



The Infancy Narratives of St. Matthew's Gospel

Fr. Nicholas King SJ – Week One



This liturgical year has been designated as a 'Year of the Word' by the Bishops of England and Wales. Between the First Sunday of Advent 2019 and the Feast of Christ the King 2020, there will be many opportunities to deepen our appreciation of Scripture as the Word of God. The Year has the title: 'The God who speaks' which is taken from a document called *Verbum Domini* (the Word of the Lord) which was published 10 years ago (part of the reason for the special Year). It reminds us that God has spoken to human beings for thousands of years. Humans have not always been attentive to what God is saying – or understood it when they have heard it – but God speaks and this Year gives us a chance to learn better how to listen.

As we enter this 'Year of the Word' we begin with the infancy narratives of Matthew's Gospel. Three short reflections offer us a chance to engage with the complexities of a story which we know so well. Fr. Nicholas King SJ captures the essence of St. Matthew's telling of the story and offers us some intriguing insights.

You might like to begin your reflection with a short time of prayer as offered here and then, having listened to Fr. Nicholas, take time to consider what he has told us. Feel free to use or ignore the points for discussion.

Gathering

All-loving God - we gather in your presence.
Almighty Father - we long for more of you.
Jesus - we place you at the centre
Holy Spirit - come and fill our time together.
Help us to be fully present here,
to your word, to one another,
and to the world you love.

The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah

An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

Reflection – Fr. Nicholas King SJ

Watch the video here -

Following the video, take some time to ponder on what you have heard. These questions may help you personal or collective reflections

Points to ponder

1. What struck you about what Fr. Nicholas had to say?
2. What did you think about the women he gives particular attention to – Tamar, Ruth, Bathsheba and Rahab?
3. Does it surprise you that the relatives of Jesus are not always totally wholesome?
4. What knowledge do you have of your own ancestry? Are all your relatives perfect?
5. In this 'Year of Communion' how could this gospel influence the way you look at other people?

Conclude your time of reflection with the following:

Reader
All The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary:
And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.
Hail Mary...

Reader
All Behold the handmaid of the Lord:
“Be it done unto me according to your word”.
Hail Mary...

Reader
All And the Word was made flesh:
And dwelt amongst us.
Hail Mary...

Reader
All Let us pray,
Pour forth, we beseech You, O Lord,
Your Grace into our hearts;
that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ your Son,
was made known by the message of an angel,
may be brought by his passion and cross
to the glory of His Resurrection.
Through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION

