



Sunday Reflection Ordinary Time

in the Charges of St Margarets, Renfrew
& St Johns, Johnstone



For Sunday 24/25 December 2021

Christmas – Midnight Mass

Reflection for Midnight Mass – Bishop Kevin’s Christmas Message

Emmanuel, God is with us

St Francis of Assisi in 1233 created a Christmas Crib in the town of Greccio. He wanted people to be able to appreciate the depths of God’s love for them, by being able to see the primitive conditions in which the Son of God was pleased to be born. And so, the figures of Mary and Joseph and the animals the manger were arranged and, after midnight Mass, the ‘bambino’, the figure of baby Jesus, was placed in the manger. The name given by the angels to Jesus at his birth was Emmanuel, **meaning God is with us.**

Elsbeth and I have a crib set at home which we bought the very first Christmas we were married. It is the centre of our Christmas decorations as the crib is the centre of decorations in George Square and our churches.

As you look at a crib this year, at home, in church or in George Square, remember that in the Orthodox churches, personal devotions at the crib are very much a part of the Christmas celebrations. Cribs are visited to focus our prayers



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but not **to bribe** God to give us what we want; pray not to try and bribe God but because somehow, mysteriously, God is with us, alongside us, and when we pray for others, we bring them with us to visit our Lord. As you look at the crib ask yourself the question, what would you take to the crib? Sorrow, anguish, disappointment, joy, the wonder of life's good things?



As you look at the crib...

Look and see

Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus, born like any human baby with infinite potential to Love and in Love to prove God is love, and God is with us.

As you look at the crib...

Look and see

A young, unmarried couple living on benefits poverty with a new-born baby. Still the baby with infinite potential to Love and to prove in Love, God is with us.

Look and see

The poor, the refugees, asylum seekers that Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus were, when they left the stable to seek exile in Egypt. Through the desert that CoP 26 warned us will change and expand, but still the human baby will have infinite potential to Love and in Love to prove God is with us.

Look and see

In George Square a baby, with infinite potential to Love – look at a baby and see God. In Renfrew and Johnstone a bay, with infinite potential to Love.

Prayer for use at the Crib

O God the Son, highest and holiest,
Who humbled yourself to share out birth and our death:
Bring us with the shepherds and the wise men
To kneel before your holy cradle,
That we may come to sing with your angles
Your glorious praises in heaven.
Where with the Father and the Holy Spirit
You live and reign, God, world without end.
Amen



in

My prayer for you

May the humility of the shepherds,
The perseverance of the wise men, the joy of the angles,
And the peace of the Christ Child,
Be God's gift to you and your families,
This Christmas time, and always.
God bless you all.

+ Kevin, Glasgow and Galloway

Please share your response to this reflection to Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk – did anything speak to you? Did you feel challenged, angered, consoled by something in the words? How did God' spirit move you as you read it? Have you shared the words with someone else? Is this a worthwhile thing to make available to folk whilst we cannot meet for corporate worship to share in word and sacrament? What are your thoughts?

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