



Well, here we are again, at the beginning of the new Church year. My thoughts about our Church are not all positive, given the Apostolic Visitation of some religious communities; the recent pronouncement that ordaining women priests was as grave an offense as pedophilia, and, as the King of Siam was wont to say: "Etc., etc., etc.!"

So I begin this new and fresh season with some old and tiresome feelings. I tried to read the Scriptures and see what they say. But to no avail!

What did strike me is that on December 2 we will celebrate the 30th anniversary (hard to believe!) of the death of the four women who were murdered in El Salvador: Ita Ford, MM, Maura Clarke, MM, Dorothy Kazel, OSU, and Ms. Jean Donovan. And the *Word and Worship* desk calendar has, for that day, a reminder of John Brown's execution in 1859. Not a word about the women. So I am off to a very bad start for this Advent. (People are soon going to think that I am always off to a bad start! What can I say!!!!)

Add to that the fact that I look at these women, and I look at my life, and I say: Albaugh, you have maybe missed the boat entirely. Your life has been too easy, and you have not done anything of consequence. What are you going to say when your last Advent is over and your arrival in heaven (hopefully!) is at hand?

And you know what? I don't think I will wait till my final day. I think I am going to say, right now, "Dear God, here I am. ...with all my faults and failings, and one or two maybe really good deeds I could mention. I think that this Advent I should try to do better, regardless of all the missed opportunities thus far. I don't have the courage or the deep spirituality of those women, or of my other favorite saints. All I have is what You have given me. And that, to quote the Easter prayer, should 'be enough.' Dayenou! It is enough. So take me as I am, and work with me as you would work with a piece of clay. For such I truly am. And make of me a soul more like Yourself. Help me to use this Advent time to grow in my love for You, and to show that love to those around me. Maybe, dear Lord, just maybe, I'll get it right yet!"

~ Sister Joan Albaugh