

THE GLAD SEASON OF ADVENT

Preparing for Christmas

by Father Robert Pelton

In December we find ourselves in that strange Advent haste that many people call “the Christmas rush.” In our rush and haste we — society — become for a time more like a family than a socio-economic system, as we spend ourselves in a carefully plotted frenzy of shopping, cooking, card-writing, partying, and sometimes praying.

We realize that all of these December-Advent carryings-on are not cut from the same cloth; some are secular and some spiritual, some Christian, some neopagan. Yet we are getting ready for Christmas, for the coming of God in our human flesh.

If we look at the Mother of the Infant Christ, we see prayerful listening, quiet pondering on this Word of God who has taken her flesh and now fills her heart. Then why are we so busy? Why so much urgency that we are caught up and molded by it? But why not urgency? After all, God, not Santa Claus, is coming to town. He is coming as a baby.

Though at the first Christmas all creation was there with Joseph, the angels, the shepherds, the animals, and the star, it was a quiet affair, an intimate “concelebration” of the Blessed Trinity and Mary. Mary’s preparation had, in fact, been busy enough — jour-



Donna Surprenant

neying to her cousin Elizabeth and back, setting up house with a man whose faith was second only to hers, traveling again, her body heavy with the Child, all the way to Bethlehem.

But Christmas still wasn’t quite Christmas. It couldn’t be until that Child had grown and gone forth to create another sort of communion, first in the upper room with his disciples, then on the cross with his blood, and finally, raised up, glorified, enthroned, and empowered to send the Holy Spirit through his transformed flesh into ours.

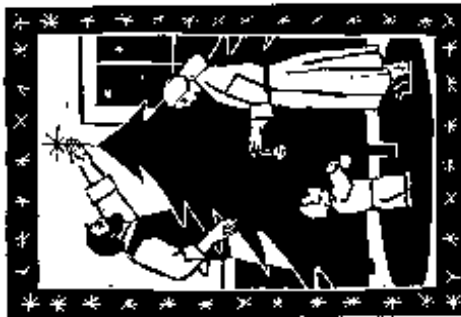
The Christmas that we are getting ready for couldn’t happen without the Church, and if we want to see the Church celebrating its first Christmas, we look to those gentle yet overwhelming meetings between the risen Christ and his friends, especially the meeting at Emmaus, where he opened the Scriptures to them, made himself known to them in the breaking of the bread, and filled their hearts with the same fire Moses had entered on Mount Sinai.

We look to children, who know how to hope for the fulfillment of a promise that thrills them just because it is bigger than anything they can understand or imagine. Then we find within ourselves the place that hopes to be unimaginably surprised.

THE GLAD SEASON
OF ADVENT
Preparing for Christmas

by Father Robert Pelton

Pass It On! #35



Please feel free to make copies
and pass them on!

Additional issues of Pass It On
can be found on the Internet at:
www.madonnahouse.org/publications



Madonna House Publications
www.madonnahouse.org/publications

Penny a copy — 1¢

Pass It On!

#35

Christmas is coming, and we are trying as fast as we can to get there. We are trying to remember the story and fill it with as much love as we can so that our children will understand it and love the Child who is welcoming them from his cradle with so much love. That Child has all the time in the world. For him all the time between his resurrection and his second coming — all of that “already but not yet” that we know so well — is for him time found.

For us it may still be loose change waiting to be added to the treasure of the Kingdom by faith and love, by odds and ends of days, years, lives, and especially by the “waste” of suffering, still needing to be immersed in the unending offering of Christ to the Father.

But in joyfully and humbly showing himself to us as the Child year after year, Jesus shows us that he has all the time in the world. What we’ve lost, he’s found, and

he is happy to wait for us to bring him the rest of what we’ve got so that he can share with us the banquet of all that he has — the everlasting banquet of love.

The whole human family is gathering around the manger. It’s a little crowded; there’s a bit of pushing and shoving, and some of the cousins are far from friendly. Many won’t arrive for quite some time. We need to show them what we’ve found here: the Child who takes whatever we have to offer and returns to us the gift of the Holy Trinity’s infinite love.

Adapted from the writings of Fr. Robert D. Pelton, priest of Madonna House. Available through Madonna House Publications.

Artwork by Donna Surprenant