



ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

Fr Gregory Gay reminds us in his Advent letter that this time of the year is a time for prayer, peace, joyful service of the poor, and conversion of heart.

Prayer

St Vincent told his first companion: "The apostolic life does not exclude contemplation but encompasses it and profits by it to know better the eternal truths it must proclaim."

This Advent and Christmas let us find some time for prayer and reflection.

Peace

St Vincent wrote to St Louise "The kingdom of God is peace in the Holy Spirit. He will reign in you if your heart is at peace. So be at peace, Mademoiselle, and you will honour in a sovereign way the God of peace and love." Vincent was a peacemaker who did so by defending the poor.

This Advent, let us seek peace within to be one with the Prince of Peace of who the prophet Micah said, "He shall take his place as shepherd by the strength of the Lord...he shall be peace. (Micah 5:4-5)

Joyful Service to the Poor

Jesus was born into poverty and lived in humble surroundings. This reality – the poverty of our Lord in his earthly life – is not a sentimental Christmas story, but salvation history. St Vincent reminds us of the intrinsic link between our salvation and that of caring for the poor: "We cannot better assure our eternal happiness than by living and dying in the service of the poor, in the arms of Providence, and with genuine renouncement of ourselves in order to follow Jesus Christ."

Conversion of Heart

A good Advent will help us see that God wants to open our minds and hearts to "prepare the way of the Lord."(MK 1:3) The Second Advent preface before the Eucharistic prayer beautifully expresses the true meaning of this holy season: "It is by this gift that already we rejoice at the mystery of his Nativity, so that he may find us watchful in prayer and exultant in his praise."

Christmas

To give life to Jesus in my heart by love, thus rendering Him present in me. This presence will be the sole object of my attention as it was for the Blessed Virgin at the Crib.

The means to imitate Jesus at the moment of His birth is to have my soul completely united to God and my mind filled with true knowledge of my own nothingness.

To admire, on the one hand, the true humanity of Jesus and, on the other, His divine works and the word of God which He spoke. To thank Him for the grace given to obedient souls to know the truth of His words.

God demands great purity of intention from those who serve Him.

St Louise de Marillac