



Wednesday Prayer

1st Sunday of Christmas – Interruptions and Redirection

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up and take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him.”

Matthew 2:13

Life is what happens when you're planning something else. Surely this saying rang true for Joseph when, for the second time in only a matter of months, his life was dramatically interrupted and redirected by an angel in a dream. (See Matthew 1:20-21.) A side trip to another country on foot for an undetermined amount of time is not a typical action for new parents to take, but just like he had done a few months earlier, Joseph did as he was commanded, and went with Mary and Jesus to Egypt. Through the angel's directive and Joseph's response, Jesus was saved from Herod's reign of terror that took the lives of all baby boys under two years of age, and the teachings of the prophets were fulfilled.

In a similar way, the shepherds' evening was interrupted by an angel who told them “good tidings of great joy” and they were directed to the manger, to be the first to see the new baby king. In what ways have you been interrupted, and redirected by God? Like Joseph and the shepherds, most of us also respond with fear or anger (or at least annoyance) when interrupted, only to find a gracious gift, or greater strength, or new insights when we follow God's direction in the interruption. How can we, in turn, be angels to others? How can we be God's messengers to interrupt and redirect the lives of young people who might be in danger of falling into the hands of people, like Herod, who will do anything to gain power and control over others and use them for their own purposes without regard for the harm they do to “the innocents”?

As we move into the new year, consider the big and small ways you can interrupt the lives of young people and bring “good tidings of great joy”. When we interrupt their lives by being a safe and caring adult kids want to talk to, they might initially roll their eyes, or be fearful, angry or annoyed (especially if in the middle of an online game or social media post) but they may also be made aware of better choices, come to know that God loves them, and be redirected onto paths that avoid the dangers of people who might try to hurt them.

Come into our lives, O Lord, interrupt our busyness and draw our attention your will. Use us as your messengers to interrupt the lives of youth so that they might be protected from those who might hurt them. Amen.

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