

## Saturday 26th December



In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

*[Luke 2: 1–8]*

Many people are facing a very different festive period this year. Perhaps they are unable to see family, perhaps they are mourning loved ones, perhaps they face poverty or unemployment. Everything has seemed bleak this year, and the festive period is also like this too, even where we have had some freedom to meet with loved ones.

That first Christmas was very different and strange too. Mary and Joseph were far from family and friends. Mary had to give birth, not with the women of her community around her, but surrounded by animals. She gave birth not in her own home, but in a space offered by another. The first visitors to her new baby were not family and friends, but strangers from the fields and the Orient.

### *Christmas God*

*We thank you that you are born among us  
We welcome you once again into our lives  
As we remember Mary and Joseph far from home  
We remember those who are alone this Christmas time  
As we think of Mary's fear giving birth in a strange place  
We remember those who are isolating or in hospital this Christmas  
As we remember that the first visitors were not family but strangers  
We remember those who are missing loved ones,  
those who are grieving and those who have died  
As we see the stars and hear the angels' song  
May we feel and share the hope, joy and peace of Christmas  
With all we meet  
Amen*

Merry Christmas to all of you – may God bless you this Christmastime

Prayer for the Week written by Revd Claire Rawlinson  
Image: Nativity – photo by Gareth Harper on Unsplash