



# Daily Reflections

## December 28, 2018

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### Scripture

#### **Matthew 2: 13-28**

When the magi had departed, behold,  
the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said,  
"Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt,  
and stay there until I tell you.

Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him."

Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night  
and departed for Egypt.

He stayed there until the death of Herod,  
that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled,  
Out of Egypt I called my son.

When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the magi,  
he became furious.

He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity  
two years old and under,  
in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the magi.

Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jeremiah the prophet:

A voice was heard in Ramah,  
sobbing and loud lamentation;  
Rachel weeping for her children,  
and she would not be consoled,  
since they were no more.

# Our Scripture Reflection

What a horribly gory scene immediately after the joyful birth of Baby Jesus! Why did St. Matthew include this tradition? Because he wanted us to know that the cross will be a part of Jesus' life from the very beginning. Satan will use many characters, including King Herod, to work against Jesus and His Kingdom. But as we already know, He will be victorious over it all on Calvary.

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## Food for your Journey

Once there was a couple who had known each other as fellow church members for many years. Somewhere along the line, love blossomed and grew between them, and the whole church rejoiced when they announced their wedding plans.

A couple years later, the church rejoiced again when this couple announced they were pregnant. They had been older when they'd married, and had had difficulty conceiving. Finally, after fertility treatments, they learned they were expecting twins. That was a double joy, because the doctor told them that, because of their age, this was probably their only chance at having children of their own.

Sadly, the babies were born many weeks premature. Despite the doctors' best efforts, they lived only a few hours -- just long enough for the parents to hold them and bestow upon them the names they had chosen from the start: Abraham Joseph and Sarah Mary, names that, according to their faith, express the fulfillment of God's promise.

And so it happened that, when this couple should have been talking with their pastor about baptisms, they were talking with him about a funeral. Together the three of them planned the service, and when the question of music came up, the parents asked if someone could play the song, "What a Wonderful World." That struck the pastor as a bit unusual, but under the circumstances, of course he said yes.

The service was emotional for everyone. As the pastor pronounced the benediction at the end, he could see the grief reflected in every face. Then, as had been previously planned, someone punched a button on a CD player, and into the funeral home floated the gravelly voice of Louis Armstrong, singing "What a Wonderful World."

What happened next, no one expected. The husband rose to his feet and opened his arms. His wife stood, too, and drew herself close to him. And then, arm in arm, they danced.

The two of them danced a dance of life, clear across the floor of the funeral home for they knew, beyond a doubt, that, when suffering comes, the kingdom of heaven is near. They knew that life is sometimes ambiguous, filled with contradictions. They knew that sometimes things happen that no one can explain. Yet they also knew, the two of them, that nothing -- no heartache, no grief, no loss -- could ever separate them, nor their children, from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

What a wonderful world -- even with King Herod in it!

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## **A Prayer from the Heart**

Dear Jesus, From the earliest days of Your life on earth and to this very day, there were and are people opposed to You and Your Gospel. Lord, it makes no sense that so many would not embrace something so good. Help me to realize, Lord, that Your Father's plan included the cross. As You surrendered Your life to His will and protection, may I joyfully do the same. Amen