

From the Desk of Miss Wilber

December 4, 2020

“Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing.” - Oscar Wilde

This quote was written in 1890, over a hundred years ago, in the book *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which was the summer reading for our high school students. I had the pleasure of listening to this book on tape over the past week, and it has definitely inspired me to ponder many aspects of life and morality. This quote alone shows its lasting relevance for us.

Today we did our first exchange of Advent Angel gifts, and some of the students were discussing how we are supposed to remove price tags when we give gifts. They realized the focus should be on the gift itself not on how much was spent on it. Unfortunately, price tags often color our perception of the value of a gift. Taking off the cost label allows us to focus on the more meaningful attributes of the gift, the attributes that show that someone thought of you and gave a gift they thought would make you really happy.

Advent is one of my favorite times of the year. I enjoy the feeling of a new beginning, of preparation and expectation for the joy of Christmas, the giving of gifts and sharing with those most in need, the emphasis on kindness and generosity throughout the community, pulling out scarves and mittens to keep us warm, sweet hot drinks, and planning extra time with family and friends. Much of that looks different this year, but the spirit of the season remains. We are all finding new ways to celebrate and live out the hope, peace, and joy that this season symbolizes.

It can be so easy to get caught up in the busyness and consumerism that have become associated with this holy season. We often forget the reason we give gifts at Christmas, the meaning of these weeks of preparation, and what aspects of these days hold true value. It is so important to make time to slow down, to pray, to reflect, and to love one another. These days of waiting for Christmas remind us of how the people of Israel waited for the Messiah to come.

Unlike them, we know what we are awaiting. We know there will be gifts to open on Christmas morning, and that these gifts represent God’s perfect gift on that most holy of days. Jesus fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament. He is the long-expected Messiah, the Son of God, the King of Israel. He is Emmanuel, God With Us. Oh, the humility of God to come to us, born of woman, as an infant, in a cave, lain in a feeding trough! How He must love us!

I pray that these weeks of Advent, of preparing for the coming of Christ, not only prepare our hearts to experience the true meaning of Christmas when that day arrives, but that it will also prepare our hearts for when Jesus comes again. For like the people of Israel over 2000 years ago, we do not know the day nor the hour when the Son of Man will come. May God find us awake and ready to welcome Him and follow Him on that day.

Sincerely,
Miss Wilber