

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Dec 17th 2014

December 17th... yes, every year on this day, the Church wants us to reflect on the genealogy of Jesus. Curiously, the Gospel of Matthew opens with a long boring and unfamiliar introduction. Even after reading those names again and again, they are so difficult to pronounce correctly. Yet, if the Church wants us to reflect on this passage every year in the season of Advent, it must be teaching us something very important. The Jewish society was a patriarchic society like many African societies. It gave no importance to women and they were considered as second class citizens. Yet, in the genealogy of Jesus, we find five interesting names of women: Tamar who slept with her father-in-law Judah to be conceived, Rahab, a prostitute who helped the Israelites to capture the city of Jericho, Ruth who was a foreigner, Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah who committed adultery with great king David and of course Mary, the mother of Jesus. Except Ruth, all other three women were of loose characters. To ordinary Jews, even Mary was of "loose character" as she was found with a child even before her marriage. They were all ancestors of Jesus. Possibly, Matthew wants to show that Jesus is completely like anyone of us, a complete human being and that it is absolutely possible for us to imitate him and become like him. He had a genealogy which had "saints" and "sinners" like ours.

Fr. Maria Arul Jesu Robin, cmf