

Advent I 2025 (Year A)

Isaiah 2:1-5; Ps 121; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:37-44

It was recently hinted to me that my homilies should be shorter, to the point, have a beginning, middle and end. That person was probably right. I will think about it in the New Year.

Out of interest I took a look at the types of Advent Calendars there are for sale in the shops. Advent Calendars used to be little paper doors revealing pictures of candy canes and sheep and gingerbread men and wisemen. They used to be pictures of what was coming at Christmas and the picture was enough to look forward to. I guess that has not been the case for some time. These simple calendars have largely been replaced with large cardboard boxes with plastic trays behind them.¹ Each numbered door opens to reveal a pre-Christmas treat. You can have a **Ted Baker Advent Calander** 'Filled with deluxe, full-sized and limited edition beauty and bathing treats to indulge in from head to toe.' £46. There is a **Ferrero Collection** Advent Calander with a tempting description of 'Delicate layers of wafer, an elegant velvety centre and a toasted almond, all finished with a sprinkling of coconut.' You can have the '**Grind**' Calander so that you can 'Count down to Christmas with 25 days of Nespresso® compatible compostable coffee pods, each a unique blend of ethically-sourced speciality coffee.' £28. Many of the calanders, such as 'Tony's Choclonely Countdown Calendar' and Lynx thoughtfully have removed any reference to Advent and Christmas so that I won't be offended. But they will tell me about their commitment to ethical sourcing. Thank you.

I also enjoyed reading the Hazards and Cautions: English Tea Shop Calander:

¹ Thank you Boots.com for the enlightenment on all products.

Food Supplements are intended to supplement the diet and should not be regarded as a substitute for a balanced and varied diet or a healthy lifestyle.

While every care has been taken to ensure this information is as accurate as possible, recipes and nutrition content may occasionally change. As a result, we recommend that you always read the label carefully before consuming any product. The Nutrient Reference Value (NRV) or Reference Intake (RI) as a percentage, helps to show the contribution that a product or portion size can make towards daily intakes. This information is provided as a guide and is not individual advice.

Yankee Candle read:

Avoid breathing dust/fume/gas/mist/vapours/spray. Avoid contact with eyes, skin, and clothing. Avoid prolonged exposure. Provide adequate ventilation. Wear appropriate personal protective equipment. Observe good industrial hygiene practices. Store in tightly closed container. Store away from incompatible materials

Again, thank you for the imparted wisdom.

Intrigued by all this I went to the back of the Church of our Lady of Lourdes and picked up what passed for an Advent Calendar on our repository table. All it said on it was '*Religious Advent Calendar. 24 Windows to open. All with Religious images.*' I was very disappointed. There was no invitation to indulgence. There was no tantalising description of treats. There was no ingredients list, and there were no hazard warnings.

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On the cover of the Calander was a very simple picture of a mother and father looking down at a new born baby, some old guys with beards looking on, and a scattering of sheep.

So, I decided to do my own marketing for this clearly hopeless cause of traditional Advent Calanders:

Product detail: A simple cardboard calendar to accompany you and the whole family during the countdown to the joys of Christmas through the season of Advent.

Ingredients: Cardboard, paper, coloured ink. There may be some cross-contamination with Faith, Hope and Charity.

Hazards and Cautions: Use of this product in conjunction with continued meditation on the meaning of Advent and Christmas could lead to prolonged periods of happiness, sense of purpose, and a reorientation towards what is important in your life. Possible confusion of family and friends upon taking pleasure in such small things is likely. An urge to say 'Merry Christmas' to everyone who says 'Season's Greetings' may overwhelm you.

Country of Origin: Judea

Delivery Options: free

Cost: £1.99 or free if you use a previous year's Calander.

After pondering upon today's Gospel in which Jesus speaks of his coming again at the end of time in Glory, of the disasters and false prophets that will come before Him, and His words '*Stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man*', I thought to myself: maybe a cheap Advent Calander is all I need. Maybe that is all any of us needs. Maybe it is more than enough. Maybe that is its beauty. Try it. May God keep you.