

Daily Disciplines

Devotion: Kneeling in Bethlehem

In each heart lies a Bethlehem,
an inn where we must ultimately answer
whether there is room or not.

When we are Bethlehem-bound
we experience our advent in his.

When we are Bethlehem-bound
we can no longer look the other way
conveniently not seeing stars
not hearing angel voices.

We can no longer excuse ourselves by busily
tending our sheep or our kingdoms.

This Advent, let us go to Bethlehem
and see this thing that the Lord has made known to us.

In the midst of shopping sprees
let's ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts.

Through the tinsel
let's look for the gold of the Christmas Star.

In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos,
let's listen for the brush of angels' wings.

This Advent, let's go to Bethlehem
and find our kneeling places.

--Ann Weems, *Kneeling in Bethlehem*

Journal Prompt: As you begin this season of Advent, take a moment to consider your kneeling places, as mentioned in the poem by Ann Weems. Journal about these places. What do they mean to you? How have they surprised you?

Prayer Prompt: Take time today for a short walk. Walk in silence. Consider the struggle to "see the stars" and "hear the angel voices" among us. As you walk, be in pray that this Advent season, you find peace and joy in the details of each day and find "the gold of the Christmas Star."

Lectio Divina: Practice lectio divina using:

Beloved, now is the acceptable time spoken of by the Spirit, the day of salvation, peace and reconciliation: the great season of Advent. This is the time eagerly awaited by the patriarchs, the prophets, the time that holy Simeon rejoiced to see. This is the season the church has always celebrated with special solemnity. We too should always observe it with faith and love, offering praise and thanksgiving to the Father for the mercy and love he has shown in this mystery.

--Charles Borromeo, Sixteenth century