

Christmas 2021

# THE JOURNEY ONWARDS ...



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## FROM THE READINGS

... The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness did not overcome it. *John 1:5*

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shone.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us ...

and he is named Wonderful Counsellor,

Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. *Isaiah 9:2,6*

Joseph went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth 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 heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!” *Luke 2:4-14*

## THE JOURNEY

Jesus’ story is told with a series of journeys: Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem where he is born; the family become refugees in Egypt, returning after danger has passed; Jesus, Mary and Joseph often join others on the Passover pilgrimage

to Jerusalem. As he walks with his disciples Jesus teaches and heals people in towns and villages on the way. His final journey is to Jerusalem, to death and resurrection and his Father God. As he journeys, by word and example, Jesus teaches about the journey of life:

“Where are we going? After a very short visit to earth, the time comes for each of us to pass from this world to the next. We have been sent into the world as God’s beloved children, and in our passages and our losses we learn to love each other as spouse, parent, brother, or sister. We support one another through the passages of life, and together we grow in love ... We, like Jesus, are on a journey.” *Henri Nouwen ‘We Are On A Journey’*

## FROM FELLOW TRAVELLERS

### ‘Love Was His Meaning’

I was answered in spiritual understanding, and it was said: What, do you wish to know your Lord’s meaning in this thing? Know it well, love was his meaning. Who reveals it to you? Love.

What did he reveal to you? Love.

Why did he reveal it to you? For love.

Remain in this, and you will know more of the same.

So I was taught that love is our Lord’s meaning. And I saw very certainly in this and in everything that before God made us, he loved us, which love has never abated and never will. And in this love he has done all his works, and in this love he has made all things profitable to us, and in this love our life is everlasting. In our creation we had beginning, but the love in which he created us was in him from without beginning. In this love we had our beginning, and all this shall we see in God without end. *Julian of Norwich*

### **When all the stages of life have passed us by, these things alone remain:**

the spiritual treasure that stretches our souls to see what our eyes cannot, the remembrance of how beautiful life really is under all its ugliness, and the love of those around us who make the journey gentle as we go.

*Joan Chittister*

## FOR THINKING AND PRAYING

- What words or phrases stand out for you in these readings and insights of ‘fellow travellers’?
- What insights might you take with you on your own journey?

## A PRAYER

**Lord, on this wonderful day we pause**  
to remember the needy people of the world,  
whom Jesus came to save:  
May the light of his star touch every dark place.

**As we meet in fellowship and goodwill,**  
we pray for the end of war and terrorism  
in your torn world.  
As we eat and share the gifts of the earth,  
we pray for the hungry,  
homeless and those who are ill.  
Bring them your compassion and justice, Lord.

**As we enjoy being relaxed and happy today,**  
we remember the sick,  
the lonely, the frightened,  
the anxious and the sorrowing:  
Bring them your comfort and peace, Lord.

**As we go our separate ways after our celebrations,**  
we remember those friends and loved ones  
who are not with us this Christmas.  
Give them assurance of your presence, Lord.

**O Word made flesh,**  
give us the will and capacity  
to embody our prayers  
in compassionate and courageous deed:  
Fill us with the joy of service.  
Amen.

*Bruce Prewer*



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