

Christmas 2

Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Micah 4:1-5, 5:2-4

Second Lesson: Luke 2:1-20

Homily

In this season we have heard the wonderful story from St. Luke's Gospel many times indeed.

Its details are depicted all around us and repeated in a lot of the music we're hearing.

This is as it should be.

The sweet and beautiful story deserves to be repeated again and again.

We love the story, and well we should, but how often do we really think

about what it all means,

and how our lives should be changed by it?

Today's Old Testament lesson was probably chosen for this verse:

*"... thou, Bethlehem Ephratah,
though thou be little
among the thousands of Judah,
yet out of thee shall he come forth ...*

It ties in so neatly with the Gospel reading, with the wonderful events in Bethlehem, that we're tempted to bring yet another retelling of that Christmas story.

That would be a good thing, but it is also good sometimes

to take another tack

and think about somewhat different matters, about some of the implications

of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem

to the blessed Virgin Mary.

Listen to what the prophet Micah had to say:

*"... in the last days it shall come to pass,
that the mountain of the house of the LORD
shall be established in the top of the mountains,
and it shall be exalted above the hills;
and people shall flow unto it.*

We've heard of a King who was born at Bethlehem.

We've heard of wise men that came a very long way

to pay Him honor.

We've developed customs, traditions, warm and happy celebrations

in honor of the event.

We tell each other all manner of pleasant stories

connected with our celebration.
 For many of us Christmas is filled with
 the happiest memories we possess.
 Perhaps that is all as it should be.

We are, after all, remembering
 one of the most momentous events
 in the whole history of the universe,
 the coming of God to dwell in the midst
 of His own creation.

But how often do we give deep and strong thought
 to the reason for which He came?
 We love the old stories, and songs,
 we celebrate with our families,
 and it's a warm and wonderful time,
 but why are we doing it?
 Why did He come?
 Why does he keep on coming,
 Eucharist after Eucharist in our midst?

Here's what Micah had to say about that:

*And many nations shall come, and say,
 Come, and let us go up
 to the mountain of the LORD,
 and to the house of the God of Jacob;
 and he will teach us of his ways,*

and we will walk in his paths:

Certainly He had a chosen people,
 a single nation raised up to be His very own.
 Just as certainly He has a chosen people today,
 as St. Peter wrote:

*“Ye are a chosen generation,
 a royal priesthood, an holy nation,
 a peculiar people. ...”*

and so we are, but why? St. Peter continued:

*“... that ye should show forth the praises
 of him who hath called you ...”*

and, as Micah continued:

*“... the law shall go forth of Zion,
 and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”*

And how is His word to be brought to the nations?
 The answer is simple:
 It's carried there by those who go forth from Zion,
 by us, weak and timid though we be.

We have been called.
 We have seen the Lord, and been fed at His Table..

We have heard His Word.

We have been entrusted with precious seed.

Are there those who do not believe?

Are there those in danger of everlasting Hell?

Are there those who need to know Jesus?

Do we know some of them personally?

Are we sharing the treasure we have been given?

Do we love our neighbors as ourselves?

Just a few days ago we celebrated His birth

We worshiped him in church.

We celebrated with our families.

There was joy.

There were gifts.

We received gifts from loved ones,
just as we received the greatest Gift
from God Himself,

and we gave gifts, out of love.

That is part of our tradition for this day.

Have we been giving the only gift
that really matters for all eternity?

We heard again today the beloved story
of a mother and child in a stable,
of angels proclaiming the glory of God,
and of shepherds who heard and saw and ...

*“And the shepherds returned,
glorifying and praising God
for all the things that they had heard and seen,
as it was told unto them.”*

As Jesus said in another context:

“Go thou, and do likewise ...”

Let us pray.

O holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel! Amen.

Christmas 2

Morning Prayer B

First Lesson: Isa 49:8-13

Second Lesson: Col 2:6-17

Homily to be written

Christmas 2

Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Isa 63:7-16

Second Lesson: 2 Pet 1:1-12

Homily to be written

Christmas 2

Evening Prayer B

First Lesson: Job 28:12-28

Second Lesson: Matt 11:25-30

Homily to be written