

In CHRIST *there is* **HOPE, PEACE** *and JOY*

OF NAZARETH

It goes without saying that the lives of Joseph and Mary were not like the lives of anybody before them or after them. In externals, absolutely nothing about the way they lived focused the attention of others upon themselves. Their lives were lived as the poor, the working class, the everyday people of that time.

That which took place in the privacy of their souls was another matter altogether. That which took place in the privacy of their souls was only for the Heavenly Father alone to see. These two souls, each in their own way, were designed according to the will of God, and each of them acted only according to that will. Each of them was asked to do things above and beyond the abilities of any other man or woman whose feet have touched the face of this earth. Each of them believed, and each of them was ready to obey immediately without question.

From their first moment alone together they knew perfect companionship. Theirs was a marriage based on the yearning of soul for soul. Theirs was a marriage unbound to the earth. They were profoundly in love. Theirs was a love so profound that they felt closer to each other than any union possible to mere bodies. The two of them knew a richness of delight that went far beyond the reach of flesh. Theirs was a union that was arraigned in heaven.

As the hand of God began to unfold that which was in the mind of the Eternal Father - the marvelous moment of the Annunciation, the angelic assurances given to Joseph in his great moment of doubt; the birth of the Christ Child in utter poverty; the visit of the shepherds; the awesome visit of the Magi; the reaction of Simeon in the Temple; the powerful words of Anna, the old prophetess; the finding of the Boy Jesus after three days of agonizing search; His humble submission to His parents for thirty years - all things revealed the work of God. They looked, they listened, they pondered, they believed, and they kept the strictest silence about all these things. Theirs was a secret known only to