

Advent = the arrival or new beginning.

The theme of the first week of Advent has traditionally been hope and expectation.

What is hope and expectation?

- We hope because we acknowledge that something is amiss.
- we wouldn't be hoping for something if everything was all right.
- we hope knowing that God has something better in store for us;
- "we were never meant to live this way..." (struggling, pain, etc...)

Expectation is the notion that we know something is going to happen to change our current position or state.

- Christmas as a kid = anticipation of our current standing in toys is going to change. And we hope that it is for the better and not some lame socks or board game.
- as an adult we are anticipating that we will no longer have to watch tv on that measly 32 inch tv but that we can have the 80 inch tv!

A problem however, is that we have forgotten what it means to be expectant.

- we live in a culture and society that says we want it all and we want it now!
- delayed gratification is not something we as humans are good at.
- the thought of having to wait for something seems so counterintuitive.
- "why save your money up to buy something when you can have it now on credit...because it ends up costing you more in the end."
- We rush to Christmas don't we? (Nordstrom sign)

We must learn to enjoy the journey as much as the destination don't we?

How do we do this?

- by recalling and reflecting where we have come from.
- the reason the journey is so enjoyable is because we are able to sense progress and know that the next step brings us to the fulfillment of our expectations.
- I would like to challenge us the first week of advent to take some time to do an inventory of your life for the past year.

What have been some of the blessings, the challenges and those sins in your life that existed. This is why we begin this first week of advent with the Great Litany. So that we can begin this advent journey with the right perspective....Knowing that we once again are in need of a savior. (Counting Crows = its been a longer December and there is reason to believe, maybe this year will be better than the last)

This past years sins can keep us from embarking on this advent journey and can prevent us from having the expectation that we should have, that Christ will come once again and restore us to the beauty and glory that can only come through going through our long December with the hope that this upcoming year will be even better than the last. Amen.