
Go Easy On The Innkeeper

On one occasion, the Bulletin made some disparaging remarks about the innkeeper at Bethlehem, observing that for all eternity the fellow must be sitting in some quiet corner, regretting that he was so close to greatness, and yet, for lack of courtesy, was denied the blessed privilege of playing host to the Nativity of Christ. For all time, this nameless one will be remembered only for his rudeness. The observation was prompted by St. Luke's lines:

"And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."

We could be wrong about this, because there really isn't much evidence for our picturing him as a mean and nasty fellow who turned the Holy Family away from his door. Maybe he wasn't mean at all. Folks usually aren't that selfish.

Anyhow, we have no way of knowing for sure about the innkeeper; and as long as we don't know, we have a duty to think well of him. He's not around to defend himself, and there's an additional claim he has to our fair-minded consideration of the clouded matter. St. Luke doesn't say that Mary and Joseph were turned away. It might have been that the gentle couple saw the crowded neighborhood and made no further effort to secure accommodations, or even to consult the innkeeper.

And so the popular picture of this scurvy, inconsiderate manager, suspiciously opening a door, lighting a lantern, and rudely ordering Joseph and Mary to begone, is not really drawn from the Gospel account. For all we know, he might have been the soul of hospitality. And had he seen Mary, and perceived her condition, would have insisted upon turning over his own quarters to the travellers. He might have been one of the most admirable fellows who ever lived!

More To The Point

And so, you might, with much better results, take your mind off the innkeeper and his part in the Christmas story, and dwell for a moment on your part in the Christmas vacation activities. Was your own conduct above reproach?

In this year of Our Lord, you should have been pretty well informed on the whole idea --informed as to the feast, and the principal characters involved, the meaning of Christmas, and your obligations as a student of this school of Our Lady.

Hence, it is presumed that you got to Mass on time; that you received Communion with fervor; that you were a source of edification to your family, and to your companions who have learned to expect much of Notre Dame men; that you remembered New Year's was a holy day of obligation, and also the First Friday of the month; and that you avoided the excesses of the pagan world about you.

After all, you knew about the Child, His teachings, His laws -- whereas the poor innkeeper had no idea at all of what was expected of him regarding Our Lord and His teachings. It could be that some of you are far worse off than the innkeeper. It could be that your most urgent need at the moment is a trip to the confessional !!

Tonight -- Start off this Marian Year with the Novena to the Sorrowful Mother at 6:45 in Sacred Heart Church. There is a Plenary Indulgence to be gained each week from this devotion. Where will you ever again have it so good! Surely there is something you need; someone to pray for! Here's a perfect devotion for the Marian Year.