



Christmas Eve Prayer 2012

**We are celebrating the feast of the
Eternal Birth which God the Father
has borne and never ceases to
bear in all eternity... But if it takes
not place in me, what avails it?
Everything lies in this, that it
should take place in me.**

Meister Eckhart



International Presentation Association 2012

Setting: *A Christmas Crib and a Lantern*

Call to Prayer

- R1** We come before the Christmas crib full of wonder and rejoicing in God's Word made flesh among us.
- All** We give thanks for God's dwelling among us and God's indwelling in the whole of creation.
- R2** We come before the Christmas crib remembering the bright star and pray that the star of Bethlehem will fill our lives and the whole community of life with peace and light.
- All** We give thanks for God's dwelling among us and God's indwelling in the whole of creation.
- R3** We come before the Christmas crib remembering the innkeeper and pray that our hearts and our homes will be places of welcome and hospitality, especially to those who are strangers among us.
- All** We give thanks for God's dwelling among us and God's indwelling in the whole of creation.
- R4** We come before the Christmas crib remembering the shepherds and pray that we will live simply and walk lightly on the Earth, attentive to the signs of God's presence everywhere around us.
- All** We give thanks for God's dwelling among us and God's indwelling in the whole of creation.
- R5** We come before the Christmas crib remembering the Magi and pray that we who are made of stardust will be star-gazers and gift-givers.
- All** We give thanks for God's dwelling among us and God's indwelling in the whole of creation.
- R6** *Luke 2:4-22*

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths 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, and on earth peace among people with whom he is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.



Reflection

Reflect on one or more of the following passages for 5 to 10 minutes and then share how the Feast of Christmas speaks to your life and to Presentation life and mission at this time.

The mystery of God is disguised and veiled in the most hopeless places and people, in the margins of life, in the helplessness of a baby.

Daniel J O'Leary, Already Within p 135

When Mary said "Yes" to bearing God's Son, she did not know if her betrothed would discard her. She gave birth in a stable. She lived in exile. She watched the execution of her innocent son. But she knew the God of liberating reversals. And she served that God as a courageous prophet – taking in, pondering, and acting upon God's Word – in solidarity with those who suffer.

*Gloria Ulterino,
Drawing from Wisdom's Well
p 106*

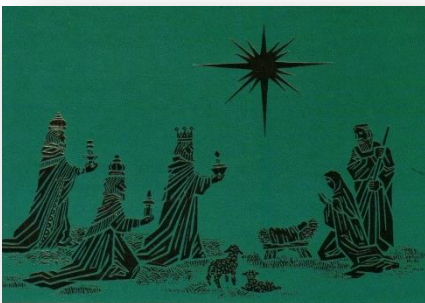
The Incarnation does not provide us with a ladder by which to escape the ambiguities of life and scale the heights of heaven. Rather it enables us to burrow deep into the heart of planet Earth and find it shimmering with divinity.

Avery Dulles



No one can celebrate a genuine Christmas without being truly poor. The self-sufficient, the proud, those who, because they have everything, look down on others, those who have no need even of God – for them there will be no Christmas. Only the poor, the hungry, those who need someone to come on their behalf, will have that someone. That someone is God, Emmanuel, God-with-us. Without poverty of spirit there can be no abundance of God.

Oscar Romero, 24 December 1978



If, as Herod, we fill ourselves with things, and again with things; if we consider ourselves so unimportant that we must fill every moment of our lives with action, when will we have the time to make the long, slow journey across the desert as did the Magi? Or sit and watch the stars as did the shepherds? Or brood over the coming of the child as did Mary? For each one of us, there is a desert to travel. A star to discover. And a being within ourselves to bring to life.

Author Unknown

Prayers of Intercession

L Holy and Incarnate One, at whose unexpected touch the ordinary world is charged with God:

R1 We pray for those whose hardship is overwhelming, those who live in poverty, anxiety and hunger;

R2 We pray for those who are lonely and fearful, who are exploited, oppressed and in despair.

All The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

L Holy and Incarnate One, at whose unexpected touch the ordinary world is charged with God:

R1 We pray for those whose lives are choked with overwork and consumption;

R2 We pray for those who have hardened their hearts.

All The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.



L Holy and Incarnate One, at whose unexpected touch the ordinary world is charged with God:

R1 We pray for those whose spirits are crushed and who have long been in bondage to oppression;

R2 We pray for those who are oppressors and who ignore the plight of those who are powerless.

All The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

L Holy and Incarnate One, at whose unexpected touch the ordinary world is charged with God:

R1 We pray for those who have refused to be silent before injustice and who have continued to follow the star of peace and justice;

R2 We pray for those whose efforts in the cause of justice have left them damaged or bitter and those whose voices are not heard.

All The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

L Holy and Incarnate One, at whose unexpected touch the ordinary world is charged with God:

R1 We pray for Earth, our only home, that she will be cherished, respected and cared for;

R2 We pray for all human beings that they may walk lightly on the earth and be in harmony with all other species.

All The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

cf Janet Morley, All Other Desires Known pp 65-70



Blessing

All We pray a blessing on ourselves and on the whole community of life.

Just as a quiet birth in a manger brought hope into the world, may we in the spirit of Nano be bearers of light and of peace in every part of our lives.

May we recognize the Holy in the mystery of the Universe, in the beauty and power of creation and in the grace of ordinary people and events.

As we celebrate this feast of Christmas, may we rekindle and refresh hope and peace in our own lives and in the whole community of life through the work of our hands and the dreams of our hearts.

In the darkness of injustice and oppression, of fear and despair, may we in the spirit of Nano always seek and follow the Star with trust and confidence in the One who dwells within us and within all of creation.

Amen.