

January 1, 2023



Center for Spiritual Development

Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH CHRISTMAS

Photo by Sr. Karin Nürnberg

HOLY MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

By Julie Mussché

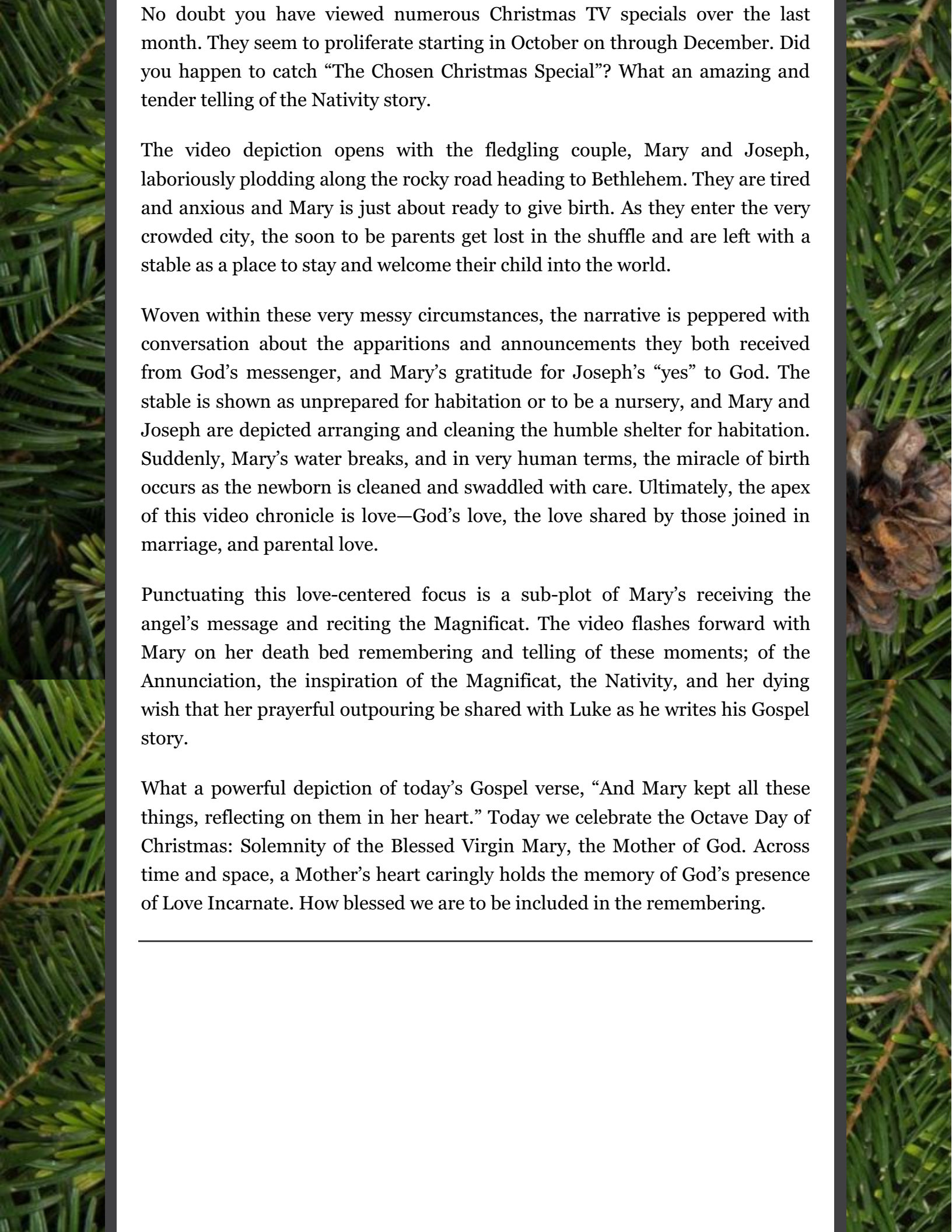
Today's Gospel

The shepherds went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

LUKE 2:16-21

Reflection



No doubt you have viewed numerous Christmas TV specials over the last month. They seem to proliferate starting in October on through December. Did you happen to catch “The Chosen Christmas Special”? What an amazing and tender telling of the Nativity story.

The video depiction opens with the fledgling couple, Mary and Joseph, laboriously plodding along the rocky road heading to Bethlehem. They are tired and anxious and Mary is just about ready to give birth. As they enter the very crowded city, the soon to be parents get lost in the shuffle and are left with a stable as a place to stay and welcome their child into the world.

Woven within these very messy circumstances, the narrative is peppered with conversation about the apparitions and announcements they both received from God’s messenger, and Mary’s gratitude for Joseph’s “yes” to God. The stable is shown as unprepared for habitation or to be a nursery, and Mary and Joseph are depicted arranging and cleaning the humble shelter for habitation. Suddenly, Mary’s water breaks, and in very human terms, the miracle of birth occurs as the newborn is cleaned and swaddled with care. Ultimately, the apex of this video chronicle is love—God’s love, the love shared by those joined in marriage, and parental love.

Punctuating this love-centered focus is a sub-plot of Mary’s receiving the angel’s message and reciting the Magnificat. The video flashes forward with Mary on her death bed remembering and telling of these moments; of the Annunciation, the inspiration of the Magnificat, the Nativity, and her dying wish that her prayerful outpouring be shared with Luke as he writes his Gospel story.

What a powerful depiction of today’s Gospel verse, “And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.” Today we celebrate the Octave Day of Christmas: Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. Across time and space, a Mother’s heart caringly holds the memory of God’s presence of Love Incarnate. How blessed we are to be included in the remembering.



Altar in St. Stephen, Vienna, Austria
Photo by Sr. Karin Nürnberg, CSJ

The Magnificat

You are invited to spend some time with this proclamation of joy and praise. What catches your attention? How does this song of praise resound in your life?

*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.*

*He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.*

*He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.*

*He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.*

He has come to the help of his servant Israel

*for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children forever.
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.*

LUKE 1:46-55

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