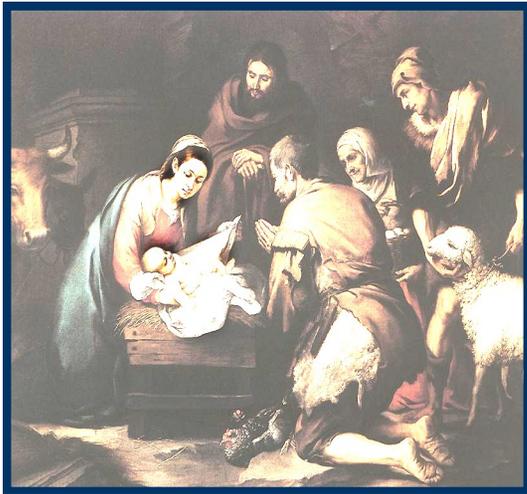


precious is it to the eyes of faith. For the Lord did not seek out the schools of learning, filled with the wise, but the simple people, who would not know how to twist, to color, what they learned; for he sought not ambition, it was simplicity he looked for.

Neither must you lightly regard the words of the shepherds, as being those of ignorant men. For from the shepherds also Mary added to her faith: by the shepherds were the people joined together unto the praise of God; *for they wondered at those things that were taught them by the shepherds.*

But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart. Let us learn from this of the chaste manner in all things of the Holy Virgin, who no less guarded in word, than modest in person, pondered in her heart upon these proofs of her faith.

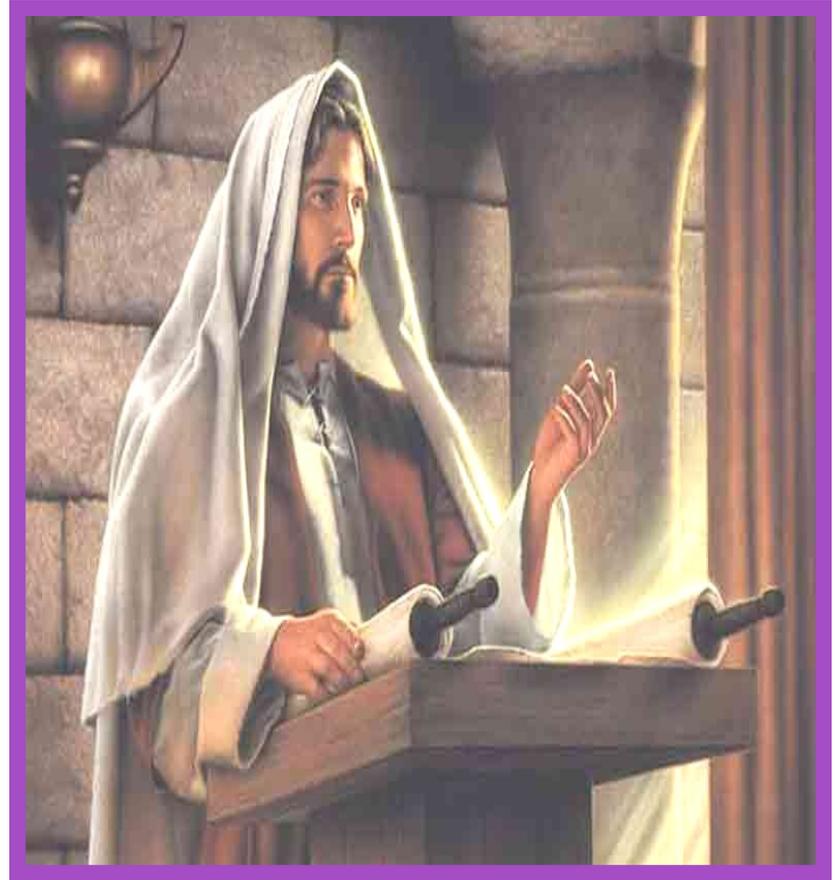


If Mary learns from the shepherds, why do you turn from the teaching of the priests? If Mary was silent before the Apostles had taught, why do you wish, now that the Apostles have spoken, to teach rather than learn? And learn that sinfulness belongs to the person, not to the sex; for sex is sacred. Lastly, Mary received no precept, but she has given an example to the world.



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**SERMON ON
THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH
FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH
128 - 1**



JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!

CHRISTMAS DAY

Based on the Divine Office-Douay-Rheims Version

Volume 1 - Pages 1173 (1962 edition)

Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 2: 1-14

by: Saint Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor

Behold the beginning of the Church now appearing. Christ is born, and the Shepherds begin their watch: they who will gather the flocks of the Gentiles, before living as untended beasts, into the Fold of the Lord, lest through the thick dark of the night they remain exposed to the ravages of reasoning wild beasts.

Well do these Shepherds watch, whom the Good Shepherd teaches. The people then are the flock, the world is the night, and the priests are the Shepherds. Perhaps he also is a Shepherd to whom it was said: *be watchful and strengthen* (Apoc. iii. 2); because for the defense of His flock the Lord has not alone ordained Bishops, but also appointed angels to this office.

And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them. See in what manner the divine solicitude prepares the way of faith. An angel teaches Mary, an angel teaches Joseph, and an angel guides the shepherds. It is not enough that one be sent, for in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall stand.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will. Well is that army of angels

named who followed the Lord of Hosts. To whom do they give praise save to their Lord, as it is written: *Praise ye the Lord from the heavens; praise ye Him in the high places; praise ye Him all His angels* (Ps. cxlviii. 1).

Fulfilled now is the prophecy. The Lord is praised from the heavens; and He is seen on earth. Of Him the Holy Mark says: *And He was with beasts, and the angels ministered to Him* (Mk. i. 13). As in one is a sign of mercy, in the other you behold a witness of divine power. It was because of men He suffered the beasts; it was because of Himself He is proclaimed by the angels.

Let us go to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us. And they came with haste. See the Shepherds come with haste; none come seeking Christ in sloth. See how the Shepherds believe the angels; so must thou believe the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and in the angels, prophets, and apostles. See how carefully the Scripture weighs the meaning of each single word. *They hasten, it says, to see this word.* For the Word, that is, the Son is seen, when the Body of the Lord is seen.

Because the shepherds are persons of humble state, do not esteem lightly the testimony of their faith. For the more humble the testimony appears to human wisdom, the more