

Born in Mannheim, Germany, in 1907, Alfred Delp was a philosopher and a Jesuit priest. During the Second World War, he was part of the resistance to Nazi rule, working to reestablish Germany on Christian values.

He was imprisoned in late July of 1944. While in prison, he secretly offered Mass and wrote letters and reflections on Advent. These writings are collected in a book titled, *Advent of the Heart*.

Freedom is born in the hour of contact. And it is not as if God simply stood there, waiting for the weary traveller to arrive. Both God [is] and [we] are traveling towards one another. God shows [us] in hundreds of ways his willingness to meet . . . more than halfway—to put out His hand when [we] . . . stumble. And this is not the full extent of His divine aid—this is merely the preliminary. The summit is reached when [we hear] His voice; then [we] can no longer doubt that [our] destiny is to rise above [ourselves] to . . . fulfillment [in Christ].

Today is the First Sunday of Advent. The word ‘advent’ means ‘arrival’ from the Latin verb *advenire* meaning “to come to.”

We hear from the Prophet Isaiah:

*Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
with the mountains quaking before you . . .
Would that you might meet us doing right,
that we were mindful of you in our ways!*

The prophet echoes the desire of God’s people . . . to meet God . . . that God might rip open the heavens and come crashing down to earth . . . with a BANG!

Saint Paul reminds the Corinthians . . . and us as well . . . that we are “*enriched in every way*” by “*the grace of God bestowed on [us] in Christ Jesus;*” that we are confirmed in the Gospel and “*are not lacking in any spiritual gift.*”

And in the Gospel, Jesus speaks of His ultimate arrival. He is already among His disciples, yet He tells them to “*Be watchful! Be alert!*” ... for He will come again.

We know that He is coming ... but we do not know when that will be.

The mystery of Christ’s coming is threefold. In the Letter to the Hebrews, we are told, “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*”

He has come ... in time and in history 2,014 years ago.

He is here ... in the Living Word we have heard, in this community gathered in His name, and He comes to us today in the Most Blessed Sacrament on the Altar.

And He will come again ... at the end of our earthly lives ... to each one of us ... and at the End of Time.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood ... Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, may God grant us “*the resolve to run forth to meet . . . Christ.*” For He has arrived ... and His Kingdom is here ... Let us be watchful ... ready ... and alert.