

PONDERING VS PANDERING

*Mary "treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart."
(Luke 2:19)*

REFLECTION

Mary was a contemplative person. Her two contemplative ponderings can be found in the Gospel of Luke. First, when the shepherds related to Mary the angels' proclamation that the baby she had given birth is the Saviour of the world, she "treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Lk.2:19). Second, when Jesus went missing Mary had to deal with her own desperation and later, an unusual reply from Jesus - "Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" Once again Mary "treasured all these things in her heart" (Lk.2:51).

Contemplative ponderings allowed Mary to grow in stillness and deep reflection. Mary was "greatly troubled" (Luke 1:29) when the angel Gabriel visited her to tell her that she would conceive and give birth to the Son of the Most High through the work of the Holy Spirit. But her contemplative nature allowed her to be still before the angelic presence and respond in faith in her heart without pandering to doubt and disbelief.

Regular contemplation and treasuring up God's movements in our hearts is part and parcel of Christian discipleship. Contemplation involves the constant practice of stillness and silence before God and re-submit ourselves to His sovereignty. We live in an age of digital communication and entertainment, connected to it 24/7 and these means of IT often distract us and dethrone the significance of God and His Word in our lives. As we continue on in this path, we would end up devaluing service and devotion to God.

As you begin this New Year in 2021 You may have a lot of things lined up - some are important and essential while others may be just distraction and waste of time. Do consider how the exercise of timely contemplation can help you focus on God and respond to situations wisely and in faith rather than pandering to things that are unhelpful so that you may have a fruitful year ahead.

PRAYER

Father God, lead us to meaningful and empowering moments in stillness and silence in Your presence. Stir within us to contemplative ponderings over Your truth that will build us up in simple faith and trust so that we will not

pander to doubt and disbelief in times of anguish and struggle. Amen.

SUPPLICATION

- Thank God for technology that allows us to worship online in such challenging times. Thank God for digital connections via Zoom and other internet platforms that grant us face-to-face engagements and interactions with families and friends as well as in church services and meetings. Pray that we would have heart-to-heart connections through these digital platforms. As we begin to have live or recorded streamed services which are heavily dependent on technology and staged settings, pray that we will not be distracted from the power and presence of God. Pray that we may not attend church as consumers of worship that pander to performance-oriented focus, but as true worshippers who ponder on God's worthiness and majesty.
- Thank God for new initiatives such as Food Bank Vending Machines in providing needy families living in rental flats to access free food from vending machines using stored value cards. Thank God for food security and availability for the poor and hungry. Pray for no one to be left out in food distribution and that no one will starve in nation.
- Thank God for opportunities where families could return home to their loved ones to celebrate Christmas and the New Year during this festive season. Pray for strong ties of love and fruitful bonding time where tight knit families and loving relationships may blossom and be nurtured. Pray also for those coming home from overseas who have to serve SHN that they may not catch or spread any COVID infection.

"All people will fear; they will proclaim the works of God and ponder what he has done." (Psalm 64:9)

If you need any prayer or pastoral care support, kindly contact the pastoral care team via:

Email: wecare@brmc.org.sg

Contact: 6592 4011 or 6592 4012