

TRUTHS THAT ARE OVERLOOKED

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In the midst of all the lavish profusions of Christmas festivities and the glitter of the cribs, there are certain characters that are often, deliberately or otherwise, overlooked. The donkey, the calves and the shepherds are just a few of such neglected, sidelined characters. May be because of this, with the advancement of time, only Joseph, Mary and Jesus are shown on the greeting cards and in the cribs. But we should think how deep the spiritual thoughts those characters that are overlooked ungraciously are capable of engendering in us.

On this Christmas let us meditate upon the shepherds. Like an act of benevolence, the greatest virtue that has been handed down the generations is implied in the very words of the shepherds. **“Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us”** (Lk (2:15)).

They had the inclination and desire to find out the truth by seeing it. Won't that be, perhaps, the greatest virtue that God saw in them? The life of Moses, who was the shepherd of the Old Testament, is relevant here. The angel of the Lord appears to Moses as a haven of solace as he came to the Horeb Mountain. When Moses saw the flaming fire in

the bush, he says, **“I must turn aside and look at this great sight”** (Ex 3:3).

Do you have the desire to see the Savior and taste the elixir of salvation amidst the intoxication of your festivities? Or are you like the murmuring Pharisees who fill to see the truth and go on complaining and making charges? Don't forget that this is a divine opportunity in which you have to make an honest assessment of your life.

There are any number of modern Herods, who, without any desire to know the truth, deliberately misunderstand things and falsely accuse others, in the families as well as in the society. We have to accept an attitude of humility and submission like that of the shepherds and the Magi, the Wise Men from the East, by abandoning our rambling reasoning and stubborn syllogism.

Very often we are fond of making open comments about others who are around us. But are these comments the outcome of our convictions or When we make detrimental, adverse or hostile comments about other persons or institutions, we must ask ourselves this fundamental question, “Do we have the genuine desire to know the truth? Or are we the willing partners in besmearing the reputation of others because of the venomous thoughts engendered in us through prejudices, predilections and partialities?”

There were people who had made their hearts hard by pernicious thoughts when Christ was born and also during

the course of his life on this earth. “Isn’t he the son of that carpenter?” “Can any good come out of Nazareth?” Remember, we can’t measure or grasp the plan of God and His decisions by using our human wisdom or intelligence. When Nazareth, the stable, the empty stone jars and so on become the miraculous mines of divine blessings, if you have at least the desire to see them, the Savior and the salvation will become yours. When we ridicule and write off people like Zacchaeus with pejorative epithets like avaricious taxman and sinner, we shouldn’t forget that there was some virtue in him that God loved. The Word says, **“He was trying to see who Jesus was” (Lk 19:3)**. He behaved like a curious child to see Jesus. So salvation came to him.

Does the Pilate who accuses Jesus without desiring to know the truth, or the Herod, who unwilling to accept and absorb the truth? Let those people, who, instead of trying to know the truth, cast aspersions and sling mud on the retreat centers, retreat preachers and spiritual services, take this as an opportunity to come to the shade of the Church.