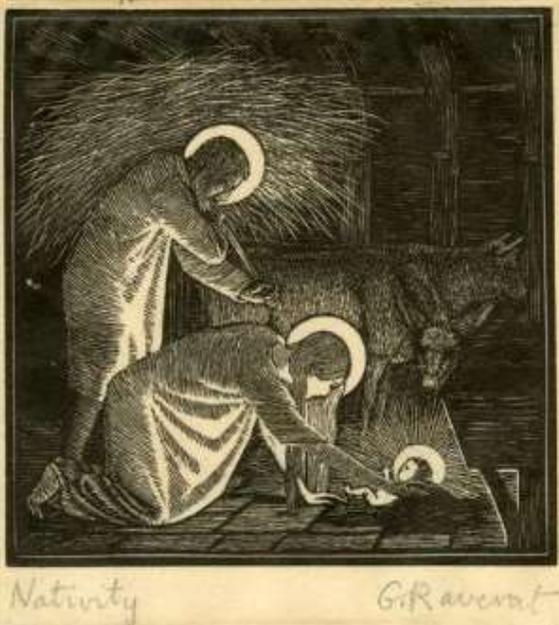


# Observing our Faith - OoF†

## Christmas Day 25 December



*What can I give Him,  
Poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd  
I would bring a lamb,  
If I were a wise man  
I would do my part,  
Yet what I can I  
give Him,  
Give my heart.*

In the bleak midwinter,  
Christina Rosseti

### **About this festival**

Christmas (Christ's Mass) is the feast of the Nativity. Augustine explained why December 25, the date of the winter solstice in the Roman calendar became the date to celebrate the birth of Jesus: "*He, therefore, who bent low and lifted us up chose the shortest day, yet the one whence light begins to increase.*" When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, God came close to us and bridged the gap between heaven and earth.

This is the day when we celebrate how God revealed himself to us in the person of a vulnerable, homeless child. And in the quietness of his coming, we ourselves and the whole world receive the gift of hope and renewal. On this day we welcome Jesus, we show ourselves to him as we are, and we watch with awe as human history is transformed.

## **A Word from Scripture**

“What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it....

He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.” John 1.3b-5,11-13.

## **An example to inspire – Being Mary**



*And all the generations shall call me blessed.*

Why is that so? Because the story of a young woman, who peered out from behind the closed shutters of her father’s house, who carried the heavy water jar back from the well, who kneaded dough and baked bread on hot stones, has become the story of the one who opened her heart so the world might receive its hope....

Every child who puts a wild flower into a mother's hand, every boy who stammers the prayers over the Sabbath bread for the first time, every girl who carefully lights the holy lamps under her mother's watchful eye, they are all the bearers of a blessing. Those who feed the poor, or heal the sick, or pray in the night – they are, each one, birthing a blessing. ...

*Be it unto me according to your word.  
And all the generations will call me blessed.*

(Contributed to Alternativity by Professor Heather Walton, Glasgow University)

## **An activity to try**

Who will be at the crib this year? Who are the despised shepherds of our day? Who would value the honour of welcoming the Christ child and approach with humility and reverence? Cut out a picture from a newspaper or magazine or find an image online and invite them to your crib. Place it beside your crib if you have one. For Jesus came for us all and especially those whom others overlook.



*Arthur from Our Last Supper, ID Campbell*

Take a picture of your nativity guest, put it on our Facebook page, email it, or Whatsapp it and we'll add it to the OoF webpage.

## A reflection

Spend time with the engraving of the Nativity by Gwen Raverat on the front of this booklet. Imagine yourself in the picture. You have come to the stable to welcome the Christ child. What do you want to say to Mary? And what does she reply?

## A prayer to offer

Loving God,  
you're happy to choose  
the most unlikely people to be included.  
You choose the lowest, the least, the unloved,  
the people who don't feel they deserve it,  
to welcome your child Jesus.  
Help us to know at we are all included  
in your loving plan,  
To bring hope to our world. Amen.

## Next leaflet: New Year

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