



Daily Reflections

December 18, 2017

Scripture

Matthew 1: 18-25

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.

He had no relations with her until she bore a son,
and he named him Jesus.

Our Scripture Reflection

As early as the announcement of His birth we are told that the Baby is destined to suffer: "because He will save His people from their sins." Yes, even in the manger we get a glimpse of the cross. And what is our Christmas response supposed to be? What else but gratitude! Our Savior is born!

Food for your Journey

Carl B. Rife reminds us that "the gospels were written backwards. First, the disciples confronted the risen Christ. Then, they remembered Christ's passion and crucifixion. Next, they collected Jesus' teachings and stories about his healing ministry. And finally, they reached back into their distant memories to the story of Jesus' birth. The Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection were important to those early Christians. And only as they needed to go back to the beginnings of Jesus' life did the Christmas story come into being. Christmas was one of the last festivals of the church to be celebrated. It was the man Jesus with whom they were dealing: a man who called them to take up their crosses and follow him. The baby Jesus grew up."

--Carl B. Rife, Wheaton, Md

A Prayer from the Heart

Oh Come, Oh Come Emmanuel and fill the hearts of Your faithful people with gratitude and joy! Amen.