

Friday 25th December 2009

The Nativity of our Lord – Vigil Mass A big hit

Readings: Isaiah 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17. 22-25; Matthew 1:1-25

“He is the one who is to save his people from their sins.”

(Matthew 1:21)

New pop bands try really hard to get their latest song played on the radio. Many radio stations have set lists of what songs their DJs can play that week. Getting on that list means that there won't just be one play of their track but lots of plays. By the end of the week, regular listeners will know the new song well. The downside is that with all that repeat playing, some listeners get bored and never want to hear the song again.

At this time of year that same listener fatigue can occur about the Christmas story. Perhaps you've been to the school play or a carol concert and you feel you have heard it all already. In fact, if you read the Gospels, you will find that the nativity story only appears in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. And each of them takes a different slant. What seems like a familiar story is less familiar if you read these two versions separately.

Today we have heard from St Matthew. His Gospel is full of references for his contemporary Jewish readers so that they will realise that Jesus is the fulfilment of their sacred scripture. He begins his Gospel with a long list of the ancestors of Jesus, showing that he is a descendant of King David as the prophets had promised. But his Gospel isn't just for Jewish ears. It also has meaning for us today. The challenge for us is the same. Are we ready to recognise that tiny baby lying in a stable as our king?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, from your birth in a stable to your death on the cross you rejected the wealth and power of earthly kingship. Help us to recognise you as the greatest king there has ever been, so that we may worship you this Christmas and always. Amen.