all. It is an ongoing journey into deeper reality. It is a recognition that the entry of God into our lives, while its essence is accomplished, is still psychologically unfinished.

As long as we breathe, there is more of our lives to open, to unbar, to unlock. There is always more of us that we might let God enter. There is no end to the ways that the Word of God can more fully take on our flesh.

This is especially true of our need to acknowledge how utterly we rely on God's healing power for our salvation. We so much want to be whole and finished that our greatest temptation is to think and hope the task is done. Oh, if this conversation could only be our last. If this long journey of faith could be neat, final, and complete.

Advent is an ongoing journey into a deeper reality.



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