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.