

The season of Advent beginning today sounds the alarm with a wake up call to prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ.

It's time to **wake up** and to **stay awake**.

Actually, once we are up and out of bed, we are quite good at staying awake. Caffeine, work, entertainment and just plain overall busy-ness keep us awake, so that on average we sleep fewer hours than people did a century ago. But it is not simply a matter of staying awake.

As the apostle Saint Paul reminds us, we are called as Christians to be awake to God and God's work of salvation in our midst.

It's easy to stay awake by keeping busy and being distracted, but are we awake to God? are we awake to Christ?

Saint Paul prescribes not caffeine or keeping busy, but LIGHT, to keep us awake during our Advent waiting.

If we live in darkness, he says, we will fall asleep.

If we live in the light, our eyes are opened and we remain alert.

So are we throwing off the words and deeds that we're not so proud of? embarrassed by? ashamed of?

Are we putting on the "armour of the Lord Jesus Christ," living and working honestly, justly and charitably?

Advent also calls us to make sense of, and live, the present with an eye to the past and an eye to the future.

In Advent we ponder the mystery of Christ's coming in the flesh and look for new ways of living the Incarnation, of living in fidelity to God, so that we make Christ's presence real for others.

We reflect upon what it means that Christ came in the flesh all those years ago, and how we live this mystery in the here and now as we wait for that moment when he comes again like a thief in the night.

Today asks us How are we living our Advent?  
Are we living these moments of waiting well?

Is the reality of Christ's birth at Bethlehem and our ultimate end with his return shaping our existence in the present? determining how we choose to live? and influencing what we choose to cherish?

Much more than "getting a birthday party ready for Jesus"

Advent is a season to help us wake up and shape up,  
to rouse us to meet Christ who *has already* come, day in and day out,  
so that when he comes again, on that day, at that hour *unknown* to us,  
we will be ready to meet him and his judgment.

Fr Paul