

## Advent 2010

### Reflection for the Fourth Sunday of Advent



Things are never as they seem! Joseph learned that! He also learned to listen to the other voice and to get the whole picture. Joseph's capacity for intellectual freedom saved the day! His depth of vision gives us courage and confidence to revisit how stories are told and heard, that we may bring forth new life. As we set out for Bethlehem in 2010 we hear Joseph's 'Why not?' to the dream of God's heart in human flesh. Let us go over to Bethlehem and see.

On the road the people are whispering with the intensity of breaking news. There are rumours of dreams and visions and moving stars, from houses, hillsides and sheds. The news is spreading along the route and the whole world seems to be caught up in the great annunciation. The Caesars are silenced at their palace windows for a child born in David's city, has taken the name 'Saviour.' He is nestling in the breath of the ox and the ass. O Rising Sun! opening the road to Bethlehem, God has remembered.

There are many people on the road to Bethlehem today. Zechariah is struggling with the silence of transition time and Elizabeth is carrying a pitcher of water for Mary. There are shepherds joining the main group from the hillsides. This is very strange indeed. Rabbinic sources have repeatedly told us of the inferiority of the shepherd classes. So why are they taking their place on the road? Someone said that they were just following their hearts. We also notice strangers on camel back, emerging at the horizon, who are said to be kings, following the wisdom of the ancient way. There is no place for kings in Bethlehem so this is either a false rumour or a change in the social order.

As the procession nears the town of Bethlehem the sound of angel voices penetrates the waiting time and the night gives way to the glory of God. The song is a song of peace. We are being lifted up out of the crumbling systems of lost perspectives into the freedom of the manger. Joseph is vindicated. Mary is raised up. History has a purpose and time is eternal. The rainbow and the cloud enshrine the victory of love. This is an unrepeatable moment where heaven and earth bow down in wonder as heart speaks to heart. The breath of animal and human is one, as the child is handed over for the repair of the world. O come, let us adore. Venite Adoremus.