

Christmas Meditation 2021

First Presbyterian Church

Roswell, New Mexico

December 2021



Christmas Meditation

The shepherds came to the manger to see the newborn Jesus. The magi came to Bethlehem to see the young child Jesus. The crowds came out to the hillsides to see the grown Jesus. Today, we come to the church to see the risen Jesus in each other. The hurting world comes to each of us to see the risen Jesus in our lives and our actions. For your Christmas meditation, I offer the following:

From Sister Mary Rose of Covenant House:

On the street I saw a small girl cold and shivering in a thin dress, with little hope of a decent meal. I became angry and said to God: "Why did you permit this? Why don't you do something about it?"

For a while God said nothing. That night He replied quite suddenly: "I certainly did something about it. I made you."

And this from Ann Landers:

Two friends were talking, and one said, "Sometimes I just can't understand all the violence, hopelessness, hunger, and poverty in the world. It all seems so unfair and so senseless. I just want to cry out, and ask God why God doesn't do something about it."

"Why don't you?" asked the other.

"Because I'm afraid God might ask me the same thing."

Finally, let me share with you a story I received from the U S Navy's Deputy Chief of Chaplains. It originally appeared in Guideposts.

Wallace was nine. Larger than most of the kids, he was also slow--slow in body and perhaps slow in mind. But the children all liked him. He was so much bigger than they, but he never bullied them. In fact, he was the ever-present defender of the smaller boys.

Wally wanted very much to be in the Christmas play that year. He hoped he could be a shepherd. But the teacher had a much larger part in mind. Wally is big enough to be the inn keeper, she reasoned. And so it was that Wallace Purling got the part of the inn keeper. He was given his part. Oh, how he practiced.

The night of the play, everything went beautifully. No one even missed a line. At last, the play came to the time for Mary and Joseph to knock at the door of the inn. "What do you want?" Wallace said, opening the door with a brusque gesture.

"We seek lodging."

"Seek it elsewhere," Wally said, "The inn is filled."

"But sir, we have tried elsewhere, and we have come a long journey. We are very tired."

"Go away," Wally properly commanded. "There is no room in my inn for you."

"But sir, my wife is with child. Do you not have some corner where we could get out of the cold?"

For the first time the innkeeper broke his icy stare and looked at Mary. There was a long silence. The audience was tense with embarrassment because they thought Wally had forgotten his lines.

"No, begone," the prompter whispered.

"No, begone," Wally said, half-heartedly.

Joseph sadly placed his arm around Mary as they began to move off the stage. Suddenly, this Christmas program became different from all the others. Wally could stand it no longer. Big he was, but cruel he could never be. With big tears welling up in his eyes he gave a performance others would never forget.

"Wait, don't go, Joseph!" Wallace called. "Bring Mary back." Wallace Purling's face grew into a bright smile. "You can have my room, and I'll sleep out in the cold."

Some say the pageant was ruined. But others knew differently. They knew that Wally had caught the real spirit of Christmas, that of giving and sacrifice. Christmas is God's great gift and sacrifice in Jesus Christ.

Let us remember the true meaning of Christmas as we celebrate the birth of the Light of the World, the Prince of Peace, the Messiah. May the peace of Christ be with us all throughout this holiday season and the coming year.

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