

October 2016

Hello everyone;

My sabbatical has ended and now I have been appointed the Guardian of the Friar fraternity at Mt. St. Francis Retreat Centre. I am trying to learn everything that goes with that position. I'm also working on the retreat team. This year the retreat theme is mercy. This, then, is the subject of my first message to you.

What is mercy? Generally, mercy means to have compassion on those who are in a poor or wretched state. We are merciful when we help others who, though no fault of their own, are victims of evil or unfortunate circumstances. Mercy, however, can have an added dimension. It can also mean being kind to and treating leniently those who otherwise deserve to be treated more harshly. We are merciful, for instance, when we help others who may be reaping the consequences of their own foolish behavior. This might be a little harder to do. Furthermore, mercy can also mean being kind to and treating with clemency those who deserve punishment for their evil deeds especially when the wrong was done to you. This is even harder to do.

Mercy requires faith. When we are wronged by someone we become angry. Anger can be directed three ways. First, we can be angry with the person who harmed us. Second, we can be angry with ourselves. We might say: "If I had only been more aware or less naive or made better choices, this wouldn't have happened." Third, we can be angry with God. "If God loved me, why would He allow this to happen?"

In times like this it is imperative that we have faith. It is important that, even if we do not understand, we continue our relationship with God. In faith we need to persevere in prayer. We need to operate in faith. We cannot base our actions on feeling otherwise we might terminate our relationship with God because of our anger. We persevere in faith through prayer being totally with God. We can tell God how we feel - betrayed and angry. Faith allows God a chance to work on us in prayer. Through prayerful reading the Bible we get in touch with God's tremendous mercy towards us expressed time and time again throughout Scripture and culminating in Jesus - God's mercy incarnate. This enduring in faith begins to bring us healing.

Mercy requires humility. Understanding God's mercy towards us, we eventually come to understand that "There but for the grace of God go I" - as the old saying goes. We can't be self righteous. With humility we might begin to understand the one who offended us and what was behind the offence. Slowly we begin to find the inner space to forgive.

Mercy leads to forgiveness. As we get in touch with God's forgiveness towards us, we are able to forgive our offender. This takes time though. In our heads we know we need to forgive. We may even say we forgive. But the journey from the head to the heart can be a long one. Staying in tune with God in prayer, and sensitive to the Spirit's leading, we will know when we are ready to take the next step: meeting and reconciling with our offender. When that time comes, hopefully we can speak honestly about how we feel and then speak words of forgiveness. This will also help with forgiving ourselves.

Mercy also leads to freedom. Our mercy can move our offenders interiorly and healing can begin in their lives. Mercy frees from the binding effects of guilt - from spiritual, interior inertia so that they can "move on" with their lives. And having mercy on others will lead to our own freedom as well. Mercy allows us to let go of our grudges. Without showing mercy we can become locked up in a prison of hate, anger, resentment and vengeance which would eventually destroy our lives.

Mercy depends on grace. But mercy does not come from us. It was impossible for us to forgive and not to become bitter. In other words, it was impossible for us to be merciful in our own strength. We need God, God's grace - that divine strength or ability that only comes from God. We are so petty that it is hard to forgive even little offenses let alone grave ones against us. But grace allows us to go beyond what is humanly possible. I call to mind examples of "heroic" mercy where, through God's grace, people forgave great intentional offenses done to them. Remember Rev. Dale Lang - the Anglican priest from Tabor, AB who forgave the boy who killed his 17 year old son (Jason) in a copy-cat Columbine-type shooting? That takes grace!

October brings the Feast of St. Francis - a man very acquainted with mercy. He was so merciful because he kept Jesus every in his sight. He was so aware of God's mercy towards him expressed in Jesus, that mercy spilled forth from his life to all he met. May we, this year of mercy, learn mercy!

Pax et Bonum! Br. Gerry

July 2016

Well, I did it - over 775 kms from St. Jean Pied de Porte in France to Santiago de Compostela in Spain in 30 days! And then with one rest day after the day I arrived, I pushed on to Finisterre - a three-day walk to the Atlantic coast making my pilgrimage well over 800 kms. Walking the Camino is an experience of a life time and it may take a life time to "process" it. I hope, however, that I can impart at least a little to you.

I was intrigued by how the Camino reduced life - especially the physical aspect - to a simplicity that allowed me to make interior "room" for God. Because walking the Camino was so physically demanding, my physical concerns were reduced simply to getting enough to eat and getting a good night's sleep. Although a great physical concern for *everyone* was with feet and knees, I was very fortunate not to have had too much trouble. Amazingly, I got no blisters

The Camino reduced life to a profound simplicity during the day: putting one foot in front of another. Although I went with two others we knew that we had to walk at our own natural pace and rhythm. This afforded me long periods each day in which to walk alone with my thoughts and prayers. And mostly we walked through beautiful countryside which inspired me to prayer and praise.

There was also a simplicity at the "albergues" in which we stayed at the end of our day. We slept in simple bunk beds in open dorms. There was sometimes a common kitchen. Washrooms, most often, were both-gender. And when we would finally arrive at our destination, I followed a simple routine. First, I would have a shower before too many others arrived. Nevertheless, I would do this quickly so as not to hold it up for others who might be waiting. (The ratio of toilets and showers per person was very low.) Another reason for showering quickly was that the showers were usually telephone booth size and sometimes not all that private. With shared toilets, showers and sinks, grooming was kept to the basics. There was no place for such frivolities, for instance, as trimming my beard. (Another reason for showering first was to ensure that I got hot water!)

There was simplicity also in clothing. Because it was important to keep my pack light, (every extra ounce feels like a pound after carrying it all day) I only had two sets of clothes - one which I wore and the other that I packed. So, next in my simple routine was to wash clothes. This I did at outside sinks which had built in washboards. In only 1 or 2 albergues was there hot water for this. When I finished, I safety pinned my clothes to a clothesline. (A trick to cut down weight and bulk is to use safety pins instead of clothespins.)

In preparing for the Camino I typed a page of my favorite prayers as well as some pages of Scripture passages which had the themes of journey, pilgrimage, walking and pathways. I also had another page of people and concerns for which I wanted to pray. I can assure you, that I prayed for OLPH all along the way and at the tomb of St. James. And I know that you were praying for me.

One of the things for which I prayed for myself was that God would give me greater faith. He answered by allowing me to experience firsthand His providential care. In planning for this trip, for instance, there were many things I had to do that I had never done before - such as booking TGV (train) tickets on line to get from Paris to St. Jean. And there were countless details of which many could not be addressed before hand. All this required trust that God would work things out - and He did. All these uncertainties could have had me in a permanent state of anxiety but I also prayed for peace. They are related gifts: with faith comes peace. I also prayed for intercessory prayer which is also related to faith.

Likewise there were so many times *during* the pilgrimage when God looked after us. Sometimes, for example, the markings which point the way were not very clear. On several occasions local people showed me the way without even asking or even realizing that I had gone astray. Walking the Camino, of course, is an analogy for life's journey and what a lesson for life - to be open to the "angels" God sends to keep us on the right path! God provided for us in many other ways - often through the generosity of fellow pilgrims and locals at just at the

right time. God, in fact, spoke to me often through meeting people from all over the world walking for all sorts of reasons. Since we had nothing else to do but walk for six to eight hours, people opened up and shared. It was also delightful to share meals with them. There was an amazing "natural" kinship on the Camino that crossed ethnic and language barriers. Everyone was on the same challenging journey helping each other along.

I am filled with tearful gratitude when I ponder how fortunate I am to have had this gift of a sabbatical. I am amazed at all the interesting things I did: work on a Christian organic farm, spend time at a Madonna House in one of their poustinias, spend time with my parents - especially over Christmas - getting in touch with their lives and getting in touch with my own roots which has so profoundly formed me, spend four months in California discovering amazing things through the S.A.T. program and finally walking the Camino.

A few days ago I briefly met some Seculars at Mt. St. Francis. It put me in mind of serving you again. I look forward to it. Through these messages throughout the year you were able to journey with me in some small way. I thank you for your enthusiasm and support you have shown throughout this adventure.

I would like to end with a poem that I received at the School of Applied Theology. I brought it with me on the Camino and it became a favorite in my prayers together with my traveling companions. It is about trusting in God's providence along the journey of life which springs from His incomprehensible love for us.

Beloved Is Where We begin

If you would enter into the wilderness,
do not begin without a blessing.

Do not leave without hearing who you are: beloved,
named by the One who has traveled this path before you.

Do not go without letting it echo in your ear,
and if you find it is hard to let it into your heart,
do not despair. That is what this journey is for.

I cannot promise this blessing will free you
from danger, from fear, from hunger or thirst,
from the scorching of the sun, or the fall of night.

But I can tell you that on this path there will be help.
I can tell you that on this way there will be rest.

I can tell you that you will know the strange graces
that come to our aid only on the road such as this,
that fly to meet us bearing comfort and strength,
that come alongside us for no other cause
than to lean themselves towards our ear
and with their curious insistence whisper our name:
Beloved. Beloved. Beloved.

Jan Richardson

From *Circle of Grace*

I wish you all a beautiful summer! Br. Gerry

May 2016

A few of us fellow sabbatical students made a quick visit to Yosemite National Park in California. It is one of the early national parks in the USA and it is stunningly beautiful! To orient our selves we watched an introductory movie about the development of the park. It featured a man called John Muir - an early American naturalist who worked hard against many odds to have the Yosemite Valley preserved.

One of my on-going interests has been to read about the lives of conservationist. It gives me a sense of being in continuity with many brave and foresighted individuals who loved creation. I have read about early American conservationists such as David Henry Thoreau (1817 - 1862), John Muir (1838 - 1914) and Aldo Leopold (1887 - 1948). I have read about many Canadians as well: Earnest Thompson Seton (1860 - 1946), Pauline Johnson (1861 - 1913), Grey Owl (1888 - 1938) and many others. My list, however, does not just include historic and national figures. It also includes local people who are still living. A favorite author of mine, for instance, is Trevor Herriot from Regina.

I especially like Herriot's work because he effortlessly weaves nature, history and spirituality together. Trevor Herriot, like John Muir is a deeply spiritual man and a Christian. Most of the early conservationists, in fact, were spiritual people. Some were solid Christians while others could not relate what they experienced in the wild with the antiseptic, overly polished, prudish and "proper" Victorian forms of Christianity of their day. Consequently, they looked to other traditions for the spiritual component they craved - especially to the Native Aboriginal North American cultures and spiritualities.* Archibald Belaney was an extreme example. He took on an entire identity for himself as a Native Canadian. He even appropriated the name "Grey Owl". (He fooled everyone but the Indians!)

Earnest Thompson Seton is another example. Like Belaney, he was born in England and immigrated to Canada. Here and in the USA he became interested in "woodcraft" and incorporated elements of Native "ritual" into his movement. Seton saw a need to give boys (and later girls) a sense of identity, belonging, purpose, of passage, and a spiritual connection to the land. He eventually became a co-founder of the Boy Scouts of America.

In many ways Seton might be considered a forerunner to the modern "men's movement" (which have many of the same elements) and the emerging emphasis of "creation spirituality" of which Pope Francis' Laudato Si is an important part. These subjects are connected and have been a strong component of my sabbatical reading. They have also been important subjects presented at the School of Applied Theology.

They are also important areas of prayer for my life. And I will take them with me on the next phase of my sabbatical - my pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago de Compostela. The Camino isn't exactly "wilderness", but it is a journey. It is a journey of trust in God's loving providence. It has already been to me already and I'm not even there yet! In spite of all the travel I've done in the Order as Vocation Director for twelve years, I am really not an "intrepid traveler". There has been endless details to attend to - airplane tickets, booking hotels for arrival and departure from Paris, TGV tickets from Paris to St. Jean where the Camino starts, etc. But, I've done as much as I can do from here in California in preparation for the Camino. When I get back to Cochrane on May 6 I'll make a quick visit to "MEC" (Mountain Equipment Co-op) in Calgary for a few items and that should be it. Then I'll pack (20 lbs or less) and be ready to leave on May 9.

I am not an "intrepid traveler" and neither am I a "techie". So, I won't be sending a monthly message for June. I will write about my pilgrimage when I return.

Oh, how I solicit your prayers for me! And I shall be praying for you as well. I will take with me a list of prayer petitions, which will include all the Seculars of Canada and especially those of Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity. Bye for now.

"Pax et Bonum!" Br. Gerry

(* The pioneers of the "Woodcraft" movement had a somewhat naive and "romanticized" understanding of Native North American cultures and spiritualities. They did not have the advantages of modern sensitivities or the research that we have today. This needs to be understood in order to appreciate their work.)

April 2016

My celebration of Easter was very different this year. First, I attended all the beautiful, transcendent liturgies of the Dominicans. This was different in that I am not normally exposed to that style of worship. But it was *after* Easter that I celebrated the risen Christ in a most unusual way. And it stood out in strong contrast to the celebrations before and on Easter day.

One of the Presenters who spoke to my sabbatical class was Marianne Finch. She is the founder of the *Care Through Touch Institute*. This is an organization which ministers to street people through massage in the famous or rather, infamous *Tenderloin* district of San Francisco. This is the most economically depressed, dangerous and crime ridden section of the city. It was at St. Boniface Church (served by the Franciscan Friars) in the Tenderloin that I and my class went to meet Marianne.

St. Boniface church is a grand old building with beautiful stained glass windows and elaborately painted walls and vaulted ceilings. It is over 100 years old. But as wonderful as this was, the church contained a treasure yet more precious. Before entering the church Marianne instructed us to first go to front section to pray in silence to prepare ourselves to walk around the church. The first section closest to the altar is for sitting and praying. The rest of the pews (about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the church), however, were full of street people lying down and sleeping! The contrast between the beautiful decor of the church and the dirty (smelly) mass of broken humanity in the pews was shocking.

After this we went to the Care Through Touch Institute where we were given a presentation on the Tenderloin district. The presenter explained, for instance, that the people who live in this area fell into roughly five groups: 1. Recent Immigrants, 2. Seniors, 3. Addicts (alcohol, drugs), 4. the Mentally Ill, and 5. Veterans. Often people living in the Tenderloin would fall into more than one category, but they were all "H.A.L.T." - Hungry, Angry (including scared and depressed), Lonely and Tired. Furthermore, the area was full of "SROs" - Single Room (or Resident) Occupancy complexes. These are rundown rat and cockroach infested apartment buildings in which people pay weekly for a single small room with no washroom. It is common for people to only be able to afford two weeks out the month. The rest is lived on the streets. This talk gave us background for our next experiences.

Next we headed for St. Anthony Foundation to have lunch with the street people. (Owned by the Franciscans Friars, various ministries take place here including a "soup kitchen"). We took a ticket and joined the long lineup that strung out along the sidewalk in front and rounded the corner. Surprisingly, for the staggering amount of people that are served each day, it was in a relatively short time before we had our food. Unlike the three soup kitchens at which I have worked, St. Anthony was modern, clean, spacious and brightly lit. With lively music playing, there was a real effort to infuse a sense of "dignity" into the situation. The meal was simple (beans and rice), tasty and ample - actually more than I would normally eat. It was interesting to observe that most people did not spend much time socializing. Efforts at conversation were limited. They ate and left - perhaps conscious of the long line waiting. It was a strong contrast to my experience of meals where there is leisurely "fellowship" around a table with friends. Homeless people do not have that privilege.

Finally came our last and most profound experience. Our class was divided into small groups and guided through the inner city neighborhood. My guide was Walter - himself a homeless man. He took us to various places where great numbers of people lived on the sidewalks. He kept referring to them as his "family" and he truly made an effort to support them. It was evident that he was well known and loved. Simply put, he was a kind man. This was made amply clear when we came upon two men fighting. The man on the ground was defending himself by kicking. By the time we got there, the altercation was over and the beaten man was very distraught. As we passed by Walter reached and hugged him. The man readily received his embrace. Walter said but few words to him and I don't think the man could even talk. But it was amazing the calming effect that this simple gesture had on him. The whole incident took less than a minute. As we walked away Walter said, "He just needed to know that he's loved".

As we left for the Tenderloin that morning it was hard not to feel that after celebrated Easter, we entering Good Friday again. Walter, however, showed me that there can be resurrection in the most dire of situations.

Happy Resurrection! Br. Gerry

March 2016

Hello from Oakland, California. As I said in February's message, I am attending the sabbatical program at the School of Applied Theology. I will be here until May. In this letter I would like to give you a brief description of my situation - both where I am living and the program I'm taking.

The residence and the classes happen at the same place - St. Albert Dominican Priory. Besides being the home of S.A.T., it is also the student house for the Dominicans. So there are many young Dominicans Friars around in their white and black habits. For Mass and Liturgy of the Hours we join them in their rather "high church" liturgies - which is an interesting change.

The building is a classic monastic structure complete with an inside cloister that features a statue of St. Dominic at a koi fish pond and live tortoises (2) that roam the lawn. This is the quietest part of the property as the priory is located in an area of rather high urban density. The most beautiful part of the property is the large back yards, which supports huge Redwood trees and even a little meandering stream. Although it is the most natural area of all the property, ironically, it is also the noisiest part. Though the high vine covered fence blocks out the sight of the nearby freeway, it does not block out the sound.

Noise notwithstanding, S.A.T. has been a positive experience. One delightful part of it is getting to know the students. We are 19 in number and from all over the world - 3 from African countries, 1 from Tonga (near New Zealand), 1 from England, 1 from the Philippines, 1 from Singapore, 4 from Canada and the rest from the USA (including 2 immigrants from Ireland). Except for one secular lay person and four secular (diocesan) priests, all are Religious - often coming off long terms of leadership. We are all from different orders and dioceses. So, we are a fascinating mix which makes for some interesting conversations as we learn to attune our ears to different accents - especially to the Africans. All but two of us live right at the Priory. We are together for classes and meals and so it is easy to build community. And as time passes and a sense of community develops, outings together are planned to see local sites. Community is such an important aspect of the S.A.T. experience that even when a Franciscan Friars invited me to move into the friary in Oakland I declined the kind offer.

As with any place where I settle, one of the first things I bought when I arrived in Oakland was a map of walking routes and hiking trails in the area. There are some regional parks in the hills above the city that are within walking distance - at least if you are a good walker and like hills. It has been interesting exploring the local flora and fauna while walking in these areas as well as being good preparation for May when I walk the Camino de Santiago de Compostela. (This is the ancient 780 km pilgrimage in Spain to the church of St. James.)

There are three "Main Ingredients" of this sabbatical program: "Attentive Rest", "Theological Renewal" and "Spiritual Transformation". These are things that we all should strive for on an ongoing base, but they are more deliberate during a sabbatical. Not that they are necessarily easy. It has been a common struggle especially at the beginning, with all the students to relax and give themselves permission to rest.

The classes reflect these three emphasises of the sabbatical. We have had presenters speak on "Transitions", "Praying Our Experiences" and "Living Contemplatively" to name a few. The program also strives to be holistic by integrating the body with the spiritual life. We are given opportunities to participate in various experiences that integrate body movement in a prayerful, intentional way. It is also a time when many seek to better their health by entering upon exercise programs.

The schedule is also reflects these emphasises. There is plenty of time for reflection. The classes are only from 10:00 AM to 12:00 and from 1:00 to 3:00 each day. And Thursday mornings are given over completely for reflection and in the afternoon we meet in small groups to share our reflections. Also there are no classes on Fridays, which gives us a "long weekend" each week. This reflective element has given me plenty of time to work on personal growth and greater self-knowledge through reading and working on my art.

Lastly, an integral part of the whole process is spiritual direction. At the beginning we met with several spiritual directors who were available. I was particularly privileged to have been able to choose a Franciscan. When I heard David Williams *OFS* speak, I knew I wanted him. So, once more, the Seculars are ministering to me again.

"Pax et Bonum!" Br. Gerry

February 2016

"Come Let us climb the mountain of the Lord" Isaiah 2:3

Hello from Oakland, California! I have arrived on the fourth part of my sabbatical - the School of Applied Theology. I will be here until May and will have time to reflect on this experience. (Winter in California - Yes, I know you feel my pain.) So, for this month, I want reflect on an experience I had while with my father.

At my parent's cottage property in Quebec there is a cross mounted at the summit of the mountain. Each summer, at some point during my holidays at the cottage, Dad and I, with saw, rakes and spade in hand, grunt up the winding path through the woods that leads up to it. (The trail has four switch-backs.) Once there, we rest for a few prayerful moments at the Cross and then work our way down raking leaves, prying loose stones and cutting away deadfall across the path. This trail maintenance excursion has become an annual event; a bonding thing we do together. Since I was not home in the summer, however, it had been neglected. By the time I got home in November and December the "cottage season" is usually long over. By then the road to the cottage is usually impassable with heavy snow. The exceptionally mild weather this year, however, brought an unexpected chance to go to the cottage. While there, Dad and I took up our tools and headed for the top of the mountain.

As this trail does not get high usage, I am always amazed at how quickly it could disappear if not maintained yearly. In about two years or less not a sign of it would be left. Often events can have a deeper meaning than we are conscious of until we take time and reflect on them. Maintaining the trail to the cross at the cottage is one of those experiences. It has become for me an analogy for our spiritual lives. Although the spiritual life is a gift of grace, we must co-operate with that grace and put in the effort to maintain it. (It is God's grace that causes us even to have the will to co-operate - "it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." Philippians 2:13, Emphasis mine.)

The destination of the long climb is a white painted cross. The cross signifies Christ. Our spiritual life is about maintaining a relationship with Jesus. That is its only objective. Our spiritual life must be a steady climb toward greater and deeper union with God as revealed in Christ.

The cross also symbolizes the DIVINE LOVE of God. It demonstrates the extent to which God would go to draw us back to Him. ("God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." John 3:16)

A path in the woods is first kept open by walking it frequently. The path symbolizes our line of communication and communion with God. We keep this open first by traveling often the path of prayer and service. The OFS Rule speaks of daily prayer being essential to our relationship with God. And we engage in prayer of various kinds. We may not be able to make it to church daily, but we must strive to meet God especially praying with and reflecting on Scripture. And then, "From Gospel to life and Life to Gospel", we bring the fruit of our prayer to serve others in Christ's love.

Secondly a trail through the forest is kept open by the deliberate, intentional work of keeping it clear of debris. So it is with our spiritual lives. We need to maintain our relationship with Christ by keeping the trail to the cross open and free of the deadfall of sin. And sin is any act which impairs our loving relationship with Christ and others. We do this by being sensitive to the Holy Spirit while examining our lives in the light of Scripture, Church teaching, the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Spiritual Direction and retreats.

The climb to the top of the hill to the cross is challenging. Dad and I usually stop at least two or three times on the way up to catch our breath. The grind up the mountain reminds me that, like any relationship - even with God - is not always easy. What is said of Centering Prayer can be said about the spiritual life in general: "It's simple but not always easy". But Jesus is on the trail with us all the way.

And this brings me to my last point. Clearing the path with my father reminds me that we don't walk the spiritual path alone. That's exactly what the OFS is all about - supporting each other on the journey. I recall the words of an old hymn I knew as a boy: "And some I love have reached the end, But some with me may stay, Their faith and hope still guiding me: I walk the King's highway." "The countless hosts lead on before, I must not fear nor stray; With them, the pilgrims of the faith, I walk the King's highway."

(I Walk the King's Highway Vss. 3, 5. Emphasis mine.)

Journey on, fellow pilgrims! - Br. Gerry

January 2016

Merry Christmas! One of the things my family did for fun was take the *Christmas IQ Test*. See how well you score in your knowledge of the Christmas story according to the Bible. Happy New Year!

QUESTIONS

According to the Bible

- 1) **where were Joseph's ancestors from?**
A. Bethlehem, B. Jerusalem, C. Nazareth,
D. Egypt, F. None of the above
- 2) **who told Mary and Joseph to go to Bethlehem?**
A. The angel, B. Mary's mother,
C. Herod, D. Caesar,
F. None of the above.
- 3) **... how did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem?**
A. Camel, B. Donkey, C. Walked,
D. None of the above
- 4) **Mary and Joseph were married when Mary became pregnant.** True or False
- 5) **Mary and Joseph were married when Jesus was born.** True or False
- 6) **Mary was a virgin when she delivered Jesus.**
True or False
- 7) **what did the innkeeper tell Mary and Joseph?**
A. "There is no room in the inn."
B. They could use his stable out back.
C. Both A and B, D. None of the above.
- 8) **Jesus was born in a:**
A. Manger, B. barn,
C. Stable, D. None of the above
- 9) **which animals were present at Jesus' birth?**
A. Cows, sheep, goats, B. Cows, donkeys, goats
C. Sheep and goats only, D. None of the above
- 10) **who saw the star in the east?**
A. Shepherds B. Mary and Joseph
C. Three kings D. Both A and C,
E. None of the above
- 11) **how many angels spoke to the shepherds?**
A. One, B. Three, C. Multitude,
D. None of the above
- 12) **what "sign" did the angel tell the shepherds to look for?**
A. A star over Bethlehem,
B. A baby that doesn't cry,
C. A baby in a manger,
D. None of the above
- 13) **what did the angels say/sing?**
A. "Joy the world, the Lord is come",
B. "Alleluia"
C. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given"
D. "Glory to God in the highest, etc."
E. "Glory to the newborn King"
- 14) **how many wise men came to see Jesus?**
A. 3, B. 6, C. 9, D. 12, E. None of the above
- 15) **the wise men stopped in Jerusalem -**
A. To inform Herod about Jesus
B. To find out where Jesus was
C. To ask about the star they saw
D. To purchase gifts of gold, Frankincense, myrrh
E. None of the above
- 16) **where did the wise men find Jesus?**
A. In a manger, B. In a stable,
C. In Nazareth, D. In a house,
E. None of the above
- 17) **Joseph took the baby Jesus to Egypt**
A. Because Cesar sent out a decree that a census should be taken.
B. Because Herod sought the boy's life.
C. None of the above.
- 18) **where do we find the Christmas story?**
A. Matthew, B. Mark, C. Luke, D. John
E. All of the above, F. Only A and B
G. Only A and C, H. Only A, B and C

ANSWERS

1. A, Luke 2:3 2. D, Luke 2:1. They were told by Cesar Augustus through a decree.
3. D. Mary was pregnant and so she may have road on a donkey, but the Bible does not say she did.
4. False. Luke 1:26. Mary was "betrothed" or engaged to Joseph but not yet married to him. Matthew 1:20 says that the angel told Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife. In Matthew 1:19 some translations of the Bible call Joseph Mary's "husband", and that he was contemplating "divorcing" her. In those days, betrothal was much more serious than engagement today.
5. True. Matthew 1:24. After Joseph was told in a dream by an angel not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife (Mt. 1:20) he did so. In Luke 2:5, however, Mary is still called "engaged" or ``espoused`` at the time the couple left for Bethlehem. 6. True
7. D. Luke 2:7. The Bible does not mention an inn keeper saying anything to Mary and Joseph.
8. B or C. The Bible doesn't actually say that Jesus was born in a barn or stable, but because he was laid in a manger (Luke 2:7) - where hay is placed for livestock - we can assume it was in barn or stable.
9. D. There may have been animals present but the Bible does not mention any.
10. E. "Wise men" or "Magi" saw the star. They were not kings but sages, men of wisdom and learning. The title "kings" comes from the old carol We Three Kings.
11. A. Luke 2:9. Only after a single angel spoke to the shepherds did a "multitude" of angels (vs 13) praise God.
12. C. This was a sign because it was strange thing to see a baby in a manger.
13. D. Luke 2:14, 14. E. None of the above. Traditionally we think of three wise men because of the three gifts. The Bible does not actually say how many there were. Incidentally, neither does it say that they came on camels. 15. B. Matthew 2:1-2.
16. D. Matthew 2:11. In a House. By the time the Wise men arrived, which could have been up to two years later, Mary and Joseph had found better accommodations.
17. B. Matthew 2:13, 18. G. Mark and John do not record the Christmas story.