

Gospel for 18 December: Jesus is the Saviour

Gospel during Advent for December 18, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 1:18-24*)

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying,

“Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel” (which means, God with us).

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

Commentary

Matthew describes for us how Jesus' birth took place. Right from the

beginning he wants to convey to the reader that Jesus was conceived in a miraculous way in Mary's womb without male intervention, by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Next he recounts the story of the events. "Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly."

Joseph wants to carry out God's will, which is why he is said to be just or righteous. He does not understand what is happening. And in order not to interfere with God's will he decides to step aside. But God has other plans, which he makes known through the angel, while Joseph is considering what to do.

One night an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and said: "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."

And then the angel gives him a command: “you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” Jesus’ name will describe his mission. Jesus is the Savior, the Messiah, the one who saves us from our sins. The angel also reminds him that everything that is taking place was already foretold in the Old Testament by the prophet Isaiah. When Joseph wakes up “he did what the angel of the Lord commanded him.”

Joseph is a man who is close to God because of his life of prayer. That is why he is able to realize that what the angel is telling him is God’s will. Through the angel’s words he discovers the path that God has prepared for him.

The same thing happens in our lives. Only through prayer can we discover what God’s will is for each of us. Only through prayer can we respond as

Mary and Joseph did to God's plan for us, saying "let it be done.'

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