



**To the Stable; Encounters on the Way to Bethlehem**

...is an innovative but spiritually reflective portrayal of the Gospel accounts of the birth of Christ. This imaginative and prayerful narrative of the Christmas story uses literary creativity to stir the soul, touch the heart and give pause in order to praise God and give thanks for the greatest gift possible----that of His Son Jesus Christ.

The Star of Bethlehem becomes a constant companion and guide not solely to the Gospel characters of the Nativity story that we are so familiar with but to the reader who in a way enters this sacred space chapter after chapter in which they too like the Wise Men, the shepherds and others follow that Star to Bethlehem and a stable.

There is a canvas of imagery in words displayed as we follow that Star and encounter not only Mary and Joseph but also the innkeeper and his wife, a donkey named Samson along with the Magi, shepherds and angelic hosts. Literary license is used as this incredible story of God's love is woven through these chapters and characters as the reader becomes a special guest and observes the *greatest story ever told*, or should I say retold.

Each of the chapters offers the reader an opportunity to journey personally more deeply into the story of the birth of Christ that many have heard since they were children. With imagination and a unique style the author opens the doorway to the stable wider and wider through this portrayal of interesting characters and biblical references so that

events of that first Christmas and the birth of Christ may become more authentic and intimately connected to our yearning faith.

*To the Stable*, wishes to paint through words an icon image of the birth of Christ so that for young and old, this story of love and faith can become a source of renewed excitement as we journey each year through the seasons of Advent and Christmas and perhaps through this reading will be able to celebrate the Season with renewed vigor because each of us had our own *encounter* as we journey in faith to Bethlehem.

Brother Richard Contino, OSF is a member of the Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn. He serves his religious community as a high school teacher of religion at St. Anthony's HS in Huntington NY. This is brother's second book, the first entitled, *These Sacred Days: Walking with Jesus through the Sacred Triduum*.

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