

Third Tuesday of Advent

December 18th, 2007

“For I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord; they shall do no wrong and utter no lies, nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths. Then they will pasture and lie down, and no one shall make them afraid.” (Zephaniah 3:12-13)

Those who have experienced it best understand humility! It often presents itself in an “Ah Ha” moment. Walking under the stars is a good way to get in touch with humility. As we scan the heavens and see the stars and the planets we get an inkling of the immensity of the universe. We look at the Milky Way and try to wrap our minds around the fact that it is made up of millions of stars that are so far out into space that we could never reach them in our lifetime even if we travel at the speed of light.

Look at our own spaceship, Earth. We would not exist without her. She has provided for our every need for a long, long time. To the question, “Who could survive without the other longer, the earth or the human?” the answer is obvious. We would cease to live without the earth but she would do quite nicely without us. In fact there is overwhelming evidence she would be a much healthier place without us.

Perhaps the greatest signs of true humility are the moments when we realize that we don’t have all the answers. When we accept the fact that some of our judgements about the “inferior” life forms around us, the plants, animals and other humans, are themselves incorrect, then we begin to understand humility.

The humble person is happy to claim that he or she is lowly. The humble person desires that God receive the glory for all the works that he or she accomplishes. Humble people don’t need to be deceitful to bolster their image in the world, and they are grateful for all the gifts that God has given them.

If we are not quite sure that we have achieved this level of humility then perhaps we need to get back out under the stars. Maybe we need to spend some quality time getting to know a plant or creature of the earth. Perhaps we need to make it a habit to see our neighbor as a beautiful expression of God’s creativity. And somewhere along the line when we reach a moment of awe, we will have reached the realm of humility.

Reflection Questions

- 1.) What does my pride keep me from experiencing?*
- 2.) Which gifts could I put to fuller use?*

Prayer: Lord, may I learn to be least in the kingdom so that I may be joyful.