



Reflection for December 9, 2020 Wednesday in the Second Week of Advent

*They will beat their swords into ploughshares,
and their spears into pruning-hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.*

[Micah 4:4]

"If you have inner peace, thousands of people around you will be saved."

[St. Seraphim, Russian mystic]

This reflection is from Alfred Delp, "The Shaking Reality of Advent" in *Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas* [Plough Publishing House, 2001]

[Father Delp, a Jesuit priest, wrote this piece shortly before he was hanged as a traitor in 1945 for opposing Hitler.]

There is perhaps nothing we modern people need more than to be genuinely shaken up. Where life is firm we need to sense its firmness; and where it is unstable and uncertain and has no basis, no foundation, we need to know this too and endure it.

We may ask why God has sent us into this time, why he has sent this whirlwind over the earth, why he keeps us in this chaos where all appears hopeless and dark and why there seems to be no end to this sight. The answer to this question is perhaps that we were living on earth in an utterly false and counterfeit security. And now God strikes the earth till it resounds, now he shakes and shatters; not to pound us with fear but to teach us one thing—the spirit's innermost moving and being moved.

Many of the things that are happening today would never have happened if we had been living in that movement and disquiet of heart which results when we are faced with God, the Lord, and when we look clearly at things as they really are. . . .

Here is the message of Advent: faced with him who is the Last, the world will begin to shake. Only when we do not cling to false securities will our eyes be able to see this Last One and get to the bottom of things. Only then will we be able to guard our life from the frights and terrors into which God the Lord has let the world sink to teach us, so that we may awaken from sleep, as Paul says, and see that it is time to repent, time to change things. . . .

Let us ask for clear eyes that are able to see God's messengers of annunciation; for awakened hearts with the wisdom to hear the words of promise. Let us ask for faith in the motherly consecration of life as shown in the figure of the blessed woman of Nazareth. Let us be patient and wait, wait with Advent readiness for the moment when it pleases God to appear in our night too, as the fruit and mystery of this time.