

Reflection Thursday 4th Week Advent 22 December 2022

“O King of the peoples, whom they long for, the cornerstone, who make the two into one: come and save us, whom you made from clay.”

In this penultimate antiphon two new images appear. Jesus is now no longer the king just of Israel, but of all the peoples, who long to be united under his kingship. He is like the stone at the corner of two walls, which have come to know as the keystone which stops the two sides of an arch from collapsing inwards. These inanimate, even mineral images are appropriate because after all we ourselves are minerals given life by God. As Genesis says, *“The Lord God fashioned man of dust from the soil. He breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living being.”* And Isaiah adds, *“We are the clay, you the potter, we are all the work of your hand.”*

Adrian Nugent OSB:

What Christmas renders present is the starting point of our salvation; it is ordered toward our redemption, which it already contains. The introduction of the crèche and all the Christmas folklore has been a good thing, and neither can nor should be simply rejected. The birth of Christ destroys the effects of death, and causes new life to be reborn in us, we are regenerated by Christ's coming as man. This new life consists in our sharing the divine nature. St. Leo bids us thank God through his Son, in the Holy Spirit, because *‘in his loving mercy he took pity on us, and when we were dead because of sin, he gave us life with Christ so that in Christ we might be a new creation, a new work of his hands.’* He then utters the well-known exclamation: *‘Christian, recognize your true dignity, and now that you have become a sharer in the divine nature, do not return to your earlier degradation through evil ways.’*