



Reflection for the Fourth Sunday of Advent

Advent is drawing to a close. In this final week, our culture bombards us with the most hectic of preparations. The Gospels call us to stop! The most urgent preparations and expectations of this Liturgical season call us to find a way, in faith, to slow down, to be still, and to ponder the most wonderful gift of God's life—in us, for us, and through us! We, as Mary, must only say “yes” to grow that life within us.

The Gospel readings of this final week focus on Mary's “yes” and her preparation for bringing forth “the Son of the Most High”. Every “yes” to anything implies a “no” to other things. She had to say no to her prior life plans; she had to bear the judgment of others, and probably the loss of many relationships—those who could not believe in her call. She and Joseph had to rededicate themselves to the very different and unexpected facets of their relationship and life together as husband and wife, and as parents of the Savior of the world.

Mary's preparation was hectic as well: she hastened to her cousin Elizabeth; she hastened to Bethlehem to protect her unborn son. She endured rejection and a less than optimal birthing situation. And she rejoiced in God, her Savior!

We Sisters and Associates of Providence are blessed to have seen in Mother Marie, her “yes” to the will of God that was accompanied by rejection and broken relationships with her family and friends. Through her work with Bishop Ketteler, Christ was born in a Community of Providence!

“Yes ... I want in all earnestness ... with His great grace, which so visibly calls me to humility, and with His divine assistance, which is never denied us, to die to self and to grow in the love of God.” –Marie de la Roche

During this last week of Advent preparation, let us, together with Mary, allow Christ to penetrate our being, grow in the love of God, and through our life of faith, rejoice in our redemption.

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