



Initial E with *The Visit of the Magi* (introit for Epiphany). Gradual, northern Italy, c. 1460-80. Malibu, Collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig VI 2, fol. 64 (detail).

The Twenty-Fifth Day of December

Twenty billion years
after the first crescendo
of God's creative power,
when all the morning stars
sang together;

Four and one-half billion years
after the formation of the planet Earth;

Twenty million years
after the song of the great whales
first sounded through ocean's depths;

One and one-half million years
after humans began to imitate
God's shaping of creation;

We are pleased to share this updated version of the traditional Christmas proclamation once more with our readers. It first appeared in the December-January 1994 issue of Pastoral Music (18:2), and we have had several requests that it be reprinted.

Eighteen thousand years
after drummers began to echo
the heartbeat of the universe;

Fourteen thousand years
after the caves at Lascaux
were decorated with paintings;

Nine thousand years
after the founding of Jericho, the first city;

Eight thousand years
after immigrants from Mongolia
had settled all the Americas;

Two thousand years
after Abraham and Sarah left Haran at God's command;

One thousand two hundred and fifty years
after Moses led the people out of bondage
to meet God at Mount Sinai;

Seven hundred and forty-nine years
after the founding of Rome;

Five hundred and eighty years
after the Babylonian Exile;

Five hundred and twenty years
after the enlightenment of Siddharta Gautama,
the Buddha;

Three hundred years
after the completion of the Great Wall of China;

In the thirty-eighth year
of the reign of Octavian Augustus Caesar;

In the thirty-third year
of the reign of Herod the Great;

While Joazar, son of Boethus, was high priest
at the Temple in Jerusalem;

**Jesus the Messiah,
son of the eternal God,
conceived of the Holy Spirit,
was born as one of us in Bethlehem of Judea,
the child of Mary the Virgin,
watched over by Joseph, her husband.**

**The birth
of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

