

Advent: 23rd Dec – And you will know him



Picture: Domenico Ghirlandaio's Adoration of the Shepherds (detail)

The story continues...

This very day in King David's home town a Saviour was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay.

Luke 2 11-12

Reflection

A Saviour was born for you. And you will know him.

The CEV* has 'a baby in baby clothes', because strips of cloth or swaddling clothes meant to the shepherds just that - baby clothes. You will find an ordinary baby in a little town, born to your kind of people, something you would see every day - though most babies are not announced by angels! God comes to the ordinary and everyday things and blesses them with His presence. Christmas to me is about God touching, inhabiting the earth he created and giving it new hope, reminding it of its sacredness. This takes me to [Saint Francis and the Sow](#) by Galway Kinnell:

Saint Francis

*put his hand on the creased forehead
of the sow, and told her in words and in touch
blessings of earth on the sow, and the sow
began remembering all down her thick length,
from the earthen snout all the way
through the fodder and slops to the spiritual curl of the tail,
from the hard spininess spiked out from the spine
down through the great broken heart
to the sheer blue milken dreaminess spurting and shuddering
from the fourteen teats into the fourteen mouths sucking and blowing beneath them:
the long, perfect loveliness of sow.*

There is something about this story of the shepherds sent to see a 'baby in baby clothes'. A very ordinary sight. Although Jesus is obviously quite beyond us, is 'other' than us (note the angels), I believe when we encounter him we somehow know him. He is recognisable to us.

Action

You may like to play the prayer again and consider that Jesus continues comes to each of us in our day, in often ordinary ways.