

This Advent season we have been talking about "disciplines of readiness". These are spiritual practices like *Waiting* and *Hoping* and, today, *Watching*.

In one of her longer poems, the Mary Oliver stops abruptly to say: Instructions from the Lord: *Pay attention. Be astonished it. Tell about it.* I hear that and think, yes, that could a summary of a well-lived life; to develop the capacity of heart and mind to *pay attention*. Developing this capacity to *pay attention* involves the mind *and* the heart - the whole person. The school teacher or the parent says: pay attention! And we know we are being summoned to the present moment - to look at what is going on **now!** Your spouse or friend says: Hey! Pay attention! And you know means put down your devices; look up, look here, see this, see me in this present moment. When we are paying attention - in this whole person way - life presents itself in each moment, in each person.

Long ago, John the Baptist sat in a prison cell, depressed and discouraged, awaiting his own death; a punishment for telling the truth. He wanted to know if the Messiah he had hoped for was true. Jesus said, **tell him what you hear and see.** "The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

Jesus is saying: listen. Look around. I believe he is still saying: look around. Pay attention. You will see wonders being done in my name. You will hear good news being declared. You will see broken-hearts healed, and wounds mended. It is happening right before our eyes; everyday.