



Advent Reflection for Monday, December 19th

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Luke 2: 13-20

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,* praising God and saying,

‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!’*

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Reflection by Laura Tyszka:

This passage is an iconic one we hear every year at Christmas. I’m hoping for some fresh insight even when these miraculous events become worn and seem mundane just from the repetition. They are in fact the opposite. The shepherds were spending a night like any other when they saw the sky fill with angels who were praising God and telling them about the Messiah’s birth. They wanted to see for themselves so they went right away to Bethlehem and found Mary, Joseph and the baby in a manger. They seemed overwhelmed with excitement and were telling everyone about this wonderful news. This is in contrast to Mary, who “treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart”. This short phrase has always stuck out to me in the traditional reading of this story at Christmas. It is quiet and poetic the way it describes her heart. I think she didn’t fully grasp the weight of giving birth to the Son of God, how could she know or fully understand? Treasuring and pondering imply that she knew though that this was important and would be something she could keep

learning the depths of for the rest of her life. Things would not be the same, for her, or for all of humanity. It is mysterious but she knew to treasure it, a profound gift from God. I'm hoping this Advent to see the exuberant wonder of the shepherds and also the quiet thinking and contemplation of Mary. I love the season of Advent, the darkness, the idea that magic can break into our everyday life, the waiting, the quiet pondering and treasuring gifts from God and others. In our family this year, we are all doing some version of an Advent calendar. For me, it's a special soap or scented oil. Some little bit of light everyday until Christmas, don't we all need that? Just a little something good to remind us that the ultimate good is coming, even when we struggle and get weary in the waiting. May we see the Incarnation as the gift to us all that it truly is.

Laura lives very close to the church with her husband Ben and 3 boys, Leo, Jesse and Gus. She is an artist and craftsperson with a small business called Wren Handmade.

