

PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

*Serving St Benedict's, St Mary's & St Oswald's
Warrington*



Celebrating Christmas at Home

25th December 2020

Preparation

It can be helpful to prepare a little space as a focus for your prayer – perhaps by the Crib or the Christmas Tree if you have one.

Song

You may like to begin by playing a carol from YouTube or a CD.

Sign of the Cross

Blessing of Light

Light the Christmas Candle on your Advent Wreath. If you don't have a wreath, perhaps light a candle or tea light, and pray:

Creator of light

The blessing of light be upon us

The blessing of daylight

The blessing of sunlight

The blessing of Christ light

Scatter the darkness from before us

That we may walk as children of light

Scripture Reading

(Luke 2: 1-14)

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.

In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is

Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing: 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy his favour.'

Reflection by John Bell

Light looked down and saw the darkness.

"I will go there," said light.

Peace looked down and saw war.

"I will go there," said peace.

Love looked down and saw hatred.

"I will go there," said love.

So he,

the Lord of Light,

the Prince of Peace,

the King of Love,

came down and crept in beside us.

Intercessions

God our Father, on this holy day, Christians the world over are celebrating the birth of your Son. Open our hearts that he may be born in us today.

On this holy day, there was no room for your Son in the inn. Protect with your love those who have no home and all who live in poverty.

On this holy day, Mary in the pain of labour brought your Son to birth. Hold in your hand all who are in pain and distress today.

On this holy day, Christ came as a light shining in the darkness. Bring comfort to all who suffer in the sadness of our world.

On this holy day, the angels sang 'Peace to God's people on earth.' Strengthen those who work for peace and justice in our world.

On this holy day, strangers found the holy family and saw the baby lying in the manger. Bless our homes and all whom we love.

On this holy day, heaven is come down to earth, and earth is raised to heaven. Unite us in worship with all who have gone through death in the hope of heaven.

The Lord's Prayer

A Christmas Blessing

May the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
and the peace of the Christ-child
be yours this Christmas.

Amen.

Acknowledgements

Excerpts from the English translation of *The Roman Missal* © 2010 International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved. Scripture Reading from *The Jerusalem Bible* © 1966 by Darton Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday and Company Ltd. Blessing of Light from David Adam in *Landscapes of Light* (Paraclette Press, 2002). Reflection © The Iona Community. Intercessions and Blessing adapted from *Common Worship* © The Archbishop's Council, published by Church House Publishing.