

## **Theological Reflection**

### **Advent – Come Lord Jesus**

Gabriel, the Archangel of the Lord, appears to Mary. Maybe Mary of Nazareth was carrying the household water jar to the well, or was possibly at prayer or cooking a meal when Gabriel broke into her quiet life. We do not know. St. Bernard tells us how all creation waited with bated breath for Mary's answer. Adam, Eve, Abraham, David, Rachel, Ruth, all who were in Sheol waited. How they must have longed to be released from that dark, gloomy place. How many tears were shed there?

Mary at the Annunciation becomes not only the Mother of the Word, Mother of Light but our Mother also. Through her obedience she becomes the New Eve, the true and faithful "Mother of the living."

Two thousand years later she continues in that role of motherhood. She remains our model especially during the Advent season. Like her we await the coming of the Lord. We gaze back fondly in memory of the first Bethlehem coming and like all creation we call out and groan for the final coming of Jesus at the end of time. However it is the annual coming that we await and cherish with the dawn of Advent each year. Look at Mary as she prepares for his coming. Then see how she holds him so lovingly and kisses the face of God with great love. Ever aware of his presence before and after his birth, Mary loves to sit and rock him.

We know from Mary's life that Jesus came at Bethlehem, but also on so many other occasions did he make his presence felt. We also know from our own past experience that the Lord comes in all manner of circumstance and people. I can think of one special memory of my father that exemplifies both preparation for Christmas and also how the Lord came through my father's careful patience.

My father, Henry, was a welder and good with his hands. He came home weary each evening tired out by climbing in and out of tight spaces on the ships and carrying heavy equipment at the shipyard. Weeks before Christmas he would begin the work of building a Christmas garden filled with lighted miniature houses, an entire village. He took a motor from a phonograph player to use in displaying skating figures revolving on a 78 rpm record. There also was a belt upon which he placed skiers that went up and down a mountainside. He spent countless hours of wiring, cutting and gluing, not to mention the two sets of trains. He did it for us four children. I look back fondly and appreciate now what it cost him then. God's love, care and time came to me through my Dad's love, care and his giving of his time.

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The spiritual parallel comes quickly to mind. We are to take time in preparation for Christmas. Weeks ahead we begin, no matter how tired or pressured, to ready ourselves for the coming of the Lord. We do this Advent praying out of love to please the Lord and to spend time with him. The Lord loves simplicity, hence the stable and animals. What he asks of us is the simplicity of spending time with him. To sit quietly, maybe in a rocking chair, and to keep him company as he lies there on the straw. He has told Margaret Mary Alacoque how we comfort his Sacred Heart and so we believe that in ways we cannot fathom that we comfort him, the God-man, by our presence. He who said he is the Light wants us to be warmed as we sit before this Light. He who promised to gather the lambs in his arms, wishes that we be a lamb and childlike before the manger scene. God taking on flesh, becoming Jesus is in need of our company as we adore Him as the Christ child. This is a mystery too deep for words but one we believe in and take to heart.

May this Advent find us not only waiting on the Lord but also sitting quietly with him who is the Light of the World.

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