

Pondering

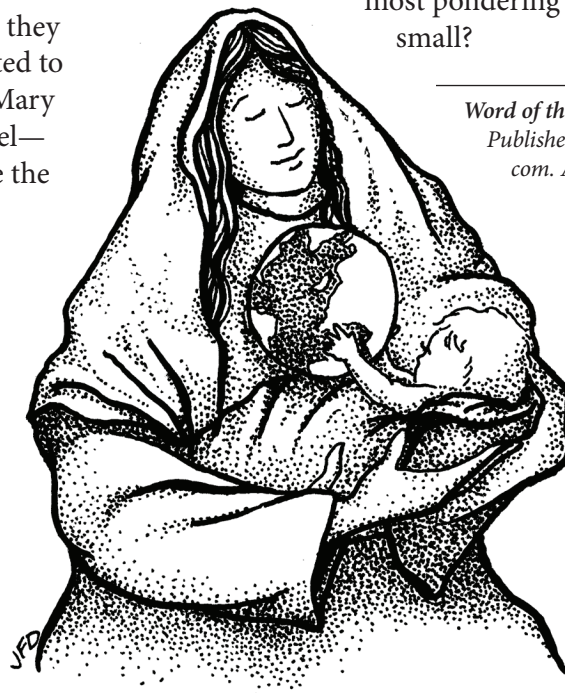
This Week's Readings at Mass

- Numbers 6:22-27 • The Priestly Blessing
- Galatians 4:4-7 • Free Sons of God in Christ
- Luke 2:16-21 • The Shepherds' Visit, the Circumcision

The mysterious and miraculous happenings didn't end for Mary when Jesus was born. As she soon discovered, the announcement of the angel Gabriel was only the beginning of a roller coaster nine-month pregnancy and beyond. Perhaps she and Joseph were just starting to settle down and get some sleep with their newborn when the shepherds arrived with their tale of the angels they had seen.

Unlike the learned and foreign magi who showed up with expensive gifts from far away for the baby Jesus, the shepherds were local. They were poor folks doing their nighttime work in the region when they were honored with receiving the angel's news about the Savior's birth. When they located the baby and his parents, it was in a humble abode that they would have been accustomed to: a barn or a cave where animals were kept. The baby was wrapped in "swaddling clothes," the equivalent of bands of cloth that happened to be on hand, perhaps as the shepherds' children were sometimes dressed.

Upon arrival, the shepherds gushed about the baby and who he was. What they heard from the angel and repeated to Mary and Joseph echoed what Mary had heard from the angel Gabriel—that her baby was destined to be the Messiah, the one chosen to save his people. Mary, we are told, "treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart." Of course, she couldn't fully understand with her rational mind what it all meant and how Jesus would grow into his identity, but we get the sense that she marveled in awe that she got to play a part in the mystery.



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"When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman ... so that we might receive adoption as sons."

Sheepish Question:
As an adopted child of God, how do I relate to the maternal care of Jesus' mother?

Questions of the Week

- 1 Luke's Gospel tells us that poor shepherds came to visit Jesus. Matthew's Gospel tells us that wealthy magi bearing expensive gifts came to visit him. Which version most speaks to you? Why?
- 2 If you have had children or other cherished little ones in your life, what do you remember most pondering or treasuring when they were small?

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