

THE BEATITUDES: PART IV

Reflection by Steve Petty

The Season of Advent is one of preparation. Many Christians might not realize that Advent is not only about preparing for Christmas, but it is also about preparing for the Parousia, the Second Coming of Christ. This is why Advent, though it is not formally a penitential season, has a penitential character to it; for we are preparing to encounter the Lord. One way that we can prepare for encountering the Lord is to be more conscientious about our discipleship. As a Christian, being conscientious about our discipleship means being conscientious about living the Beatitudes. In this edition of the Catholic Corner, we will look at the third Beatitude:

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.."
Matthew 5:5

To be meek means that a person is humble, discreet, and deferential. In the Kingdom of God, the meek are blessed because meekness is the antidote to the aggressive arrogance that seeks to dominate others. Many in the world equate meekness with weakness. They are, in reality, very different. A person who is weak lacks the virtue of courage. A meek person, on the other hand, is not one who lacks courage, but is one who is self-possessed. The meek person chooses quiet over loud, humility over arrogance, and deference over selfishness. Meek disciples don't let the darkness of a sinful human nature dominate or control them; they choose the path of Jesus. The following quote from the late Pope Francis about the third Beatitude is an impactful one:

"Meekness is yet another expression of the interior poverty of those who put their trust in God alone. Indeed, in the Bible, the same word — anawim — usually refers both to the poor and to the meek. Someone might object: 'If I am that meek, they will think that I am an idiot, a fool or a weakling.' At times they may, but so be it. It is always better to be meek, for then our deepest desires will be fulfilled. The meek 'shall inherit the earth,' for they will see God's promise accomplished in their lives. In every situation, the meek put their hope in the Lord, and those who hope for him shall possess the land...and enjoy the fullness of peace (cf. Ps 37:9.11). For his part, the Lord trusts in them: 'This is the one to whom I will look, to the humble and contrite in spirit, who trembles at my word' (Is 66:2).

This Advent Season, spend some time working on the virtue of meekness. Take the Lord's own example of meekness and make it your own. While being meek does not come easily for our broken human nature, its intentional practice will open your heart to a greater portion of God's peace and serenity.

RECOMMENDED WATCH: THE NATIVITY STORY

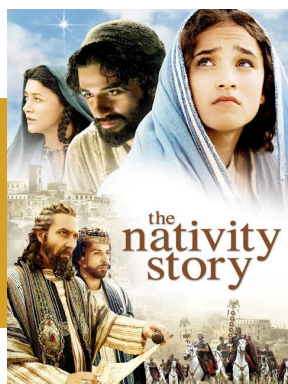
by Ken Pullis

"In those days, a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged, and who was expecting a child."

The Gospel According to Luke begins Chapter 2 with this brief description and historical context for the "First Advent," which we know as Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem. We can imagine Mary and Joseph were scared and maybe even confused as they departed on the nearly 100-mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Despite the many difficulties, Mary and Joseph were guided by trust in God on this pilgrimage of faith.

Each of us will undertake a similar pilgrimage of faith this Advent. **We do not always see everything that God has in store for us, but we are called to trust that God has a plan for each of us.** God intends to bless us with peace, hope, joy, faith, and His love. May we be open to God's blessings in the coming weeks. Immanuel means "God with us," and He is with us this Advent and Christmas.

I recommend the movie "The Nativity Story," which is available to stream on Amazon Prime. It is a moving portrayal of the journey of faith and hope of Mary and Joseph on their way to the City of David, Bethlehem.



RECOMMENDED WATCH >>

The Nativity Story

Available to watch on Amazon Prime



RECOMMENDED REFLECTION: OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS IN THE SEASON OF ADVENT

by Tim McCormick

The season of Advent is not only about reflecting on the past, when Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the first century AD, but it also has both a present and a future perspective to it. As we make our way through these four weeks leading up to December 25th, it is a great time to assess where we are in our relationship with Jesus.

During the season of Advent, I am one of those who likes to ponder and reflect on my relationship with Jesus through a series of questions: What would my reaction be if Jesus returned right now? Would I react with joy, relief, and excitement, or would my reaction be filled with fear and regret? If my reaction is more negative, what areas in my relationship with Jesus might I need to work on? Do I need to spend more time in prayer? Should I look to see if there is a Reconciliation or Confession service happening at my local parish? Is there a food pantry or soup kitchen that could use my help? **As I tell my students regularly, we give time to the people and things we consider important. Truly, how important is my relationship with Jesus to my everyday life?**

Advent also looks forward to the future. When Jesus first came, it was largely in a quiet and hidden way. Only the lowly shepherds and wandering wise men came to visit him. In many ways, it was an undercover arrival in a remote part of the vast Roman Empire. But when he comes again, it will be sudden and dramatic. It will not be in secret. As St. Paul reminds us:

"For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God." — 1 Thessalonians 4:16

And for all of us, the second coming of Christ will come, either at that historical moment in the future or at the end of our own earthly life. **Are we ready for that moment?**

So, while it is always good to sing Christmas carols and watch our favorite Christmas movies during this season, make sure to set aside time reflecting on your relationship with Christ now and how that impacts your future. **Maranatha!**