

1 Sunday Advent A 2016
November 27
Frazee/Callaway

Here the story of a Thanksgiving Encounter: my friend was amid her extended family, including her cousin Morgan. Morgan is about 30 years old, she is struggling in marriage and pretty firm on divorce. She has a three-year-old little girl who is the sweetest little girl you will ever meet. At one point Morgan said, "I would like to become Catholic, but I know that I am not able to be that good." She said, "I have been promiscuous and am going to be divorced even though I hate divorce." My friend did everything she could do to convince Morgan that she is worthy of God's mercy. On some level, Morgan wonders if God is on her side. Perhaps smothered by guilt and shame, she cannot conceive of God having mercy in abundance. Rather, she believes God rallies behind some people but not others. She believes that God sits on his throne in heaven, taking delight in the complete destruction of people who have gone astray. For Morgan, God might be loving and merciful to some, but to most he is just a big divine bully waiting to smite.

This cannot be so. God does have an opinion about us: God believes that we are all worthy of redemption. God has already decided that the price of his own Son's life was not too much to pay for us. God does not cease to spur us on to possess a more abundant life. This is what we want for Morgan: a more abundant life.

Morgan lives in guilt. We want her to know forgiveness. Morgan lives in shame. We want her to accept her dignity. Morgan is a sinner. We want her to know Jesus. We want her to have access to the grace of the Sacraments. We want her to be supported by the love of truth, of a community that accepts the Gospel and lives it to the full. We want her to find in marriage a life of love that is free, total and fruitful.

That's Morgan. What about you? God is in your corner! God does not cease to spur you on to possess a more abundant life. God is rich in mercy, constantly offering pardon; he calls the sinner to trust in his forgiveness alone.

To trust in God's forgiveness alone: that is a leap of faith! We find it somehow more natural to trust in our own efforts, even when we fall short. We trust in ourselves even when we are stuck in sin with its shame and guilt. God offers us another way. God says, "Trust in my forgiveness alone."

If you are stuck in a faithless rut, hear the Advent voice of the prophet Isaiah: "Come, let us climb the Lord's mountain, to the house of God."

If you are tired of the shambles of your life of faith, hear the Advent voice of the Psalmist David, "Come, let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord."

If you struggle to have hope, hear the Advent voice of St. Paul, "It is the hour now for you to awake from your sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed."

If you are waiting for the right time to be all-in, hear the Advent voice of Jesus, "You must also be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."

God does not cease to spur us on. Listen carefully to the conversations you have during this holiday season. Your family and friends may be waiting to hear that God is for them, too.

