

A Story Worth Telling

Fourth Week of Advent – December 18, 2017-Matthew 1:18-24

When our two oldest were little, they loved to act out the Christmas story. Barbara and Eric would put on bathrobes while I tied dish towels to their heads. A wooden stick was Joseph's staff. The baby Jesus was one of the many dolls pulled from the toy bin. They would live out, in drama, the story of what the gospel writer tells us this week. **"This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about."** With lots of laughter, excitement and a lot of bossing each other around about where to stand and what to say, the story of the birth of Christ happened right there in the middle of our living room every year. Sometimes it was presented over the course of several days because they really didn't tire of it. It was, and it is, a story worth telling.

It is a story we must tell to our children, grandchildren and anyone who will listen. **"When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly."**

Did my children know the drama behind the story? Did they know that Mary could have been killed (stoned to death) for her ill-timed pregnancy? Did they know that Joseph could have abandoned her to live a life on the marginal fringes of her family and community? No, they did not know the deeper truth that Matthew writes about in this week's gospel.

What my children knew in those living room presentations to Bill and me was that the two of us thought the story was important for them to tell and to reenact within our home. They knew that they were entering into something important, something holy. They got the message that this was an important story to live out in drama, in life. They learned that people make important decisions in life that lead to good. **"Such was his intention when, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her...When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.'"**

They got the message so much so that they acted out the story with their baby sister, Eadie when she was old enough. I'm sharing this piece of our lives because I know it is an important story to tell. I want people to embrace the truth that having your children or your grandchildren learn the story of Jesus' birth through their own participation in that story, helps them to learn what we are called to be in the world.

The story worth telling is this... **"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means God is with us."** I recommend living room dramas as the best way to learn the story.

Happy Advent!


Sue Schettler