



Bringing Home the Word

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) December 25, 2016

Where We Come From

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

There has been a renewed interest in genealogy these days as many seek to understand who their ancestors were, where they came from, and whether or how they were successful. Websites make it easier than ever to track down our ancestry and answer the universal human question: “Where did I come from?”

Jewish and Christian tradition also values ancestors and highlights the roots of Jesus’ heritage. The Messiah was to come from the royal line of David, and

his roots reach all the way back to Abraham, the father of the Chosen People.

As we listen to each of the strange and unknown names of Jesus’ ancestry, consider that behind each person there is a story, a family, God’s action mingled with the person’s hopes and failures. Each individual life flows and unites into one strong tree. And God, in his providence, watches over each and every one, preparing for the person of his Son. Each individual, with his or her problems and gifts, commingle to form the long human lineage of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. Today we celebrate this plan reaching its culmination. Jesus Christ, our Savior, is born today in Bethlehem!

This protracted lineage invites us to look back and up: back on all the events that have filled the tapestry of our personal and family history, and up to see that through it all, God has brought us to know him and to accept his salvation. His providence works in and through it all to bring us to him. †

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 52:7–10

“Break out together in song,
O ruins of Jerusalem! For the
LORD has comforted his people.”

Hebrews 1:1–6

“In times past, God spoke...
to our ancestors through the
prophets; in these last days,
he spoke to us through a son.”

John 1:1–18

“He was in the beginning
with God. All things came
to be through him.

*“Each individual
is part of the long
lineage of Jesus.”*

A Word From Pope Francis

The grace which was revealed in our world is Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, true man and true God. He has entered our history; he has shared our journey. He came to free us from darkness and to grant us light. In him was revealed the grace, the mercy, and the tender love of the Father: Jesus is Love incarnate. He is not simply a teacher of wisdom, he is not an ideal for which we strive while knowing that we are hopelessly distant from it. He is the meaning of life and history, who has pitched his tent in our midst.

—Homily,
December 24, 2013
(Midnight Mass)



REFLECTION
QUESTIONS
QUESTIONS
REFLECTION

- How have my ancestors influenced my faith?
- What is one family Christmas tradition I can share this holiday?



The Joyful Mysteries

By Bishop Robert J. Morneau

Our faith life is one large system. To understand the mystery of the Nativity of the Lord, it is most helpful to understand other mysteries that shed light on the Christmas event. The devotion of the rosary is helpful here. The Nativity is one of five joyful mysteries of our faith, the other four being the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, and the Finding of Jesus in the Temple. Prior to his birth, Jesus is already

present in history, and subsequent to his birth we witness the action of grace in his years of growing up.

In the mystery of the Annunciation, we learn that God has a plan and that divine design involves Mary's cooperation. It was her "yes" that confirmed

the working of the Holy Spirit. The Annunciation tells us that God always takes the initiative in the events of salvation history. The Visitation introduces us to the person of John the Baptist, the one who would prepare the way of the Lord. Again, God involves Elizabeth in this divine scheme, and through her, Mary receives assurance that the child to be born of her is truly the Lord.

Through the mystery of the

Presentation in the Temple, the mission of Jesus begins to take on flesh. The elderly Simeon and Anna rejoice to encounter the one who is to be a light to all the nations. Jesus is born to scatter the darkness of sin and death. Now Simeon can die in peace. Finally we see Jesus beginning his teaching ministry. The scholars are amazed at his learning and interpretation of the word of God. But this mystery also foreshadows the suffering his mission involves. Jesus is found by his parents but only after three days of agonizing pain. Today a Savior is born unto us. To fully understand this joyful event, we must also understand the vocation of Mary and Elizabeth, Zechariah and John, Simeon and Anna. Every birth is part of a larger family system. †

Source: *Daybreaks*, © 2012 Liguori Publications

Heart of My Heart

By Mary Katharine Deeley

I remember the most beautiful birth announcement I ever saw. The picture on the front showed the mother and father's EKGs in red and blue. Superimposed on them was the baby's EKG in green. The caption simply read, "Heart of my heart." For those parents and that child, the phrase summed up the love, the hope, and the dream that this birth represented for all of them. It celebrated life passed on from parent to child, from this generation to the next.

I cannot help but think Mary and Joseph thought of Jesus as "heart of my heart," knowing he was that and so much

more. Perhaps they dreamed about what he would become, how he would fulfill his place in his Father's plan. Is it not this way for the Church—whose very hope is that the children of God will enter the world boldly, burning with the gifts they've been given and empowered by their living faith in the one whose voice they knew?

It is Christ, this child whose birth we celebrate, who brings us to the light of faith. Christ gives us a voice to follow and becomes the way by which we walk. Christ, the mother who gave him life, and the father who nurtured him, dare us to journey into the world with passion, courage, and hope. If we do it right, the world will see our hearts beat and know that God's heartbeat provides the foundation for our lives. †

Source: *Daybreaks*, © 2010 Liguori Publications



Lord, you are the living Word of God who came to dwell in the hearts of all people. Increase my desire and strengthen my will to know the word of God and to live it in my life.

—From *Joyful Meditations for Every Day of Advent and the 12 Days of Christmas*,

Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

December 26–31

Mon. St. Stephen:
Acts 6:8–10; 7:54–59 / Mt 10:17–22
Tue. St. John:
1 Jn 1:1–4 / Jn 20:1a and 2–8
Wed. Feast of the Holy Innocents:
1 Jn 1:5–2:2 / Mt 2:13–18

Thu. Octave of Christmas:
1 Jn 2:3–11 / Lk 2:22–35
Fri. The Holy Family: Sir 3:2–6, 12–14 or
Col 3:12–21 / Mt 2:13–15, 19–23
Sat. Octave of Christmas:
1 Jn 2:18–21 / Jn 1:1–18