

“Magnificent” December Four Minute Retreat on the Birth of Jesus

Doug Leonhardt, S.J.

Introduction

Many years ago, a Jesuit by the name of Mike Moynahan wrote a poetic reflection about the ninety-mile journey of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem and their attempt to find lodging. He described their third attempt to find a place to stay: “The third stop looked like a distant bleak relation to the previous two until the owner’s wife spies the young girl wince from movement she understood too well. ‘You can have the place out back. It isn’t much but it will be a roof over your heads. There is fresh hay thrown. The animals won’t bother you and the child will be warm. I will get some rags and water. Go on now, the mother and the baby are waiting.’ Silently the young girl’s face proclaims, ‘Magnificent!’”

Scripture

And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea to the city of David to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came to have her child, and she gave birth to her first-born son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2.4-7

For Reflection

- 1) St. Ignatius suggests when we reflect on the birth of Jesus that we imagine ourselves in the stable with Mary, Joseph, and their newborn. What do we see, what do we hear, what do we smell, what do we feel, what do we do?
- 2) Christmas celebrates the “Word, Son of God, becoming flesh,” human like us. How do we put Christ back into Christmas in our lives and families rather than succumb to the “holiday spirit”?

Action

Listen to your favorite religious Christmas hymn and let the words and music touch your heart.