

**December 9, 2018**

**2nd Sunday in Advent**

**Advent isn't about Christ coming to fulfill our lives,  
it is about our coming to fulfill Christ's.**

Jesuit, Fr. Karl Rahner, SJ, wrote a while back a meditation on the meaning of Advent. He titled it, "*The Divine Dawning*". It brings a new depth to the meaning of the season. I would like to share some of it with you. Fr. Rahner's writing can be rather thick, so I invite you to listen, not in an attempt to remember what he says, but to gain an overall perspective on what he is saying. He writes:

"Every year we celebrate the holy season of Advent. Every year we pray those beautiful prayers of longing and waiting, and sing those lovely songs of hope and promise. Every year we roll up all our needs and yearnings into: 'Come!'

"And yet, what a strange prayer this is! After all, you have already come and pitched your tent among us. You have already shared in our life with its little joys, its long days of tedious routine, its bitter end. Could we invite you to anything more than this with our 'Come'? Could you approach any nearer to us than you did when you became the 'Son of Man,' when you adopted our ordinary little ways so thoroughly that it's almost hard for us to distinguish you from the rest of humanity

"In spite of all this we still pray: 'Come' as much from the depth of our hearts as it did long ago from the hearts of our forefathers, the kings and prophets who saw your day still far off in the distance, and fervently blessed its coming. Is it true it is still really Advent?

"Are you the eternal Advent? Are you he who is always still to come, but never arrives in such a way as to fulfill our expectations? Are you the infinitely distant One, who can never be reached? Are you only the distant horizon surrounding the world of our deeds and sufferings, the horizon which, no matter where we roam, is always just as far away? Are you only the eternal Today who is equally near to everything, and still equally distant?

"When our bleeding feet have apparently covered a part of the distance to your eternity, don't you always retreat twice as far away from us, into the immense reaches filled only by your infinite being? Has humanity drawn the least bit closer to you in the thousands and thousands of years that have elapsed since it boldly began its most exciting and fearsome adventure, the search for you?

"Have I come any nearer to you in the course of my life, or doesn't all the ground I have won only make my cup all the more bitter because the distance to you is still infinite? Must we remain ever far from you, O God?

"Forgive me, Lord, if I say that this coming of yours seems more like a going, more like a departure than an arrival. And yet you, O hidden God, have quietly and inconspicuously taken your place in our ranks and marched along with us.

"You promised that you would come, and actually made good your promise. But how, O Lord, how did you come? You did it by taking a human life as your own. You became like us in everything: born of a woman, you suffered under Pontius Pilate, were crucified, died, and were buried. You took up again the very thing we want to discard. You began what we thought would end with your coming: our poor human kind of life, which is sheer frailty, finiteness, and death. You took upon yourself our kind of life, just as it is. You let it slip away from you, just as ours vanishes from us. You were supposed to come to redeem us from ourselves, and yet you, who are absolutely free and unbounded, were 'made,' even as we are.

"Is this the coming you promised? Is this what humanity has been waiting for? Is our grief taken from us, simply because you wept too? Is our surrender to finiteness no longer an act of despair, simply because you also surrendered? Does our road have a happy ending just because you are traveling it with us? Is it a value to me that my destiny is now a participation in yours?

"Slowly a light is beginning to dawn. I've begun to understand something I have known for a long time: you are still in the process of your coming. Appearing in the form of a slave, you redeemed humanity by embracing the very slavery from which you were freeing us.

"Your coming again doesn't mean your's will be 'another' coming, because you have never really gone away. You come to reveal yourself ever more clearly to the world that the heart of all things is already transformed, because you have already taken them all to your heart. Behold, you come. And your coming is neither past nor future, but the present, which has only to reach its fulfillment. Now is the one single hour of your Advent, at the end of which we too shall have found out that you have really come."

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*That changes everything!*