

"By the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope..." Romans 15:4 Second Reading, BUT for many Advent can be a dark time. The holidays difficult. I feel some of that myself...

Depression can become an unwelcome guest at this time when the days are shorter and old memories are longer. Over the last six months death has taken 10 significant persons out of my life. In addition three others are very seriously ill. So I feel a heaviness which leans upon my spirit. All the more reason to engage with Advent spirituality and be proactive against the enemy depression which would steal in between our defenses and bring havoc if left unchecked.

So today I engage with John the Baptist, the Advent prophet. No self pity there. He possessed the male energy. Just as he told off the power elite of his day: "You brood of vipers!" ...let his courage be set loose upon the viper of depression! He was a man of action. And action is precisely what is needed when one is bowed down with grief. Get up! Move! Exercise! Sing! Go out to others who bear far greater burdens! ACT as though not depressed and what seemed like such an overpowering enemy, will eventually deflate like a spent balloon. And if it lingers, take counsel and medicate.

AN ADVENT STORY:

Friday I did a memorial for Beth, a teacher who died at age 93. She moved! She acted! She was an inspiration. I would almost every day see her take her walker, go to our gate, engage with the gatekeeper and then on her walker plod over to the mall for her daily hike where she was well known and where she would visit with many along the way.

Here is what someone wrote of her:"she found the beauty in every person. She made you feel like an instant friend. she was an inspiration on how to live your life as full as you can...overall, she just loved the adventure of life. She liked tall, handsome men and didn't hesitate to flirt with a server in the restaurant that was 50 years younger. She was a true cougar!"

Life is to be lived, not regretted even when the bumps come on the road. So I see Beth as an Advent figure...moving along on her walker, not bemoaning the past or present but moving forward "loving the adventure of life."

Advent is our time to lift up our heads in the dark and long for and expect the light that will always illumine our path.

"Maranatha! come Lord Jesus into our dark!"

BREAKFAST QUESTION: how do I really feel these days?

PERSONAL REFLECTION: What words from today's Scriptures lift up my spirit?