



Daily Reflections

January 1, 2021

Scripture

Luke 2:16-21

And they came with haste; and they found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. And seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this child. And all that heard, wondered; and at those things that were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God, for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. And after eight days were accomplished, that the child should be circumcised, his name was called JESUS, which was called by the angel, before he was conceived in the womb.

Our Scripture Reflection

Luke recounts the deeds of the shepherds in following through with action prompted by the angelic host. After going to the city and finding the child, the shepherds make their discovery widely known. Their act of proclamation is contrasted with Mary's own action of treasuring and pondering all of these things internally. The Greek word used for the content of what Mary treasures and ponders (*rhmata*) can be translated as "matters" or "things" (Luke 1:65; 2:51). The word is also rightly translated as "words". However, limiting the content of Mary's pondering to "words" alone may overlook the possibility that Mary is doing more than simply reflecting on the report of the shepherds. Rather, it seems likely that here, as in 2:51, Mary is being pictured as preserving all of her memories of Jesus' early life. It is no surprise that Mary may wish to remember with care the events surrounding Jesus' birth, especially as she discerns God's desires for her. It may be that in recounting this detail, Luke is suggesting to us that we would do well to do the same.

Food for your Journey

I was confined to bed rest during the last half of my pregnancy before my daughter, Kate, was born. ...

Because of my mandatory confinement to the bed or the couch, I was unable to do the usual baby shopping and preparations. I was also feeling quite sorry for myself and afraid that I wouldn't be able to give my daughter everything she'd need during her first few weeks. One Tuesday afternoon, I was complaining ... well, whining really ... about this. I was frustrated, and I wondered out loud how I'd get the highchair, baby carrier, bassinette, stroller, baby bathtub, etc. that we needed.

The wise woman visiting that afternoon, listened intently. When I finished, she very firmly and warmly asked, "Do you have a blanket?" I nodded.

"Do you have a drawer you can empty?" I looked at her quizzically. "Dear, if you have a blanket and a drawer, you have everything a newborn needs." In that moment I was transformed; instead of feeling sorry for myself and afraid I couldn't provide, I felt overwhelmed with gratitude for what I did have. ...

My daughter never slept in a drawer, and she had a lot more than a blanket. It's amazing how much more than enough we have, isn't it?

--Wendy Bailey, from "A Blanket and a Drawer," November 21, 2011 blog entry, Changing Church -- Changing World blog, <http://njregionalpresbyter.wordpress.com/2011/11/21/a-blanket-and-a-drawer>.

A Prayer from the Heart

Lord God, some of us are a little like the Shepherds;
Just carrying on with our jobs... despite the turbulence in the world scene.
Give us a message ... send us an angel
That will start us seeking a new way of life.
Lord God, others of us are like the Wise Men from the east;
We can see the need of some power to come and to give us direction;
But we don't know in which direction to go.
Give us the wisdom to see that it is not in physical power
that our salvation lies, but in love and humility.
We ask You to make us expectant, instead of planners.
We ask You to make us seekers, rather than know-it-alls.
We ask You for grace so that we are ready to receive.
We ask You for humility so that we are prepared to accept
Your way of doing things.
We ask You for faith, and faith is a gift, really to believe. Amen