

Advent 4C - December 2021

"Advent Teufel" or Advent Devil:

Maula Powers is a storyteller. In an issue of *Catholic Digest* some years ago Ms. Powers told about a creature called the "Advent Teufel." *Teufel* is a German word for devil. According to an old German folktale, it is the Advent Devil who tries during the Advent season to keep people so busy in outward affairs that they lose sight of the real meaning of Christmas. The Advent Devil doesn't want people to have time to experience the rebirth of Christ within themselves.

The temptations of the Advent Devil are diabolically clever. He makes it so easy for us to go along with the flow of seasonal celebrations. The Advent Devil's business is to keep us so busy with holiday obligations that we forego daily prayer, Scripture study, and Church services. Some of us have been fighting the Advent Devil this year. Hopefully, we now have him under control at least for this coming week! I hope you are in a position to use that little bit of time that's left to focus on the real meaning of it all. (Fr. Tony) (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>) L/21

God Is the Happiest Being in the Universe

Perhaps we need Santa at Christmas to help us be merry and joyous because we have a flawed understanding of Jesus. From today's gospel text we learn that the first reaction to Jesus' presence on earth, of God-in-our-midst, was joy. Joy so tremendous, joy so utterly overwhelming that it must somehow escape the bounds of earth itself and jump towards the heavens.

In John Ortberg's wonderful book *The Life You've Always Wanted*, he writes: We will not understand God until we understand this about him: "God is the happiest being in the universe" (G. K. Chesterton). God knows sorrow. Jesus is remembered, among other things, as a 'man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.' But the sorrow of God, like the anger of God, is his temporary response to a fallen world. That sorrow will be banished forever from his heart on the day the world is set right.

Joy is God's basic character. God is the happiest being in the universe. Joy is what makes Christmas. Each of us may look to some annual family tradition to trigger that joy. But the trees, the carols, the cookies, the presents, the

parties, are only various expressions of a single experience of the spirit JOY born again into our souls. (by Leonard Sweet from *Collected Sermons* at www.Sermons.com)

"Please come back again!"

An electrician did a small job, one afternoon, for a popular local restaurant. He met many of the employees and management, and he was very impressed by how friendly everyone was. He and his wife had never been there before, so the following week, they went to the restaurant for dinner. And, during dinner, the man kept mentioning to his wife how nice everyone was when he did the job there and that they almost made him feel like he was part of the crew. They had a wonderful dinner, and finished off a bottle of fine wine. When the check came, the man was amazed at how little the bill was, and noticed that the waiter had written "50% Off" on the check and deducted that amount. He showed this to his wife. He mentioned just how incredibly nice everyone was at this restaurant. And even though he only worked there for just one afternoon, they gave him this great discount. He paid the check and thanked the waiter for the generosity of the restaurant and staff.

On the way out, the man stepped into the kitchen to personally thank the chef, and shook hands with everyone on the crew (about a dozen employees), expressing his appreciation for the great dinner and discount. He also left a note for the owner, thanking him, and offering him 50% off his next electrical maintenance job.

On his way out the door, he thanked the maître d' for the generous discount. The maître d' then explained to him that not only did the man and his wife get the discount, but everyone else in the place did also. He said, "*Sir, tonight, and every Tuesday, is 'Half-Price Night.'* But I have to tell you that you are the only customer in the history of this restaurant to thank the entire kitchen crew and the owner for having it.... Please come back again!" —

One of the attributes of a grace-filled life is a spirit of gratitude. What a wondrous and glorious blessing!

The Gospel today demonstrates that with a true spirit of gratitude comes the spirit of generosity. The *Visitation* teaches generosity; the *Magnificat* teaches gratitude;. (Fr. Tony) (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>)