



Gate of Heaven --- Our Lady of Victory

2018 — A Year Celebrating the Eucharist

Second Sunday of Advent Reflection

Is there Room at the Inn?

We are all familiar with the Gospel account of Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem for the census. Mary, who is with child, is ready to give birth. The God-man is coming into this world to save us from original sin and personal sins...and, we are told in the Gospel that there is no room for Him in the inn.

When Jesus Christ, the God-man comes to us in the life of grace and in the Sacraments, we can ask ourselves; *Do I make room for Jesus Christ to dwell in my inn? Do I have a place prepared and waiting for Him?*

The word Advent from Latin “adventus” (ad-ven-toos) is the arrival of a notable person, event, or thing. In Christianity, this is specifically applied to the arrival of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem as a baby; at the end of time in glory; and daily in the life of grace. Thinking of how we prepare for the arrival of an important guest at our hours, most people would probably answer - we clean! We put our house in order. We make time to be present to our guest. We make the atmosphere welcoming and loving. With this in mind, how then should we spiritually prepare for the arrival of the greatest guest we could possibly have - God with us - Emmanuel - Jesus Christ knocking on the door of our hearts in the life of grace and in the Sacraments?

Jesus gives us a glimpse of what this preparation and his presence coming to us looks like when he says in John 14: “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him.” **THERE IT IS - HOW TO SIRTUALLY CLEAN** for God dwelling with us! He is coming to our inn because we love him and keep his word! This same chapter of John also speaks of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling when Jesus says, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of Truth, which the world cannot accept because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you.” Again, the cleaning is loving Jesus and keeping his commandments.

Jesus himself will help us to do the spiritual cleaning. He has set up the Sacrament of Reconciliation where the victory that He won on the cross to save us from sin is applied to us if we choose to repent and convert. Christ’s graces help us to do that as He cleanses us with the blood and water that flowed from his side on the cross.

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Many people ask, where does the Sacrament of Reconciliation come from? Jesus instituted this sacrament with us in mind when he appeared to his apostles on the night of his Resurrection. He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." Jesus continues to be present in this sacrament through the ministry that he entrusted to his apostles and their successors that continues in an unbroken line through the ordained priesthood. Our Redeemer came to offer us salvation, and he set up the way that we can come in contact with the GREAT LOVE with which he died on the cross to free us from sin and grant us new life in Him!

Let us take advantage of this great gift of forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation - whether it be mortal sins that we must confess and convert from before we approach the reception of our Lord in Holy Communion - or whether it is small faults that we are seeking the graces Christ won on the cross to help clean out our inn so it is even more welcoming and more open to His presence.

God is infinite when he comes to us, he offers himself infinitely in Love. How much we receive is limited only by how much we are open and can hold. Let us make more room in our inn this advent season.