



Daily Reflections

December 16, 2017

Scripture

Matthew 17: 9-13

As they were coming down from the mountain,
the disciples asked Jesus,
"Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"
He said in reply, "Elijah will indeed come and restore all things;
but I tell you that Elijah has already come,
and they did not recognize him but did to him whatever they pleased.
So also will the Son of Man suffer at their hands."
Then the disciples understood
that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

Our Scripture Reflection

One of the key reasons for the Advent season is to "Prepare the way for the Lord", and one important way to do that is to realize how crooked our ways have been. So many people say they want to follow Jesus but they do so on their terms. Advent calls us to honesty and humility. With the help of God's Grace may we be blessed with both.

Food for your Journey

In a national study of youth and religion funded by the Lilly Endowment, Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton bemoan the fact that adults in our culture have effectively communicated to children an ethic they call

“Moral Therapeutic Deism.” It comes down to something like this: “Be nice, don’t do bad, for a remote deity wants you to be happy and feel good about yourself.”

In other words, says Smith, “we have come with some confidence to believe that a significant part of ‘Christianity’ in the United States is actually only tenuously Christian in any sense that is seriously connected to the actual historical Christian tradition.”

— Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, I want to experience the joy that only You can give. As I prepare to celebrate Your birth, help me to make a straight path for You to enter my heart. Amen.