

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Sep 8th 2015

Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

When I first read the long form of today's Gospel and its long list of genealogy, my head was reeling. What in that long list of genealogy of names speaks to me? But all of those names lead to Mary and Joseph and the son of God made man. Today is the Nativity of Mary, but Joseph, unassuming Joseph, is the story. I confess that I always imagine him as the figure from the Nativity set that held a place of honor on my family's mantel every Christmas. As a child, I loved placing the little figures around the manger along with the sheep, the cow and the donkey with part of one leg missing. I always imagine him as a quiet man, sawing and hammering and working carefully with wood to build things. Patient. Steadfast. The person you can depend on. Someone who makes the best of a situation. The person you want in your family. In the Gospel, we learn that Joseph was going to do the right thing, quietly when he learned Mary was with child before they lived together. An angel delivers the news that this is the one who will save people from their sins, saying don't be afraid. That's tough advice. We are often afraid of what we don't know, what we don't understand. The depth of Joseph's faith, his steadfastness and courage come through. He did the right thing.

We all need to be more like Joseph in our families and in our lives. We should try to be that person who is patient in the face of frustration and problems. We should try to be steadfast, to sing of the Lord as in today's Psalm: "He has been good to me" even when life is not going as we have planned. We know the right thing to do, but sometimes we are swayed off that path. We each have a long line of family ties and circles of friends who help form us everyday. But it is up to us to continually build our lives and our relationship with God, to work at becoming the people we are born to be in the love of God. It takes a lot of hammering and sawing. Be patient. Be steadfast.

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