

DIOCESE OF  SALFORD
Department for Formation



God is with Us:
Christmas @ Home

Resources to support Prayer at Home

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Image: Mike Moyers

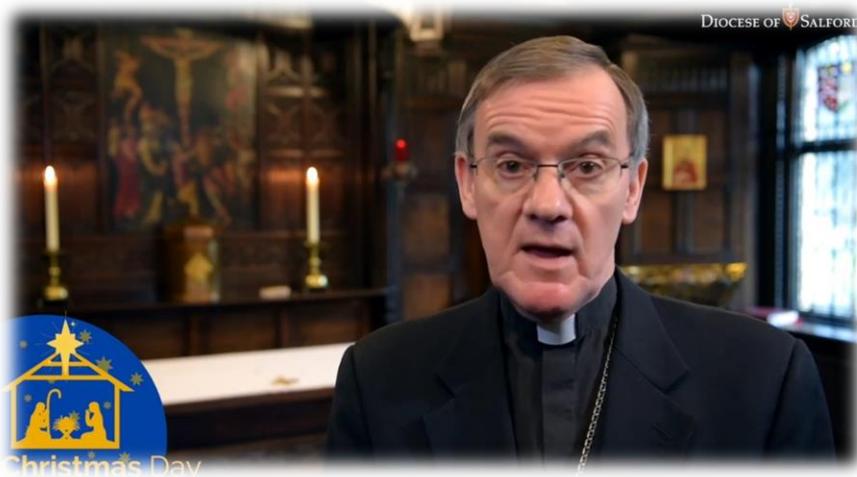
CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM BISHOP JOHN

I'd like to wish you all a happy Christmas, different and difficult though it may be this year. If you have a crib at home this Christmas, or even just a picture on a Christmas card of Mary and Joseph, the baby in the Manger. There may be shepherds around, or the ox and the ass, but the important thing is that there's silence. No-one is saying anything, they're just rejoicing in the birth of Jesus. There's no need for words. It's just a simple prayer being there. I wonder what your Christmas is like this year. It's probably quite different to the one you would normally have planned. You may be with some of your family, or may have decided that this year you simply can't be together. But we are together. We are together in hope. I wonder what Mary must have been thinking as she gazed on that child. The angel Gabriel had made great promise to her that this was all part of God's plan, but she must have been a little bit confused, pondering all of these things in her heart. What is God's plan, allowing me to be here 70 miles from home, giving birth to this baby - God's son - here in a stable. He's got some plan, but I'm not quite sure what it is. You and I have got to live with that sense of hope, that in all the brokenness and the sadness of our world, particularly in this last year of the pandemic. Let's see how our priorities may change, how our faith may be strengthened as we look again at how we can be Ambassadors for Jesus, how we may be Missionary Disciples and proclaim the love of God in our actions of everyday. I hope that this Christmas, even though it is different and for some rather disappointing, that it can still be an important moment of prayer and a reminder to us all that Jesus is here among us, and that he'll guide us.

God bless you, as we celebrate Christmas together, and may the Lord stay with us always on our journey.

+ John

You can watch Bishop John's Christmas message [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=318Alyop9M4&feature=youtu.be) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=318Alyop9M4&feature=youtu.be>).



In addition to these resources, we encourage you to stay in touch with your parish who may be offering private prayer and streamed Masses. There are several resources for 'Church at Home' on the diocesan website [here](#).

If you are reading a printed version of this resource, please visit www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/christmas-at-home for this resource electronically where you can follow all the links.

PRAYERS

O God, who gladden us year by year
as we wait in hope for our redemption,
grant that, just as we joyfully welcome
your Only Begotten Son as our Redeemer,
we may also merit to face him confidently
when he comes again as our Judge.
Amen

Jesus, You are the light of the world which the darkness can never over power. Shine brightly through us today and always so we can bring hope to our world today. Father in heaven, guide us to Your perfect light, Your son Jesus Christ. Amen

O God, who wonderfully created the dignity of human nature
and still more wonderfully restored it,
grant, we pray,
that we may share in the divinity of Christ,
who humbled himself to share in our humanity.
Amen

More printable Christmas prayers are available [here](#).



Image: Mike Moyers

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18-25

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph; being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son
and they will call him Emmanuel,

a name which means 'God-is-with-us.' When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home and, though he had not had intercourse with her, she gave birth to a son; and he named him Jesus.

Isaiah 9:1-7

The people that walked in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who live in a land of deep shadow
a light has shone.
You have made their gladness greater,
you have made their joy increase;
they rejoice in your presence
as men rejoice at harvest time,
as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.

For the yoke that was weighing on him,
the bar across his shoulders,
the rod of his oppressor,
these you break as on the day of Midian.

For all the footgear of battle,
every cloak rolled in blood,
is burnt,
and consumed by fire.

For there is a child born for us,
a son given to us
and dominion is laid on his shoulders;
and this is the name they give him:
Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God,
Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.

Wide is his dominion
in a peace that has no end,
for the throne of David
and for his royal power,
which he establishes and makes secure
in justice and integrity.

From this time onwards and for ever,
the jealous love of the Lord of Hosts will do this.



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.'

John 1:1-5,9-14

In the beginning was the Word:
and the Word was with God
and the Word was God.
He was with God in the beginning.
Through him all things came to be,
not one thing had its being but through him.
All that came to be had life in him
and that life was the light of men,
a light that shines in the dark,
a light that darkness could not overpower.

The Word was the true light
that enlightens all men;
and he was coming into the world.
He was in the world
that had its being through him,
and the world did not know him.
He came to his own domain
and his own people did not accept him.
But to all who did accept him
he gave power to become children of God,
to all who believe in the name of him
who was born not out of human stock
or urge of the flesh
or will of man
but of God himself.

The Word was made flesh,
he lived among us,
and we saw his glory,
the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father,
full of grace and truth.



*The Youth Team will provide a 'One Minute Word' each Sunday
[here](#) (Youth Facebook) and [here](#) (Youth Instagram)*

THE SEASON OF CHRISTMAS

Important Information about attending church in person over Christmas

Due to the current capacity restrictions in our churches, please check with your [local parish](#) about their arrangements for Christmas Masses. Some parishes may have a booking system so book early to avoid disappointment. Bishop John has reminded us that we can attend any Mass to celebrate Christmas during the Christmas Octave (25th December 2020 - 1st January 2021). The obligation to attend Mass is still lifted so, if you prefer you, can join in with Mass via livestream, again please contact your local parish for Mass times and how to watch the stream. The Christmas services from the Cathedral can be followed [here](https://www.churchservices.tv/salfordcathedral#) (<https://www.churchservices.tv/salfordcathedral#>).

Christmas is not just one day; it is a whole season from 25th December (Nativity of the Lord - 10th January (The Baptism of the Lord) or for some until 2nd Feb (The Presentation of the Lord). The liturgical colour of the Christmas Season is white or gold Here is some information on important celebrations during this time.

Friday 25th December 2020 - Christmas Day (Solemnity)

Next to the yearly celebrations of the paschal mystery, the Church considers nothing more important than the memorial of Christ's birth and early manifestations. This is the purpose of the season of Christmas.

Saturday 26th December 2020 - St Stephen, the first Martyr (Feast)

Stephen is the first martyr. He was one of the deacons appointed by the Apostles to organize the distribution of food to the poor. He performed many miracles and confounded the Jews in disputation. They fabricated false charges against him. At his trial he preached the risen Christ to them, so they stoned him to death. He prayed for his persecutors as he was dying. One of them, Saul of Tarsus, who was looking after the cloaks of the stone-throwers, was later converted and became the great missionary St Paul.

Sunday 27th December 2021 - The Feast of the Holy Family

The gospel on the Sunday within the octave of Christmas, feast of the Holy Family, is about Jesus' childhood and the other readings are about the virtues of family life.

Monday 28th December 2021 - The Holy Innocents, Martyrs (Feast)

The Holy Innocents are the children who were slaughtered at the orders of King Herod, in the hope that by killing every boy born in Bethlehem at the same time as Jesus, he would succeed in killing the new-born King of the Jews.

Friday 1st January 2021 - Mary, Mother of God

On the octave of Christmas, solemnity of the Mary, Mother of God, the readings are about the Virgin Mother of God and the giving of the holy Name of Jesus.

Sunday 3rd January 2021 - 2nd Sunday of Christmas

On the second Sunday after Christmas, the readings are about the mystery of the Incarnation.

Wednesday 6th January 2021 - The Epiphany of the Lord

On the Epiphany, the Old Testament reading and the gospel continue the Roman tradition; the text for the reading from the apostolic letters is about the calling of all peoples to salvation. On this feast we celebrate the visit of the three magi who come to pay honour to the new-born king. They represent the whole world coming to adore Jesus.

Sunday 10th January 2021 - The Baptism of the Lord

On this day we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan. Today we celebrate the fullest revelation that Christ is the Messiah and the Son of God - that moment when the voice of the Father from the cloud says of Jesus, "This is my Son, the Beloved."

Tuesday 2nd February 2021 - The Presentation of the Lord

On this day, Mary and Joseph present the Baby Jesus in the temple in Jerusalem and we hear the prophecies of Simeon of Jesus. Candles may be blessed on this day to represent Jesus the Light of the World.



THE LORD'S DAY AT HOME

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (B)
Sunday 20th December 2020

If you are baptised and/or well-catechised at this time please use these prayers to under-stand your faith. If you are not baptised or do not know the meaning of the words, please contact your priest or a member of the pastoral team. You should read the 'harder' parts, and even repeat, if you can, with a special spirit of prayer for your Sunday prayers.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES Entrance Antiphon A: Draw down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the just One: let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour. Sign of the Cross In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. A: Amen. Introduction 1: Finally we get to the Christmas story! It seems as though all through Advent we have been spending so much time with Joseph and Mary, and then on the Sunday we get to meet Mary and Joseph, and there is their journey of preparation for the coming of the Messiah. Some years we spend with Joseph, but this year it is with Mary, as we hear of her joyful willingness to be part of God's plan of salvation. As we prepare to meet Jesus today, we ask Mary to help us. We begin by calling to mind our sins	Prayer Plead forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. A: Amen. THE LITURGY OF THE WORD Gospel Reading (Luke 1:26-38) The Angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you. She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid, you have won God's favour. Indeed, from now on you will call me a son, and you must name him Jesus.	Reflection Sometimes a story is so well known we stop thinking about it - and that can be true of the story of Jesus' birth. From early childhood we have heard the story, and it can become too familiar. It is worth stepping through it with new eyes, to see where we may have missed some of the power of God's love revealed in the coming of Jesus. Today is a special example - the story of the Annunciation is so well known. So let's just pause for a moment and listen again. It begins with a visit from an angel; who said "Greeting" for Mary? It is not the "Greeting" for Mary? Or was it just the words that were "highly favoured" - and if so, why? 'Rejoice, so highly favoured!' is hardly a sorry sentence. This is Mary's own reflection, shared with Saint Luke, so years later she must still have held on to the memory of that "greeting" given to her. It's important to remember this when we get to the other end of the story, when Mary says 'Let what
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The Lord's Day at Home

For those still at home and not attending Mass, the Liturgy Office has prepared a sheet called 'The Lord's Day at Home', based on the Sunday Scriptures, so that you can pray on your own or with your family. It is particularly aimed at those not able to follow a Mass on the internet. The sheets are available [here](https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/news/covid19/lordsdayathome/) (<https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/news/covid19/lordsdayathome/>)

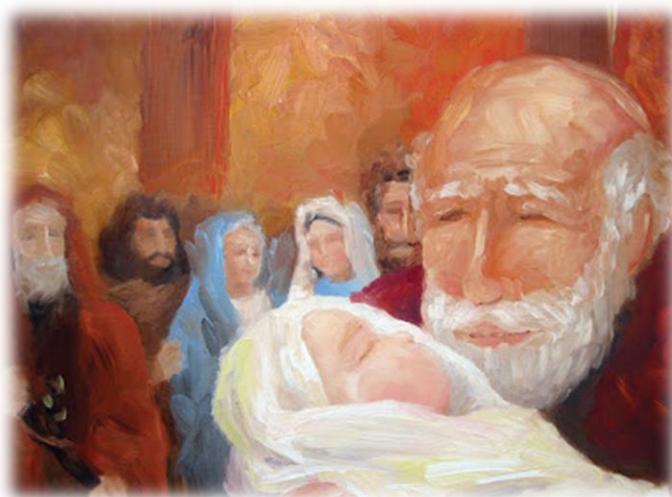


Image: Mike Moyers

THE REASON FOR THE SEASON

Celebrating Christmas, taken from The Church Year for Children (Pia Biehl)



Christmas is a time for family, celebrating together and sharing gifts.....

Amongst the Christmas meal, the decorations etc

let us not forget the true meaning of Christmas.

The Birth of Jesus

Why not try something different this year?

Image: Elizabeth Wang

- Gather around the Christmas Tree (before you hand out your presents).
- Do you know any Christmas Carols, why not sing one together?
- Can someone read the Christmas Story taken from Luke 2: 1-20 (New Jerusalem Bible)

Now it happened that at this time Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be made of the whole inhabited world. This census - the first - took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria and everyone went to be registered, each to his own town. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee for Judaea, to David's town 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. Now it happened that, 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 out in the fields keeping guard over their sheep during the watches of the night. An angel of the Lord stood over them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said,

“Do not be afraid, Look, 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 all at once with the angel there was a great throng of the hosts of heaven, praising God with the words:

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace for those he favours.

Now it happened that when the angels had gone from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, *“Let us go to Bethlehem and see this event which the Lord has made known to us.”* So they hurried away and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in a manger. When they saw the child they repeated what they had been told about him, and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds said to them. As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all the had heard and seen, just as they had been told.

- Click onto the link to listen to the hymn, [Silent Night](#).
- As you listen to the hymn, think about your family members who can't be with you this year.
- Think about members of your family who have died.
- Gather all your thoughts in a joint prayer such as The Our Father.

TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

Taken from the [Catholic News Agency](#) - Original Source: Fr. Calvin Goodwin, FSSP, Nebraska

The song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" is an English Christmas carol. From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the Church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember. To fit the number scheme, when you reach number 9, representing the Fruits of the Holy Spirit, the originator combined 6 to make 3, taking the 6 fruits that were similar: the fruit in each parenthesis is the that was not named separately. There are actually Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The "True Love" one hears in the song is not a smitten boy or girlfriend but Jesus Christ, because truly Love was born on Christmas Day. The partridge in the pear tree also represents Him because that bird is willing to sacrifice its life if necessary, to protect its young by feigning injury to draw away predators.

According to Ann Ball in her book, Handbook of Catholic Sacramentals:

- The two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments
- The three French hens stood for faith, hope, and love.
- The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
- The five golden rings represented the first five books of the Old Testament, which describe man's fall into sin and the great love of God in sending a Saviour.
- The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.
- Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit----- Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.
- The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.
- Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit-----Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience [Forbearance], Goodness [Kindness], Mildness, Fidelity, Modesty, Continency [Chastity].
- The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.
- The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful Apostles.
- The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in The Apostles' Creed.



Image: Mike Moyers

EPIPHANY HOME BLESSING

Taken from *The Church Year for Children* (Pia Biehl)

In many European Countries, Christians of all denominations follow the annual tradition of 'chalking the door'. Your local parish may provide blessed chalk the weekend before the epiphany. You may wish to write the following by your front door, this is a great witness to all who will see it:

20 + C + M + B + 21

- The first two and last two digits represents the new year: 2021.
- The letter C, M and B stand for the Latin phrase: *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, which means: MAY CHRIST BLESS THIS HOUSE.
- It also helps you remember the names of the three Wise Men: Caspar (also known as Gaspar or Jaspas), Melchior and Balthasar.

Chalking the door of your house is a sign of hospitality and of welcoming God into your home and is a great way to start the New Year!

The family could say together this prayer:

Let us pray: Bless, O Lord God almighty, this home, that in it there may be health, purity, the strength of victory, humility, goodness and mercy, the fulfilment of your law, the thanksgiving to God the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. And may this blessing remain upon this home and upon all who live here. Through Christ our Lord. Amen



FOR INDIVIDUALS

- [Universalis Office of Readings](https://universalis.com/readings.htm)
(<https://universalis.com/readings.htm>)
- [The Christmas Gospels - What Good News](https://www.whatgoodnews.org/faith-talks-1/2020/12/9/the-christmas-gospels)
(<https://www.whatgoodnews.org/faith-talks-1/2020/12/9/the-christmas-gospels>)

FOR FAMILIES

- [Christmas Fun and Activities](https://www.whychristmas.com/fun/)
(<https://www.whychristmas.com/fun/>)
- [Christmas Recipes from around the world](https://www.whychristmas.com/fun/recipes.shtml)
(<https://www.whychristmas.com/fun/recipes.shtml>)
- [Children's Liturgy Each Sunday](https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Children-s-liturgy)
(<https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Children-s-liturgy>)

ONLINE RESOURCES

- [Christmas religious programming on the BBC](https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/mediapacks/christmas-religion#thechristmaslikenootherproject)
(<https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/mediapacks/christmas-religion#thechristmaslikenootherproject>)

Midnight Mass - 25th December from Clifton Cathedral - BBC One

- [Pray as you go](https://pray-as-you-go.org/)
(<https://pray-as-you-go.org/>)
- [CBCEW Liturgy Office -Digital exclusion/psalms reflections](https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Flu/Psalm.shtml)
(<https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Flu/Psalm.shtml>)

YEAR OF ST JOSEPH

Pope Francis has announced a special year dedicated to St. Joseph starting from 8 December 2020 until 8 December 2021, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of St. Joseph as the Patron of the Universal Church, as well as the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady. The Apostolic Penitentiary also issued a decree granting special indulgences for the duration of the special year to celebrate the anniversary and “to perpetuate the entrustment of the whole Church to the powerful patronage of the Custodian of Jesus.” During this period, the faithful will have the opportunity to commit themselves “with prayer and good works, to obtain, with the help of St. Joseph, head of the heavenly Family of Nazareth, comfort and relief from the serious human and social tribulations that besiege the contemporary world today.” You can read more about the ‘Year of St Joseph’ [here](#). Pope Francis encourages each of us to pray this prayer to St Joseph each day:

*Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.*

*Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.*



CHRISTMAS MUSIC

External links to YouTube

- [Love shone down](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyijhpaEs8)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyijhpaEs8)
- [Hail Mary](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kBicrhrcf8)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kBicrhrcf8)
- [Angels we have heard on high](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRHuETZuLEo)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRHuETZuLEo)
- [Silent night](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEH7_2c644Q)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEH7_2c644Q)
- [Come, come, come to the manger](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4DUvf7O6Us)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4DUvf7O6Us)
- [O Holy Night](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7Tu68aky4k)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7Tu68aky4k)
- [Hark the herald angels sing](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCt1s44cfMM)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCt1s44cfMM)
- [In the bleak midwinter](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCt1s44cfMM)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCt1s44cfMM)
- [The First Noel](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5uud2fjtoo)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5uud2fjtoo)
- [While shepherds watched their flocks by night](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSyUvOUZwxQ)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSyUvOUZwxQ)
- [O come all ye faithful](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plj6wtHN21s)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plj6wtHN21s)
- [We three kings](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8mjRxBkE)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8mjRxBkE)
- [What child is this?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jroBAL3WW8)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jroBAL3WW8)
- [Once in royal David's city](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRIZ22dn-XY)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRIZ22dn-XY)
- [Mary did you know?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifCWN5pJGIE)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifCWN5pJGIE)

VIDEOS

External links to YouTube

- [Christmas in a nutshell](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXgH8ZlZ9jQ)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXgH8ZlZ9jQ)
- [Christmas story in song](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pW1pbuyGlQ0)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pW1pbuyGlQ0)
- [A social network Christmas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sghwe4TYY18)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sghwe4TYY18)
- [Angels we have heard on high children's music video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-b5IC_Jsfc)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-b5IC_Jsfc)
- [Made for Glory - The Nativity](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqDCY5WCY_Q)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqDCY5WCY_Q)

HELPING OTHERS

Caritas Christmas Appeal 2020

The impact of COVID-19 has made 2020 a year like no other. A perfect storm of a global health pandemic and the start of a UK recession biting means raising funds to help tackle homelessness and help people in poverty is going to be harder than ever before. So, as Caritas approaches its Advent and Christmas fundraising appeal for this year, they have a simple message: in a world where you can be anything, [#BeKind](#) Please donate to Caritas this Christmas to help make a real difference to people's lives. Because when there's no room at the inn for people today, Caritas has a range of support to help get people back into a home, back on their feet and feeling hope for their future. For more information and to donation please visit <https://www.caritassalford.org.uk/service-view/advent-appeal-2020/>

In a world where you can be
anything, be kind.

[#BeKind](#) this Christmas

Text BEKIND to 70460 to donate £10


[#MiracleOfKindness](#)



Image: Mike Moyers

BLESSING OF A HOME NATIVITY SCENE

From Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.
R/. Who made heaven and earth.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture (Luke 2:1-8)

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.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

R/. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The leader prays with hands joined:

God of every nation and people,
from the very beginning of creation
you have made manifest your love:
when our need for a Saviour was great
you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary.
To our lives he brings joy and peace,
justice, mercy, and love.
Lord, bless all who look upon this manger;
may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus,
and raise our thoughts to him,
who is God-with-us and Saviour of all,
and who lives and reigns forever and ever.
R/. Amen.



LITURGY FOR BLESSING A CHRISTMAS TREE

From Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

When all have gathered, a suitable song may be sung.

The leader makes the sign of the cross, and all reply "Amen."

The leader may greet those present in the following words:

Let us glorify Christ our light, who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and forever. **R/.** Amen.

In the following or similar words, the leader prepares those present for the blessing:

My brothers and sisters, amidst signs and wonders Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea: his birth brings joy to our hearts and enlightenment to our minds. With this tree, decorated and adorned, may we welcome Christ among us; may its lights guide us to the perfect light.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture (Titus 3:4-7):

But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, ^{he} saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

R/. Thanks be to God.

The intercessions are then said. The leader says:

Let us ask God to send his blessing upon us and upon this sign of our faith in the Lord.

R/. Lord, give light to our hearts.

That this tree of lights may remind us of the tree of glory on which Christ accomplished our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. **R/.**

That the joy of Christmas may always be in our homes, let us pray to the Lord. **R/.**

That the peace of Christ may dwell in our hearts and in the world, let us pray to the Lord. **R/.**

After the intercessions the leader invites all present to say the Lord's Prayer.

The leader says the prayer with hands joined:

Lord our God,
we praise you for the light of creation:
the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night.

We praise you for the light of Israel:
the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures.
We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son:
he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace,
who fills us with the wonder of your love.

Lord God,
let your blessing come upon us
as we illumine this tree.
May the light and cheer it gives
be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts.
May all who delight in this tree
come to the knowledge and joy of salvation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R/. Amen.

The lights of the tree are then illuminated.

The leader concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying:

May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy, now
and forever.
R/. Amen.

The blessing concludes with a verse from “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”:

O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night
and death’s dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.





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