

Happy New Year 2020 Every Grace, Blessing and Best Wish

The Gospel from the Mass today....

The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and found the baby lying in the manger

The shepherds hurried away to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw the child they repeated what they had been told about him, and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds had to say. As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen; it was exactly as they had been told.

When the eighth day came and the child was to be circumcised, they gave him the name Jesus, the name the angel had given him before his conception.

Commentary

The cosy picture of the bright-eyed child in the clean wooden manger (with the ox and the ass peeping in from a respectful distance) is misleading. The picture is one of destitution. There was no room for the new-born in the normal living-quarters, and the worried mother had to lodge him in the only space available, a feeding-trough for cattle, perched on top of their fodder. That was where the ragged sheep-minders found him. They too were the poorest of the poor, no sheep of their own, just hired for the night. Perhaps they got a drink of goats'-milk or a crust of bread for their shivering pains. Matthew does at least have the baby worshipped by those rather splendid Wise Men from the East, with their noble and symbolic gifts. No gifts forthcoming from today's rough crew. As we worry about our post-Christmas waistlines, and set out on our prosperous New Year, it makes us reflect on where true blessedness lies, and who are the chosen ones of the Lord. Surely God could have rustled up more suitable worshippers for his Incarnate Son than these scruffy down-and-outs? He did not.