



Daily Reflections

December 15, 2018

Scripture

Matthew 17: 9, 10-13

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

To this day most Jews expect the return of the Prophet Elijah to usher in the Kingdom of God. Many who saw and heard John the Baptist thought that perhaps he was Elijah. After all, like Elijah he wore a camel hair shirt, lived an austere lifestyle and preached repentance. Jesus saw John as a "type" of Elijah, as a man directly in line with the message and mission of the great Prophet. Jesus then poses a question of sorts: Are you heeding the message of Elijah in the presence of John? The humble, the repentant do understand the message and respond to it accordingly.

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 God, You give me this holy season of Advent to “make a straight way” in my life so that I can be open and ready to receive You. Help me, Lord, in the midst of this busy time to work each day to change what needs to be changed. When Christmas comes, may my heart be ready to receive the joy that only You can give. Amen