

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6TH ADVENT REFLECTION



Advent seemed to be a straightforward, linear experience in my childhood. The waiting was there, checked off by days on a church calendar, scenes of the Christ Child in a manger, ending with the celebrations of the Christmas season featuring gifts of love and generosity and gratitude, and certainly for the children, gifts there for the unwrapping. There was a kind of lightness of spirit, a simplicity in that experience, in which one could find a particular grace.

A few days ago, my husband and I visited the Center for Action and Contemplation (Richard Rohr) in Albuquerque. Amid the quiet and peace of this desert space, one is invited to walk the turns and twists of the CAC labyrinth. Again and again the path turns away, until one finally reaches the Center.

For me, perhaps for many, the path through Advent this year seems to be measured less by a linear calendar than by the design of a labyrinth, in a year marked by political, social, even spiritual unrest and uncertainty, and all too often, unprecedented distrust and a meanness of spirit that confuse our path, turn us away from one another, turn us away from centering, even from seeing clearly where the Center is.

The Advent 2017 letter sent to us by the SCL leadership asks an interesting question: Is it we who wait? or is it God who is waiting for us? So do we search for God at the center of our labyrinth? Or is God already there, waiting for us “to open our eyes and see,” to make the right turns that lead to the Center.

At the fall meeting, SCLA/SCLs pondered, in one word, how the SCLA experience has changed or influenced our lives. At our table, two participants chose *humility*. For one, especially as we work with the poor and needy, humility comes with the clarity that we share a common humanity; for another, humility in appreciating that others live the Vincentian spirit, though never recognized, or even named.

Perhaps we can walk the path of this Advent Season with a sense of renewal, embracing simplicity and humility, with a centering of spirit necessary for our greater shared humanity...and perhaps even with the lightness of a child, considering as we wait that God in the Christ Child is waiting for us.

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