

Christmas 2016

When the time came for God to send his Son into the world to save the world from the darkness of sin and death, God called the angels together to ask where his Son should be born. The angels discussed God's question for a long time, but they could not agree where God's Son should be born. Some of the angels insisted God's Son should be born in Rome, the most powerful empire of the day, in order to show the power of God's Son. But others said that God's Son should be born in Athens, in the land of the Greeks, the wisest of all peoples, to show the wisdom of God's Son. Still others said that God's Son should be born in Egypt, the land of pharaohs and pyramids.

After hearing the opinions of all the angels, God dismissed them. Then, after reflecting on their advice, God assembled the angels once more to announce his decision: "I have listened carefully to all you have said, and I have decided that my Son, who will be the Prince of Peace, the King of King, the Lord of Lord, should be born in a stable in Bethlehem." In Bethlehem! In a stable! The angels were aghast and did not know what to say. Why would the Son of God be born in a city of no account in such lowly circumstances? God understood that the angels, as wise as they were, did not understand his decision, and so God explained.

"If my Son were born in Rome or Egypt, people would think of him as a powerful king like Caesar who can do whatever he wants by power and force, and so they would not understand what it means to serve other people in love and humility. And if my Son were born in Athens, people would think of him as a philosopher filled with wisdom and knowledge, but they would not learn the wisdom and knowledge of God. And so, my Son will be born in Bethlehem of Judea, of poor parents who live among the poor of the land so that all will know who I am."

And so it was that God's Son was born in a way and place we could not have imagined because God was doing something new, something we cannot understand apart from Jesus Christ. May God bless you and your family this Christmas and throughout the New Year.

Father Matera