

ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH : CHRISTMASTIDE 2025–26

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS AS PILGRIMS OF HOPE

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Ain Vares: 'The True Light that gives Light to every Man' (John 1: 1–14)

**May the God of Hope fill us with
Joy and Peace this Christmas**



As this Jubilee Year comes to an end, St Beuno's Outreach invites you to reflect on how 2025 has unfolded for you as a Pilgrim of Hope. With the help of the familiar Scripture texts, characters, and images of the Christmas story, you may like to ponder these questions:

How have you journeyed forward with hope this year, or faced challenges with patience and courage?

How have you been able to quietly spread love and peace around you?

How have you tried to be a messenger, sharing with others God's hope, even if it meant following a different path from the one you expected?

Spend whatever time you can with the texts and images in this booklet, and pray for the people and situations they evoke. Sometimes there may only be time to ponder a single phrase or image; sometimes you may have chance to reflect at greater length on the joy, peace and hope brought about by the birth of Jesus.



*Celebrating Christmas morning at the Orthodox Church of Saint Porphyrius,
Gaza City, 7 January 2025*

THE JUBILEE PRAYER

Father in heaven,
may the **FAITH** you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of **CHARITY** enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed **HOPE**
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within
both humanity
and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, **PILGRIMS OF HOPE**,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.

May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.

To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.

Amen.

The Nativity of the Lord: 25 December 2025

Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town 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 registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn 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 the same 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 great fear. And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.' 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 baby lying in a manger.

Luke 2: 4–11, 15–16

Christmas Day doesn't always offer much time for lengthy prayer and reflection. But perhaps I can find a small window of quiet on Christmas Eve, or simply carry something from today's reflection with me as I set about my tasks.

If I do have chance to spend 'quality time' with the Lord, I try to support with my prayer those who are extra busy today.

I spend a few moments bringing to mind what happened over 2000 years ago. Then I slowly read the text and ponder.

What was in the minds of Mary and Joseph as they travelled to Bethlehem?

What was their journey like? Long, dusty, uncomfortable ... or an adventure?

Perhaps it was an opportunity to get to know each other better?

What were they hoping for as they journeyed together? I pause awhile.

Later, I may turn my attention to the shepherds. I try to imagine the scene, in the dark of night: I see the angels appearing, the light shining. I feel their initial fear.

I witness their sudden decision to travel to Bethlehem.

Perhaps I recall a similar time in my own life, when I received some unsettling news, and decided to 'go and see' for myself.

I speak with the Lord and share with him what I was hoping for then, what happened on my journey ... and what I am hoping for now.

To conclude, I give thanks for this prayer time and keep in my heart the hopes of Mary, Joseph and the shepherds.

As a Pilgrim of Hope, I examine my journey this year.
I consider the times when, like Mary and Joseph,
I have moved forward with hope.

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*Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem (1602, Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad)
from a Mir'at al-quds of the Spanish missionary Fr Jerome Xavier SJ*

I pause awhile, praying for all those who have been on a journey
in the hope of a better future.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for peace
and not disaster, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29: 11)

The Feast of the Holy Family: 28 December 2025

An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Out of Egypt I called my son.'

But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, 'Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead.' And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

Matthew 2:13–15,19–23

I settle down for today's prayer in whatever way works best for me. Perhaps I look back over the days since Christmas. What was I most grateful for? I offer my thanks. Were there moments of regret? Something I did or failed to do?

I express my sorrow, if I can. What do I most desire for this time of prayer now?

I ask the Lord to be close to me as I begin to read this familiar passage.

I immerse myself in the story. I may want to dwell on a particular word or phrase. What is it that draws me here? I ponder.

Perhaps I imagine meeting with Joseph some time after the family are safely back in Nazareth, as he recalls everything that has happened in those momentous weeks and months.

What was it like to be revisited by the angel in his dreams?

How did he feel as he was forced to uproot his family to protect and defend them? Was he fearful ... hesitant ... anxious about what lay ahead ...?

I listen, perhaps marvelling at the faith and courage of this ordinary man, entrusted by God with such an extraordinary challenge.

As I ponder what I've heard, I may naturally turn to thoughts of my own family: the joys and pains ... the burdens some are carrying ... the blessings we have received. I take whatever time I need to talk to the Lord about what is in my heart. When I'm ready, I end with a '*Glory be to the Father ...*'

As a Pilgrim of Hope, I consider how I, like the Holy Family, have faced challenges with patience, courage and hope, rather than despair.

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Peter Koenig, The Census (2015)

I pause awhile, praying especially for those who have had to endure moving from their home, in the hope of greater safety for their family

Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope. (Romans 15: 4)

Mary, Mother of God: 1 January 2026

At that time: The shepherds went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up 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.

Luke 2: 16–21

Although this first day of the New Year might still be busy, I try to set aside some quiet time for prayer. If it helps, I might settle next to Mary in the peace and quiet of the stable. It is empty now after the noise and chaos of the shepherds crowding round, wanting to get a glimpse of her baby; full of excitement at the sights and sounds they saw on the hills.

Jesus sleeps soundly in the manger; Joseph close by, exhausted by it all, snores gently. Mary and I sit together, breathing in the peace and tranquillity, setting aside any worries or anxieties – basking in the presence of God.

Mary tells me about the things she is treasuring in her heart.

What is it that I truly treasure in my own heart? I ponder.

Perhaps we take time to look back together – truly momentous events for Mary; perhaps more mundane for me?

Or maybe there were major upheavals for me in 2025? If I've experienced hard times, perhaps I can now see more clearly where God was with me, even if I wasn't sure at the time.

I speak to Mary about what lies ahead for me in the coming year. Are there things I want to change ... need to do differently? Maybe within my family there are births to look forward to or other exciting events? I let the anticipation of these fill me with joy, and ask for God's blessings.

Or maybe some changes might not be so easy ... adjusting to life without someone I've recently lost ... anticipating further losses ... facing other challenges in my family, with my friends, or my community?

I ask for God's strength and courage.

Mary reaches for my hand – she is ever-present at the side of her Son, an advocate and comforter for me. I know I can always turn to her.

In time I draw my prayer to a close with a heartfelt '*Hail Mary*'.

As a Pilgrim of Hope, I ponder, as Mary did, on my words and actions.
How do they spread joy, peace and hope around me?

AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris, 2016



A Syrian mother and her baby living in a refugee camp

I pause awhile, praying for all who have been given hope
through the mercy and love they encounter.

May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you.

Psalm 32 (33): 22

The Epiphany of the Lord: 6 January 2026

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.' After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them, until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Matthew 2: 7–12

I settle myself in my chosen place of prayer. Christmastide is coming to an end. How do I feel? I relax and come to quiet in the way I know best.

When ready, I turn to the text and perhaps read it several times.

It is familiar, but today I may 'hear' something new.

I consider the wise men reaching the end of their journey. I try to imagine their frame of mind. At last, they have found what they were looking for.

Can I share their 'great joy'? What or whom might be in the way?

I explain to the Lord in my own words, trusting that he always listens.

The wise men carried their gifts such a long way in the hope that the star would lead them to the infant 'King of the Jews'.

I pause and ponder. How did they find their meeting with Herod?

Perhaps they knew of his reputation as a vindictive and cruel ruler.

Did they have any misgivings?

I follow the wise men to Bethlehem. So much is left unsaid. It leaves me great freedom to imagine what went on between them and Mary and Joseph.

Maybe I find myself there, present, hearing it all.

I notice how much the Magi are moved by their encounter with the baby Jesus.

As messengers of what they've seen, they must now travel home by another way.

I ponder the implications of this simple phrase. There is its literal meaning: to avoid Herod's trap; but also a symbolic meaning, for there are many ways of telling others the Good News. As a Pilgrim of Hope, which is my way?

In time, I bring my prayer to an end, thanking the Lord in my own words for any insights I have received today and throughout this Christmastide.

As a Pilgrim of Hope, I consider whether I have been
a messenger, sharing God's hope.
Perhaps, like the Wise Men, I, too, have
found 'another way' towards God?

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I pause awhile, praying for all those
who are looking for 'another way' this Christmas.

Today our world is experiencing a tragic 'famine' of hope.
So much pain, emptiness, and inconsolable grief surround us!
May we become messengers of the consolation bestowed by the Spirit.
When we radiate hope, the Lord opens new paths along our journey.

Pope Francis (Pentecost, 2020)

As this Jubilee year comes to an end
and the Jubilee door is finally closed,
I ask that day by day, I fill my life ever more
with the **gift of hope**,
so that I can reach all those
who are looking for it.

CNS photo/Lola Gomez



**St Beuno's Outreach
in the Diocese of Wrexham, UK
wishes you a Blessed Christmas.
May the new-born Jesus bring you
Joy and Hope today,
and in the year to come.**