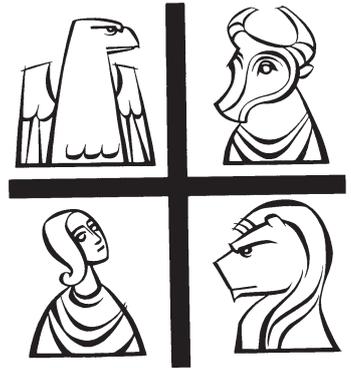


Reading Luke in Lent

Gospel of Luke 2:1-19



The Birth of Jesus Christ

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

² This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

⁵ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.

⁶ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

The Shepherds and the Angels

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.

¹⁰ And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

¹¹ And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.'

¹² And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!'

¹³ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.'

¹⁴ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

¹⁵ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.

¹⁶ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

¹⁷ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

Reflection

Just as in Chapter 1 Luke compared Jesus with John the Baptist, in Chapter 2 he compares Jesus with Caesar Augustus. What sort of king is Jesus? Luke emphasises his links with David. Not David the warrior but the shepherd boy (Bethlehem is where Samuel discovers him). It is to shepherds that the angels appear to announce Jesus' birth — good news for all people. The passage with Mary treasuring all that she has seen and heard and pondering them in her heart.

- Which phrase in this passage do you treasure? Take time to ponder it in your heart over the coming days.

Prayer

Good and gracious God,
on this holy night you gave us your Son,
the Lord of the universe, wrapped in swaddling clothes,
the Saviour of all, lying in a manger.

On this holy night
draw us into the mystery of your love.
Join our voices with the heavenly host,
that we may sing your glory on high.
Give us a place among the shepherds,
that we may find the one for whom we have waited,

Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
in the splendour of eternal light,
God for ever and ever.

Amen.