

TWO REFLECTIONS FOR CHRISTMASTIDE

Almost two thousand years ago, a family we have come to call holy, began their life together. It started with a crisis, a pregnancy that had not been planned and a confused young groom considering a quiet divorce. Soon there was another problem, an unexpected trip at the worst of all possible times. All the carefully made plans suddenly changed, there was an uncomfortable journey and a lonely birth.

The difficulties must have seemed endless to this young couple; frightening threats on their child's life, moving without a moment's notice and then moving again just when things seemed to be settling down. Later, there was an adolescent crisis: the teenager who wandered off, at first frightening his parents with his unexplained absence, then bewildering them with his plans for the future.

Eventually, death touched their lives. At some point, Joseph died, leaving Mary a widow, a parent alone with all the heartache and emptiness that follows death. The child, the searching adolescent had become an adult. He was different, not accepted. The neighbours didn't like his lifestyle. The religious folk disapproved of the company he kept. Their leaders grew to hate him. Finally, they had him killed. The family unit was gone now, only the widow was left. She grew old alone.

Mary and Joseph were a family much like any of our families today. They knew fear, loneliness, confusion, disagreement and disappointment. We might spiritualize the full and painful impact of the problems they faced by believing that they had direct access to solutions through angels and dreams. The fact is that they were close to God. A God who spoke to them through the persons and events of their lives. But our families today have the same access to the same God. The God who led them out of crisis beckons us also.'

(Sr. Fran Ferder - adapted)

Song of the Angels

*When the song of the angels is stilled.
When the star in the sky is gone.
When the kings and princes are home.
When the shepherds are back with their flocks.
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost.
To heal the broken.
To feed the hungry.
To rebuild the nations.
To bring peace among people.
To make music in the heart.*

(Howard Thurman)