

Advent Reflection Resources

Week 4 - The Nativity



The Bible Passage

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

~ Luke 2:1-20



Ways to enter the story

You might like to relive the story, as Mary or the midwife, or a silent onlooker like Joseph, or one of the shepherds, and take the opportunity to talk to Jesus, to pray and worship. It might help to read or listen to the passage again. If you find it hard to keep focused while imagining things, you could try writing your reflection down. Or maybe you're artistic, and you want to paint or draw something related to the story.

Here are some questions to ponder as you respond.

Have you ever been on a long, hard journey? Maybe the last nine months of the pandemic have felt like a never-ending journey.

What would you say to God about it? Are there companions on the road, or gifts that God has given you, which have helped you through?

Is there something special that God is asking you to do, a role that only you can fulfil - could you talk to God about it?

Alternatively, on the next page are the lyrics to 'O Come, O Come Emmanuel'. You might like to spend some time reflecting on the words, which speak beautifully of who Jesus is.



O Come, O Come Emmanuel

and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go.

O come, O Key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe for us the heavenward road
and bar the way to death's abode.

O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times did give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe.

O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night
and turn our darkness into light.

O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem,
unto your own and rescue them!
From depths of hell your people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.

O come, O King of nations, bind
in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease
and be yourself our King of Peace.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.*

