

## Reflections on January 2013 Readings

\* Matthew's Book draws information from Mark (the first Gospel put into writing) and also from the Q (which stands for *quelle* meaning "source"), a compendium of Jesus' sayings that had been passed along orally. Luke also taps the same two sources, yet each Gospel is quite unique. For example, this month I noticed that some well-known (and not so well-known) parts of the Bible are found only in Matthew. Here are some of them:

- the angel's message to Joseph (1:18-25), visit of the wise men (2:1-12), and Herod's slaughter of the infants (2:16-18)
- Jesus' instructions to leave our gift on the altar and reconcile with others before worshipping and presenting our offering to the Lord (5:23-24)
- teaching on how to give (6:1-4) and short kingdom-of-heaven parables (13:44-52)
- teachings on how He fulfills the law, and on anger, settling differences and adultery (5:17-30)
- the parable about the weeds sown among the wheat (13: 24-30)
- Jesus paying temple tax (24-27)
- *Where 2 or 3 are gathered in my name, I am there among them. (18:19)*
- parable of the 10 bridesmaids (25:1-13)
- parable of the unforgiving servant (18:21-35)
- parable of the workers in the vineyard (20:1-16)
- separating the sheep and the goats at the end times (25:31-46)
- Judas repents and hangs himself (27:3-10)
- *the tombs were opened and the bodies of many saints who had died were raised (at the time of Jesus' death; 27:52)*
- high priests and Pharisees requesting that Jesus' tomb be sealed and guarded (27:62-66) and the rumor that spread after his death (28:11-15)

\* The story of Joseph in Genesis is among my favorites. I greatly admire him because he kept his focus and his faith during the roughest of times. He avoided sexual temptation (hard to come by these days, too) and when his brothers feared a reprisal he assured them that *You meant it (selling me into slavery) for evil, but God used it for good*. Because of Joseph the entire Jewish nation (Jacob, also called Israel, and his 12 sons—the 12 distinct tribes) survived the famine that would have killed them.

\* Matthew is the first of four somewhat differing stories regarding the resurrection. Was there one angel or two? Who was first to enter the empty tomb? The Gospels also differ in reporting details like who approached Jesus asking for a special favor, James and John or their mother? Let's look for the basic lessons and the indisputable truths that lie beneath the stories and Scriptures and not let minor details cloud the big picture for us. E.g., the lesson from the story of James and John is that greatness isn't about getting special honors; it's about serving others. An important truth related to the empty tomb: He is risen! Because He lives, we too shall live!

\* I especially enjoyed reading Psalm 16 aloud. Now I read them all aloud. It brings back happy memories of my public school years, when we started each day with Lord's Prayer and Psalm.