

The First Day of Advent
Sunday, November 29, 2009

This year's daily devotionals will feature excerpts from publications by Pittsburgh Theological Seminary faculty members. Each reading, in its own way, will help us to prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of Christ. Today's reading comes from the book *Encountering God: Christian Faith in Turbulent Times*, written by Professor Andrew Purves, Professor of Reformed Theology, and recently retired faculty member Professor Charles Partee. The book is published by Westminster John Knox Press. For information on ordering the book, visit www.Cokesbury.com.

This excerpt is found on page 33:

“Many people think that being Christian and being religious are the same thing. According to them religion is the general category and Christianity is a specific example of it. This outlook would be accurate if religion were correctly defined as the human effort to encounter God and Christianity were understood as one of the possible manifestations of that quest, a particular illustration of the genus “religion.” At many levels Christianity does look and act like a religion, but in its essential reality the Christian faith is *not* a human effort to encounter God. Rather the Christian faith is the result of God's effort revealed in Jesus Christ to encounter the human.”

A Prayer for Today:

Gracious and Loving God, we give you thanks for this season of the year. We thank you for the time over these past days spent with family and friends. Most of all we thank you for Jesus Christ, who doesn't wait for us to find him, but rather encounters us so that we might know you. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.