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Fr. Danny Murphy – ADVENT 1 – 2016

QUOTES

Beauty doesn't matter because in the end, we all lose our looks and all we have is our heart. Comedian George Burns once quipped: "A sermon should have a good beginning and a good ending and the two should be as close together as possible." We'll see if that is going to be fulfilled tonight. The season of Advent always occurs when the days are getting shorter and then nights are getting longer. That's because Advent is the "Season of Light." When we awake, the coming of the sun (s – u – n, lower case) and the coming of the SON (S – O – N, UPPER case) Jesus, the light. The season of Advent is distinctly different from the season of Lent. During Lent, you might often ask yourself and sometimes other people might ask you: "What are you doing for Lent?" We seldom ask that question during

Advent, do we, but maybe we should: "What are you doing for Advent?" What is the best way you can spend these four weeks. A suggestion: this Advent, BE A LIGHT. It is easy to be a light, but to be a light requires that you give of your time. This Advent, might I consider calling someone for no other purpose than to tell that person that I was thinking of him/her, and how much he/she means to me. A priest-friend of mine said that recently he received a call from a parishioner who thanked him for putting extra effort into everything that he does. That parishioner was a light to that priest. This Advent, could I consider writing a few lines of greeting in the Christmas cards that I send, to personalize them, to remind the recipient how special he/she is. That's being a light! This Advent could I strive to be a better listener; to try hard not to do anything, not to think anything when another person is speaking to me. To be a good listener is to be a light. Could I, in creative but sincere ways, think of how I could get the other person to talk and for me to listen? I'll give you a simple example, now don't give into guilt, and don't beat yourselves up, this a simple nursery school level example. If you were to say to someone (and I know I did a hundred times or so): "How was your Thanksgiving?" In all probability, the response would be something like: "Oh, it was fine!" end of conversation! Instead if you were to say: "How did you spend your Thanksgiving?" Well, that opens the other person up to the possibility of talking and then you would have to listen. Everybody has a story to tell but there are so few people who want to hear the story. So this Advent, be a light, by being a listener. I can be a light this Advent by being more sensitive to the feelings of other people. A young

adult friend of mine tells me that she spends every Thanksgiving and every Christmas with her nieces and nephews and every year she dreads to do so because she would so much want to have children of her own but she hasn't found the right guy. And think of the countless number of couples who would love to have children, but for whatever reason they seem to be unable to conceive. All I need to do to be a light is to say, and to mean: "I understand, I understand!" This Advent could I try to stop expecting myself, try to stop expecting other people to be "God?" Only God is perfect! Now, yes, you and I, we should "strive to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect." But, we will never get there! So, can I stop expecting myself and others to be perfect? That could be a light. Could I also remember that only God can fulfil my needs? And not to expect other people to fulfil my needs? That could be a light! So, this advent – be a light: a call, a note, listen, an apology, an affirming touch, an "I love you", a compliment, a smile, a prayer, this Advent: Be A Light!