

Reflection Friday Week 31 - 2020

Astuteness. We need to be astute. What does that mean for us today? Astute means having keen penetration or discernment; being sagacious; clever; cunning; ingenious and shrewd. All of us want these qualities. Something to help:

That which the sober man keeps in his breast, the drunken man lets out at the lips. Astute people, when they want to ascertain a man's true character, make him drunk. (Martin Luther)

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God' suggested to me a heavenly welfare program for the meek. Today that saying reveals an astute insight into egotism, about how those with swollen pride or vanity cannot see anything larger than themselves. (Huston Smith)

Perhaps I can say that I am a bit astute, that I can adapt to circumstances, but it is also true that I am a bit naive. Yes, but the best summary, the one that comes more from the inside and I feel most true is this: I am a sinner whom the Lord has looked upon. (Pope Francis)

Let us listen to St John Henry Newman once again and reap the benefits of his astute insights:

"God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments.

Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me. Still, He knows what He is about."

- Once, when walking the grounds of Balmoral with her protection officer, Queen Elizabeth II ran into some American tourists. They obviously didn't recognise her: *"Have you ever met the Queen?"* they asked. *"No,"* she responded, and then pointed at her protection officer. *"But he has."*
- When visiting New Zealand in 1986, the Queen and Prince Philip were pelted with eggs thrown by protestors. Later, at a state banquet, she remarked: *"New Zealand has long been renowned for its dairy produce, though I should say that I myself prefer my New Zealand eggs for breakfast."*