**Advent**

**My music-history professor at the University of Kansas at Lawrence was lecturing about an early-16th-century composer whose work was based on the church year. He interrupted his lecture to ask, “Does anyone know who decided when the seasons of the church year were to start? In other words, who decided when Advent and Lent begin?” Our only responses were blank stares. “Anyone?” he asked again. One brave student raised her hand and ventured, “Hallmark?” (Jill C. Etter)**

**Advent is a time to discover Christ anew. The mystery of the Incarnation is not something that will happen on December 25th, but the realization that Christ has already taken our flesh and is waiting for us to recognize his presence among us. (Sister Lenora Black, in Catholic Digest)**

**Sometimes we may forget that God’s coming is not just something in the future. As we repeat during Advent the poetic words of the Old Testament prophets, we can make it sound as if God were not already here. But John the Baptist reminds us that Jesus is here: “There is One among you, whom you do not recognize.”(St. John 1:26) (Sister Lenora Black, in Catholic Digest)**

**Advent is not the dark side of Christmas but rather the place where we behold the light of Incarnation. How can our hearts know what to celebrate if we have not also questioned, hoped, and suffered? (Joanne Lehman, in Catholic Digest)**

**In truth, we are easily tempted to relax in the security of a familiar present. We resist an unpredictable future. Perhaps we really do not want God’s surprising intrusions into our comfortable little world. Advent means, as Johannes Metz says, stepping out of that realm where we are in control “to journey into a realm not under our control” and where “we must be prepared to accept change and undergo transformation.” (Sister Lenora Black, in Catholic Digest)**

**A Child is born! That is forever the message of Christmas. A Child is born! In the early days of the 19th century, the world was following with bated breath the march of Napoleon and waiting with feverish impatience for the latest war news. And all the while, in their own homes, babies were being born. Just think of some of those babies. Why, in one year, lying midway between Trafalgar and Waterloo, their stole into the world a host of heroes! During that year, 1809, William Gladstone was born in Liverpool, Alfred Tennyson drew his first breath at the Stomersby rectory, Oliver Wendell Holmes made his initial appearance in Massachusetts, and Abraham Lincoln was born in Old Kentucky. Music was enriched by the advent of Frederic Chopin at Warsaw and Felix Mendelsohn at Hamburg. But nobody thought of babies. Everything was thinking of battles. Yet, viewing that age in a perspective the years enable us to command, we may well ask ourselves which of the battles of 1809 mattered more than the babies of 1809. When a wrong wants righting, or a work wants doing, or a truth wants preaching, God sends a baby into the world to do it. That is why, long ago, A Babe was born at Bethlehem*. (F. W. Boreham)***

**The Advent mystery is the beginning of the end of all in us that is not yet Christ. *(Thomas Merton)***

**How old is Baby Jesus? Four, according to my 6-year-old godchild, Shaun. While lighting the Advent wreath, Shaun observed that since Christmas is the celebration of the birthday of Baby Jesus, and there are four candles on the Advent wreath, then Jesus must be turning 4 this Christmas. *(Michael J. Bradley, in Catholic Digest)***

**From a parish bulletin in Rolling Meadows, Illinois: “Refrain from putting up Christmas decorations until Gaudiest Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent.” *(John Connor, in Catholic Digest)***

**Advent is less a matter of our waiting for God to come than of God waiting for us. For God is already at the door, knocking. We have but to open the door of our hearts to let God in. (Sister Lenora Black, in Catholic Digest)**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***