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The Advent of Peace

by John Dear

On the Road to Peace

Advent renews my spirit every year because it invites new hope for a world in despair, light for a world in darkness, and peace for a world at war. Advent calls us to prepare anew for the coming of the God of peace and God's reign of peace on earth. We do that by working to end war and the causes of war, and making peace with everyone.

Since we begin Advent this upcoming weekend, I thought I'd share a new poem, "Advent," by my friend Fr. Daniel Berrigan, the longtime Jesuit peacemaker and poet. Ten years ago, I edited an anthology of Dan's poems, *And The Risen Bread: The Collected Poems of Daniel Berrigan, 1957-1997*, (Fordham University Press), but this poem comes from a new collection of Dan's recent writings over the last 15 years, which I also edited, called *Testimony: The Word Made Fresh* (Orbis, 2004)

May his poem, and this holy season, give us new hope and inspire us to resist our government's wars and welcome the coming of peace on earth.

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Advent

By Daniel Berrigan

It is not true that creation and the human family are doomed to destruction and loss --

This is true: For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,
that whoever believes in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination,
hunger and poverty, death and destruction --

This is true: I have come that they may have life, and that abundantly.

It is not true that violence and hatred should have the last word,
and that war and destruction rule forever --

This is true: For unto us a child is born, and unto us a Son is given,
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,

And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
the Everlasting, the Prince of Peace.

It is not true that we are simply victims of the powers of evil who seek to rule the world --

This is true: To me is given authority in heaven and on earth,
and lo, I am with you, even unto the end of the world.

It is not true that we have to wait for those who are specially gifted,
who are the prophets of the Church, before we can be peacemakers.

This is true: I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and daughters shall prophesy,
your young shall see visions,
and your old shall have dreams.

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It is not true that our hopes for the liberation of humanity, for justice, human dignity, and
peace are not meant for this earth and for this history --

This is true: The hour comes, and it is now, that true worshippers

shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

So let us enter Advent in hope, even hope against hope.

Let us see visions of love and peace and justice.

Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage:

Jesus Christ -- the Life of the world.

John Dear, S.J. will be speaking in Toledo, Ohio, Thursday Nov. 30, and leading an Advent retreat at the Villa Maria Center near Youngstown, Ohio, Dec. 1-3. For further info, see: www.fatherjohndear.org.

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