

## **Advent: A Matter of Life, Death and New Life**

During a retreat he led in Chicago for seventeen of us just before he ordained us priests, Bishop Frank Griswold tossed out a question. He said he always asked, as rector, when interviewing someone to be his associate: "What is your personal experience of the paschal mystery? That is, how has Christ been living and dying and rising in your life?"

While working on my sermon for All Saints' Sunday, a day of baptisms and new life, I was also talking and working with a family as they prepared for a funeral. Perhaps that's why the Bishop's question keeps re-emerging for me. I know that, when I slow down and pay attention, I begin to see how it's always a matter of life, death and new life.

Advent is like that. It's a time of beginnings: of preparation and expectant waiting. It's also a time of endings: the church year has come to a close, complete with Sunday readings about the "last days," the end of time. And it's all a holy mystery, this "both/ and-ness" of God. To paraphrase the familiar words of our Eucharistic liturgy: Christ has died and Christ is risen and Christ will come again.

As I write this, I am about to say "hello" to my new life as a married man and "good-bye" to being single. More and more, I'm aware of life's sacred balance, God's paschal mystery. My life in God – and yours - is caught up in the both-and-ness of Christ, who is both our Passover and our mystery, who lived and died and who comes and lives again.

— Peace, *Tom Momberg*