



Catholic Connections

The Liturgical Year

After the genealogy Matthew continues with the stories about Jesus' birth and the visit of the wise men, or magi. The Catholic Church celebrates these events during the Christmas season. This is one of the special seasons during the Church year.

The Church has its own calendar, called the liturgical calendar. It moves through seasons just like any other calendar does. The seasons are connected to the important moments in Jesus' life. Advent is the season before Christmas. During Advent we remember and celebrate the events leading up to and surrounding the birth of Jesus. The Liturgical Year reminds us that God's saving action continues today and will be fulfilled when Jesus returns at the end of time.

Matthew 1:18–2:12

take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. ²¹She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus,* because he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

²³*k "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means "God is with us." ²⁴When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. ²⁵He had no relations with her until she bore a son,* and he named him Jesus.^l

The Visit of the Magi*

2¹When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod,* behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, ²saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star* at its rising and have come to do him homage."^a ³When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he

inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.* ^{5b} They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet:

⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

⁷Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." ⁹After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰They were overjoyed at seeing the star, ¹¹*c and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.



Jesus and His Family Escape into Egypt

For the full story, read Matthew, chapter 2.

When has your family faced a difficulty or danger together?

The Flight to Egypt

¹³*When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt,* and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him." ¹⁴Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. ¹⁵*He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet^d might be fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

The Massacre of the Infants

¹⁶When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the magi, he became furious. He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the magi. ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jeremiah the prophet:

¹⁸*e "A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be consoled, since they were no more."

The Return from Egypt

¹⁹When Herod had died, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰and said,^f "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead."* ²¹He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod,* he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee. ²³*g He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazorean."