

Weekly Devotions

December 3-8, 2018

Monday, December 3 -

Quote for the day:

“Sometimes we lack courage to do what we know what we have to do, but lack the courage to do it.”

Pope Francis

Read: Joshua 1.9

Ponder: Courage is defined differently depending on our circumstances. Courage calls us to be more than we think we can be; calling us to leave our comfort zone and stretch our limits. Courage does not mean the lack of fear; courage calls us to rise above it. For the sake of our wellbeing or the wellbeing of those whom we love, we can do things we never thought possible.

Challenge: There are times in each of our lives where we have been called to go above and beyond what we think is possible. What do you fear? How is the Holy One asking you to reach beyond the possible and dive into the impossibilities of life? What courage do you possess?

Tuesday, December 4-

Quote for the day:

“Mary’s greatness consists of the fact she wants to magnify God, not herself”

Pope Benedict XVI

Read: Luke 1.46-55

Ponder: The reading is known as *The Magnificat* or Mary’s response to her cousin, Elizabeth’s greeting. It speaks of raising the lowly, bring down unjust powers of this world, filling the hungry with good things. She speaks of a world that is yet to exist, but sees the Creator’s calling for a better world through her and us.

Challenge: Because of the current immigration issue that is prevalent in our news and at our border with Mexico, how do these worlds resonate today? The poor, the lowly, the hungry, the tired...what do we as Christians consider our duty or obligation to change that which does not reflect our values and hope for a better world?

Wednesday, December 5 -

Quote for the day:

“I believe that He was made man by joining the human nature with the divine in one person...conceived by the Holy Ghost and the blessed Virgin Mary.

John Wesley

Ponder: This quote is similar to what we find in our Articles of Religion/General Rules which guide the United Methodist Church. It seems straightforward enough.

Challenge: What does it mean for Mary to be considered a blessed Virgin? What does her virginity offer to the birth of Christ? What if she wasn’t a virgin?

Thursday, December 6 — Feast Day of St. Nicholas

Quote for the day:

“Holy Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art though among women, and blessed is the fruit of they womb Jesus.

Read: Luke 1.26-33

Ponder: The quote is a phrase used in the Rosary of the Roman Catholic Church. Many non-Catholics find the Rosary to be a foreign prayer or meditation. The wording has been lost in modern translation, but there are those who find comfort in the world Catholic or Protestant.

Challenge: Though you may find it unfamiliar to say the world of the Rosary, I encourage you to use them this day. It is not a prayer to the blessed Virgin, but a desire to have Mary intercede on your behalf. The fact remains that she is the mother of Jesus and the Queen of Heaven.

Friday, December 7—

Quote for the day:

“If I had been the Virgin Mary, I would have said ‘no’”

Margaret Smith

Read: Luke 1.24

Ponder: There are those who so desperately desire to have a child. There is a deep longing to bring new life into the world. Elizabeth was such a person. Ridiculed for being barren and feeling like she failed her husband. But there are those who have chosen not to have children and are also ridiculed for their decision. Is the worth of a woman based in her ability to bear a child?

Challenge: Some interpret the visit of the angel Gabriel to Mary in different ways. Some see Mary as having an active role in the decision-making process, while others see her as merely a vessel to give birth to a holy child. Pray for those this day who choose not to give birth and for those who long for a child. Pray for the children of our world who are in the foster care system or in detention cells waiting to be loved.

Saturday, December 8 -

Quote for the day:

“Mother love is the fuel that enables an ordinary human being to do the impossible.”

Marion Garretty

Read: Luke 2.29-35

Ponder: The reading includes what is known as The Benedictus. Simeon shares both good and bad news. The words spoken to Mary, while prophetic, must have pierced her soul right then. To be told your child is going to be the catalyst for change and upheaval would scare any parent.

Challenge: The love of a parent is unmatched. Many of us will know no greater human love. Because of that love, what were you able to accomplish? Because of your love, what have others been able to accomplish?