

December 29th A.D. 2013
The First Sunday After Christmas

Meditation

The Gospel Account for Christmas Day; St. Luke, Chapter II, Verses 1 - 14

(1928 Book of Common Prayer, Pages 98 - 99)
(People's Anglican Missal, Page A -19)



“Shepherds” by Peter Nicholas Bircham

*The Son of God, born before all the ages, becomes Man as He is born in a stable of Blessed Mary, His Virgin Mother.
Angels announce His birth to shepherds who hasten to adore Him.*

2.)

GOOD NEWS

It must have been a bit of a temptation for Our Lord, as the Son of Almighty God, the Creator and Maintainer of all things, to have considered, if only for a moment...a dramatic birth. Here, if ever...it was necessary to be *simple and open* – just as Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds were. He knew it could be no other way.

There was a cave in a hillside that had been used as a barn. It was the only place for two weary travelers who had been turned away from the crowded inns of the town. A man and his wife are there resting up from their long journey. They are also waiting, as the birth of their first-born is nigh. For nine months, the Woman has been carrying a King in her womb. How she has longed to see and to hold her Child! Suddenly, the Child is born...a Child not of the world, but finally in the world...for the sole purpose of *saving the world*. With infinite love and gratitude the Woman takes her new-born into her arms and wraps the child up and lays Him in a nest of straw in the manger. Then, she and Joseph look at their new-born Son, they admire Him, they love and adore Him. Perhaps we can dare to imagine that the babe responds with a little smile of loving approval to His parents.

Outside the cave, on the nearby hills, are some shepherds with their sheep. The shepherds watch the sheep as they watch the stars. These simple men who are well acquainted with the ways of nature, and know the stories that the stars tell through the various constellations. Perhaps, as their thoughts wander, they think about the promise of a Messiah which it seems is as old as these constellations themselves. "*Maranatha!*"... *Come Lord!* They may even be praying. However, they do not expect to see anything out of the ordinary here in these hills. Nothing ever happens out there in the country. That's what they think. They are wrong in this instance. Angels don't just appear on hillsides ordinarily...but this is not an ordinary night. It is not like any night that has come before...or will come after. It is a singular and distinct night in the history of all the world. First, one Angel appears and speaks to them: "*Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy...for today has been born to you a Savior who is Christ the Lord.*" Then, a multitude of angels appear; and they sing, "*Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*"

The shepherds, once they get over the astonishment of what they have just witnessed, don't waste any time. They hurry to the cave where the child is. They enter and with the greatest humility look at this child with the love and admiration that simple and honest men possess. The Child is surrounded with the love of angels, of men, and of animals... of all creation. Lord Jesus, O royal Child, let us add our love to theirs!



3.)

THY GREAT GLORY

Why do You do it, O Lord, Jesus? You who are the Lord God, why do You choose to come as an infant? Babies are lovable, of course, and You want to be loved. There is nothing You and Your Heavenly Father want more than our undivided and complete love, is there? But, more is wanted than this yearly passing of a stirring-up of our emotions. Humans are emotional creatures, so there is always an over-supply of that sort of thing. Jesus, You want to be loved, in fact and in truth, so that we will freely give ourselves and our lives to You and Your transforming power all through the year.

Perhaps You came as a child because You want us to *be* children. This is what Christianity means. To be a Christian means to be a child; *to be like You, to be one with You*. Later on, when you grow up, You will tell us: “*Amen, I say to you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a child, shall not enter into it.*” (*St. Luke, Ch 18, Vs 17.*) How could You ever make such a demand on us unless You are first a child Yourself ?

In His becoming a child, Jesus shows us what we must always be: full of trust, full of love for Him and of His Father, full of abandonment into His hands. This is the feast of our Lord's birth. It is also the feast of the Father's love for humanity. The child-likeness of Christ is His response to the Father's love...His life, not just in the cave-barn at Bethlehem, but all the way through to the very end. So it must be ours. And so it *is*, by the grace of this feast, and the means to be a child which Christ will give unto us in proportion to our love and our desire.

So now if we are all children, and if we possess the grace of child-likeness, then we have a right to a child's joyful enthusiasm. So here it goes;

“ *Glory be to God in the highest...we praise Thee, we bless Thee, we adore Thee, we glorify Thee. We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory !* “



Prayer for the Day: *Today A Savior Has Been Born to You Who is Christ the Lord !*

4.)

A short Prayer for the Week

This hath I done for thee...What hast thou done for Me ?

- - - - -

What is man, that Thou art mindful of him ? And the son of man that Thou visitest him ? - - - Psalm 8



The Dying Year

“ It were better that we were not at all, than that we should live still in wickedness.”

A Prayer at the End of the Year

We have followed too much the devices and the desires of our own hearts. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us. But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us! Forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please Thee in the newness of life !

5.)

**Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory
4 Shaw Road
Raymond, Maine 04071**

**PLEASE NOTE: PUBLIC SUNDAY MASSES WILL RESUME IN THE SPRING.
CONVENTUAL MASSES ONLY FOR THE WINTER.**

KALENDAR

Holy days and Saints days for the week of December 29th to January 5th, A.D. 2013 / 2014 as observed at the Priory.

Sunday, December 29th ... **The First Sunday After Christmas** ...*comm St. Thomas, of Canterbury, Bp & M.*
Monday, December 30th *In the Octaves.*
Tuesday, December 31st ...*St. Sylvester, Confessor & Pope.*
Wednesday, January 1st ... Circumcision of Christ & Octave Day of Christmas.*Secular New Year*
Thursday, January 2nd *Octave Day of St. Stephen, Protomartyr.*
Friday, January 3rd *Octave Day of St. John, Apostle*
Saturday, January 4th *Octave Day of The Holy Innocents, M.M.*
Sunday, January 5th **Vigil of the Epiphany of Our Lord***Comm. 2nd Sunday After Christmas.*

KEY: *Ab. = Abbot, Ap. = Apostle, Bp. = Bishop, C. or Conf. = Confessor,
Doct. = Doctor of the Church, M. = Monk, Myr. = Martyr, P= Priest Po. = Pope, Vir. = Virgin,*

Note: **May the New Year of 2014 bring you all Peace, Health, & a deeper relationship with Almighty God, His Son, Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Mother Mary, & All the Saints!**
May the souls of all the faithful departed of 2013 through the mercy of God rest in Peace. Amen.

MISCELLANEA:

SUBSCRIPTIONS; If you know of anyone who would like to be on our e-mailing list to receive this weekly offering, please either feel free to copy and pass this along to them, or have them send us their e-mail address and we will gladly add it to our mailing list.

CANDLE OFFERING: HELP! Our supply of altar candles is nearly exhausted. We would gratefully welcome all monetary offerings to help us replenish our supply in time for Candlemas (Feb. 2nd) ...the traditional date for the blessing of candles to be used in the new year. Please send your donations to our address: Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory, 4 Shaw Road, Raymond, Maine 04071 , marked "Candle Offering". If you would like to make your offering as a memorial, please include the name(s) of those you want remembered. Thank You !!!!!

THE ANIMALS: We are always looking for benefactors to help us with the upkeep of the animals in our care. We are grateful for our animal angels as are our animals. If you would like to help, or know of someone who would. please send your donation to the address above marked "For the animals"

