

Reflection for Saturday 12 December

For a number of people prayer is all about praying for themselves: their needs, desires, their worries and troubles. For a number of others prayer is about praying for people in their needs: illness, personal problems and concerns.

But the highest form of prayer is adoration and praise of God because then we are then totally focusing on him and we are forgetting self and all else. What better form of adoration is the Gloria: “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.” After we’ve heard the Gospel read at Mass, after hearing Jesus speak to us, we make the acclamation “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.” That is praise indeed: praise for what Jesus has just told us in the Gospel reading. One way we can offer adoration and praise to God is by reading the psalms. Have a look at the last three psalms in the psalter, 148, 149 and 150. The last psalm ends in praise and thanksgiving to God for all that he and has done for us; “Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord.”

Thanksgiving and praise are difficult sometimes when we are down and feel we have little to be thankful for to God. But if we rise above our own feelings and needs and give to God what is his, then surely this says something about our faith in him. Our faith in a loving God grows stronger if we trust that he will answer our prayers made in his name when we are down and sees us through the rough patches in our lives.

Prayers of thanksgiving and praise made to God help us. Through them God somehow gives us confidence to carry on, knowing that he wants the best for us and will answer our prayer and see us through difficult times. That was how Jesus prayed and his heavenly Father saw him through his Passion. It wasn’t easy for Jesus, but he continued with his Passion leading to his death because he knew that was what his Father wanted of him. Our Lord Jesus holds us and goes alongside us even though we don’t feel he is with us. Perhaps we’ve experienced this when we’ve come through our rough patch and we then have turned to him in thanksgiving and praise of him because he has carried us through that time.

Advent is a time in which we can review our prayer life and see if we are praising God in our prayers and making our requests to him in his name, as Jesus says that’s how we should pray. May this Advent be a time of blessing and going forth in faith, looking forward to meeting the Lord both in his birth and one day in his glory.

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