

The Christmas story is amazing at every point

Not only did God choose to come to earth as a helpless baby, born of a woman

But notice the birth announcements made by God

Not to the expected

Not to the religious or the upstanding Jews

But to the lowly shepherds—poor and unclean—Jews, yes, but not respected Jews

And to foreign nationals—Gentiles, who are likely from Arabia—with a different faith

For the shepherds, God sent angels—first one and then a multitude—Luke 2:8-20

A flood of emotions flow through them

Fear—wonder—questioning—curiosity—anticipation—knowing—celebration

For the wise men, it is different—they get a star, but a star that has meaning to them—Matthew 2:1-12

We see emotions here, although considerably different from the shepherds

Excitement—decision—pursuing—answer—finding—joy—reverence—redirection

God didn't just come to Mary and Joseph and enter our world through a baby

God came to others to tell them the good news

God wanted them to know of this incredible good news...

That the Messiah, the Lord is born

That the child is born who is king of the Jews

But it isn't just so they have a sense of the joy and wonder of it all—which they enjoy from afar

They are invited to go and see for themselves

In fact, they are able to go into the inner sanctum where the baby is living

Mary and Joseph, and others living there, welcome them into the home

Leaving the place where they saw the baby Jesus—they were changed

We see it in the shepherds as they tell everyone about what they had been told and seen

For the wise men—they were warned in a dream to go home a different way

Their plans were changed when they heeded the warning in the dream

I dare say that none of them forgot what they had seen

For shepherds to be given the message and for anyone to listen to them is astounding

The wise men chose to listen to the dream, rather than King Herod

Wonder and joy... We often relegate the emotion of wonder to children

As adults, we are challenged to become like children and find the wonder

But I ask, as adults, what causes wonder and joy to well up within you?

Where do we see God's presence in our midst?

Do we pursue and seek out the places where God invites us to look for God?

Are there places where we find that God seems absent? Do we linger in those places?

Are we willing to follow the Leadings that come, rather than secular expectations?

Even if they seem counter intuitive? Are we able to trust the Leadings?

A God who comes as a helpless baby to a poor peasant couple, then to shepherds and Gentiles/Arabs

Is a God that comes to everyone— Do we dare to trust that God has come to us?