

Bethlehem and the Tabernacle

*The Star of the Child shone over Bethlehem lowly,
And the Sages went in and knelt down and adored;
They saw but a Babe, yet they knew 'twas the Holy,
For the Star told the Sages the Babe was their Lord.*

*The Babe is the Bethlehemite Child on our altar,
The Star is the altar-lamp shining so mild;
The Sages are they who in faith never falter,
But adore in each church where a lamp shows the Child.*

Months had flown, since the day on which the Archangel Gabriel brought from Heaven, the message to the Blessed Virgin. She knew that the Saviour of the world was to be born in Bethlehem and not at her home in Nazareth; and so, without troubling herself as to *How it was to be done*, she was awaiting the sign that would make known to her the will of God.

The Emperor Augustus in his pride wished, at this time, to know the exact number of his subjects. Without intending it, he was furthering the designs of Divine Providence.

Mary and Joseph were both of the tribe of Juda and the family of David, so they were obliged to leave their quiet home at Nazareth, and go to be inscribed at Bethlehem. It was a long journey, and the travelers arrived at their destination worn out with fatigue. But in vain did they seek a shelter. They were everywhere repulsed and, at last, they withdraw into a poor, abandoned stable.

Here it was, dear little children, that about midnight the Word Incarnate, the Son of God, came into the world. Suddenly, He appeared to the enraptured eyes of His Mother, lying on a little straw. O how eagerly she took Him up in her arms, pressed Him to her virginal heart, and addressed Him by turn, "My Son!" and "My God!"

O dear children, can you read this Gospel story without thinking how glad you would have been, to be able at that blessed moment, to draw near to the Blessed Virgin