
Thoughts

'An Advent Song of Ascents: Pathways to the Manger'

::: ONE :::

Now that you've let us see and hear the story of Jesus' birth, I'll add a little 'pling' - like in the movies when you see a star twinkling and then it goes 'pling'....

You have just showed us how many people took a pathway to the manger... First Mary and Joseph, a donkey, then the shepherds, and the wise men from the East.

They all did not really know, what to expect at the end of their pathway...

What do you expect...?

::: TWO :::

Here is a little story by Olaiya Muiyiwa Benralph from Nigeria¹:

"When I was young, I had a great fear of darkness."

One night the electricity went off. Darkness quickly enveloped my room, and I felt something bad was closing in on me.

I screamed until my mother rushed to my rescue.

As soon as the light from her lantern shone in the room, the darkness disappeared!

Thinking about that night years later reminds me of how the whole world lay in darkness until God spoke the sun into being.

I think also of how the coming of Jesus Christ as the true Light dispelled the darkness in the world and illuminated the path for humankind.

Finally, thinking of that night reminds me of a cold manger in Bethlehem where the Holy Child was born.

That night marks the point at which God shined a divine light into the world and dispelled the power of evil.

Remembering my experience with darkness as a child helps me understand Christmas better.

Christmas is the time when God's light through Christ breaks the hold of [darkness] in the world."

::: THREE :::

Now, don't tell me that you are not afraid of darkness. Not only children are afraid of the darkness...

It may not be the darkness at night.

It may be the darkness of loneliness at night, or in the days.

It may be the darkness of feeling trapped with no way out—without hope to go on.

It may be the darkness you face confronted with someone who always bullies you.

It may be the darkness of an unknown future, but expected to be ominous.

But I tell you: Take your own pathway to the manger, this year, this Christmas.

Yes, there's a little one lying there—only a little light. But this little one, this newborn became the greatest hope, the first born to eternal life.

The eyes of the little one are glancing at you and tell you: I will be the light in your darkness. And in me you will find hope.

Take your own pathway to the manger, this year, this Christmas, and there you can find hope, and light to dispel your darkness.

::: Amen