



Christmas Reflections

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger - *Seek That Which Is Above* -

"Advent is concerned with that very connection between memory and hope which is so necessary to man. Advent's intention is to awaken the most profound and basic emotional memory within us, namely, the memory of the God who became a child. This is a healing memory; it brings hope. The purpose of the Church's year is continually to rehearse her great history of memories, to awaken the heart's memory so that it can discern the star of hope....It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope."

Edward Hays - *A Pilgrim's Almanac* -

"Advent, like its cousin Lent, is a season for prayer and reformation of our hearts. Since it comes at winter time, fire is a fitting sign to help us celebrate Advent...If Christ is to come more fully into our lives this Christmas, if God is to become really incarnate for us, then fire will have to be present in our prayer. Our worship and devotion will have to stoke the kind of fire in our souls that can truly change our hearts. Ours is a great responsibility not to waste this Advent time."

Fr. Brian Cavanaugh -

"During Advent opportunities for works of charity abound calling out for Christians from every side: a sack of food for a needy family, money dropped in a Salvation Army kettle, a donation to an Indian school, a toy for 'Toys-for-Tots,' etc. Unfortunately, these works of charity so easily can assuage the Christian conscience, while doing nothing to being about a solution to the root causes of the problem.

"Works of justice, on the other hand, follow ***the road less travelled*** of Advent's hope to pursue solutions for difficult problems. Hope comes through works of justice rather than simply performing works of charity."

St. John Paul II, December 1999 -

John Paul II, in his Angelus message of December 19, 1999, explained that Christmas is not simply the remembrance of the Event that took place 2000 years ago when, according to the Gospel, the power of God took on the frailty of a baby. It is really about a living reality that is repeated every year in the heart of believers.

"The mystery of the Holy Night, which historically happened two thousand years ago, must be lived as a spiritual event in the 'today' of the Liturgy," the Pope clarified. "The Word who found a dwelling in Mary's womb comes to knock on the heart of every person with singular intensity this Christmas."

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI -

Pope Benedict XVI in his weekly address on January 4, 2012 said: "The phrase *admirabile commercium*, current in the theology and spirituality of the Nativity, is used to describe this 'admirable exchange between the divine and the human....The first act of that exchange comes about in Christ's own humanity. The Word assumed our humanity and, in exchange, human nature was raised to divine dignity. The second act of the exchange consists in our real and intimate involvement in the divine nature of the Word....Thus Christmas is the feast in which God comes so close to man as to share the very act of being born, showing men and women their most profound dignity: that of being children of God. Humanity's dream which began in the Garden of Eden – we want to be like God – is realised in an unexpected way, not through the greatness of man, who cannot make himself God, but through the humility of God Who came down among us in His humility, raising us to the true greatness of His being.'"

