

## Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Dec 10th 2016

I have a junior son and as many of you know this is the year that preparation for college really begins to ramp up. When he was younger and I fantasized about this time in his life I felt it would be so exciting-- the world is his oyster, all we needed to do is determine which oyster he was going to shell. Pretty straightforward, right? The reality is that this journey is much more anxiety producing than I had envisioned. My anxiety lies in the plethora of unknowns inherent in the process (and in raising a child). Is he prepared? Will he be able to handle the demands of college life? Will he get a good enough ACT score to land in the college of his choice? When will he hone in on an interest of study? How many visits should we do and to where? Will he want to play sports? What will he write about in his essay.....the list goes on.

The Advent season is also an exciting journey. And much like what I am experiencing it can have its highs and low. It is about repentance and expectation. At times this season can seem a little bleak with the somber notes of O Come O Come Emmanuel playing a continual loop in our minds. What I think is happening in this second week of Advent is that God is reminding us of the urgent hopefulness that is a critical part of the season. The fiery image of Elijah in the first reading illustrates the power and glory of God, reminding us of what is at stake which can be anxiety producing. And yet the reading ends with equally beautiful imagery by telling us that if fall asleep in our friendship with God we will be blessed. On the surface the word choice of falling asleep may seem like a passive act, but what I think it really is communicating the opposite. We need a deep and rich relationship with God, so strong that we know each other in and out. This, like all good relationships, requires work. It means we must engage in the process of getting to know God. Advent is a time of preparing, we do this through working on knowing and loving God.

The only way I have figured out how to squelch my fears about the college process is to prepare. My son will reach the right destination as long as we do the work. Our faith journey requires this same attentiveness. Today's readings remind us of the destination that is ours if we show up and do the work. Hope and expectation -- what a great message for this important season.great.

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