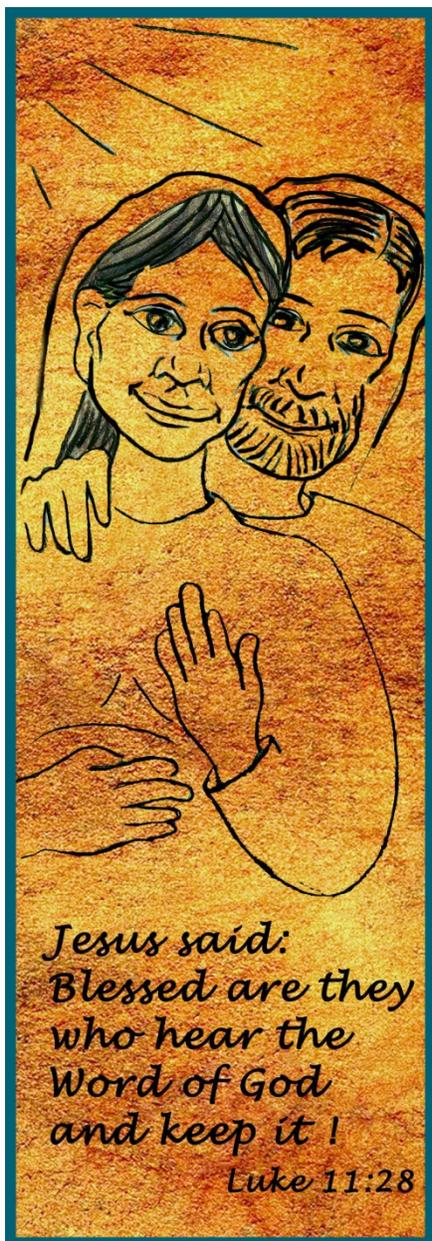


A JOYFUL AND HOPE-FILLED CHRISTMAS!

*from your brothers at Weston Priory*



## Birthing Shalom

THE GOSPELS GIVEN TO US BY LUKE AND MATTHEW present Mary and Joseph as listening with their heart to the Word of God: at the annunciation of the birth of Jesus to Mary (*Lk. 1: 26-38*) and also the annunciation to Joseph (*Mt. 1: 18-25*). Luke presents Mary as treasuring in her heart all the events of Jesus early life (*Lk. 2:51*) and later has Jesus say of her “Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it (*Lk. 11: 28*).” Mary and Joseph are shown to be the first believers and followers of the Realm of God that Jesus inaugurated. At Christmastime they remind us to listen with the ear of our heart to the Word of God and to live it out.

Saint Benedict invites us to this way of listening in the Prologue to his Rule and in his reflections on the good zeal of monks (*RB 72: 4-7*). The Benedictine practice of *Lectio* is an iconic way of interiorizing what we read and what we encounter in life and nature. It births us as bearers of Peace in our world. It invites us to pause, to focus awareness, to nurture a manner of being that radiates the love and peace of God (*shalom/salaam*). It embeds in us a demeanor of compassion and gentleness that listens for God’s presence and God’s call to humbly care first for the wellbeing and happiness of others (*Phil. 2: 3-4*). ■