



By Pat Haggerty

My son and daughter-in-law were visiting recently with their two month old daughter. Whenever she fussed, which wasn't often, my son would do this little ritual of standing and bouncing her slowly while doing a "sh-sh" sound in her ear. It did the trick! I didn't tell my son that I had a similar routine for baby soothing also.

I got to thinking of that consonant digraph--"sh." It does have a soothing quality. When pronounced after "h-u" it creates that beautiful word: "hush." It's not that word of reprimand for being quiet. It's that calming word for rest, be quiet, be at peace.

It's a word that should serve as our mantra for Advent. Hush. Be still. Listen to your heart. Listen for God. You are awaiting something very important. You need to put yourself in the right state to prepare for the arrival of the Christ Child, our Savior. Everything about Advent speaks to the concept of stillness and reflection.

When we read the words of the Prophet Isaiah, the underlying message is stillness: "On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom." Whoever heard of a blossom sprouting loudly? It just doesn't happen! The bud blossoms in stillness and emerges in the quiet of nature. It emerges from the earth in the hush of nature's elegance.

If we read on in Isaiah, we see that "the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall

lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them.” (Is 11:6) What does that conjure in our minds? For me, it’s a scene of extraordinary calmness. It is one which could easily be prefaced by the word “hush.”

During this season of Advent, amidst all the frenzy that can be characteristic of the season, find that balance that is centered in quiet. It does take work because we are going against the tide---against everything that the secular world portrays. It is easy to be overtaken by our shopping, our baking, and our Christmas card list. Instead, find your center in the stillness of your heart. It is there that you will find Jesus.

Be still.

H-u-sh.