

# No place for them in the inn.

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*(Luke 2:7) And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.*

In the liturgical tradition, we are in the season of Advent. Advent is a strange season. It is the first season of the church year and it precedes the celebration of the birth of Jesus. That's not what is strange about this season. The strange thing about Advent is that it is a season of preparation of both the past coming of Jesus and at the same time the last coming of Jesus. At a time when most of the world, Christian and non-Christian are celebrating or getting ready to celebrate, the season of Advent is one of contemplation. In many respects it is countercultural to our society.

We are too busy to be contemplative, too busy to stop and think. If we do have any time we dedicate it to the celebration of Christ's birth, to lights and trees, of cookies and cakes, of gifts. We have no time to think about what his birth means or prepare for his last coming. In our society we not only dedicate all of our resources to the celebration but we over extend ourselves.

When Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem there was no place for Jesus to be born. Should we be critical of those who turned them away? As I have read the accounts I have never had the feeling that they were turned away due to prejudice or malice. It seems that Joseph and Mary were turned away because there really was no room. There was no room for the rich or poor or pregnant women.

The inn keeper's accommodations were full or over extended. There was no room. They could do nothing for anyone who was in need not even the savior of the world.

As we travel through this Advent season I am not saying to do away with the celebration. That would be crazy. I am asking if there could be a time for contemplation. Is there anything left in our resources for the poor? Is there a place for Jesus? If Jesus came today would we have to say that we would really like to help, but we can't we are over committed as it is? Would we say There is no place in our inn.

*Pastor Arthur Sharot*