

Unfolding the Word Advent

Opening Prayer

On the road to Emmaus, the disciples said,
' were not our hearts burning within us as he opened the
scriptures to us'.

Lord,
Open our minds to your gospel message,
Help us to listen to it more attentively,
Help us to understand it more clearly
Help us to live it more faithfully.
We ask this through Christ our Lord,
Amen



Text:

Matt 1:18-25; 2:1-15

Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:²³ "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife,²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Matthew 2:1-15

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,² asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage."³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him;⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared.⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and

search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was.¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.¹³ Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him."¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt,¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

Questions to consider:

1. We often forget that there are 2 annunciations of the birth of Jesus in the Gospels. This is the story of the annunciation to Joseph. What's the point of it and what does it say to us?
2. Matthew's Gospel tells the story of the wise men. What is its message for us today? They are foreigners, outsiders but they recognize who Jesus is when his own people do not.