



Seeking with the Shepherds

Experiencing Divine Joy

Shepherds... what an unlikely group to be the first to see and testify to the most important moment in human history. Can you imagine how Mary might have felt when they drew near? She would have understood who they were socially and religiously, but here she was, giving birth in a manger. Yet, she, the shepherds, and all who listened to them were left experiencing the divine joy that entered into our world through Jesus. In the shepherds seeking, we see that Jesus is the humble savior for all men.

GETTING STARTED – Discuss the following questions –

- How would you define joy?
 - We defined it as **confidence and contentment that everything is going to be OK.**
 - The experience of deliverance and the anticipation of salvation.
 - What part of this definition do you like? Or, how would you change it?
- What have been some experiences in your life that have reaffirmed your confidence in God to take care of you?

IN THE SCRIPTURES – We see the joy of three groups in this story, Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, and those who heard the shepherd's testimony. Go back and read Luke 2:8-21 and consider how obedience leads to joy in the three groups' lives.

- Where do you see obedience happening in this passage? And what was being obeyed?

- How do you see joy being present in the passage?

PERSONAL APPS AND STEPS – Advent is about a joyful remembrance of God fulfilling his promises through Jesus and an expectant hope of Jesus' second coming. Consider the quote from Rich Villodas and reflect on how you will be present to the joy afforded to you in the remainder of the Advent season.

“What if at the end of history, the question God asks us is not whether we abstained from sin. What is the question is, “Did you enter into the joy that was available to you?”

