



CHRITSMAS

Called to the Crib



National Office
for Vocation
Helping people hear God's call

EVERYONE RESPONDED

*'Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you;
he is Christ the Lord'*

Luke 2:11

At Christmas we celebrate Jesus' birth, he is Emmanuel which means *'God is with us'*, God became man to live as one of us, so that he can be close to us.

This Christmas our focus will be on the crib. It is good to set one up in your home, central to all your Christmas decorations if you haven't already. We encourage you to perhaps visit your parish if you are unable to sit with the crib at home, and spend time reflecting on each of the figures there. Each figure at the crib was 'called' in different ways, from Mary and Joseph to the shepherds and then the kings, each one received an invitation from God and they accepted even if they were unsure of what lies ahead for them.

We will focus on each figure, and how they were called giving you time to reflect on each of them and how they relate to you, and how you can invite others to draw closer to the crib, to see each of the figures and to celebrate the birth of Jesus.



THE INFANT JESUS

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:1-5



Jesus is usually placed in the centre of the crib, with all figures gathered round. He can be found with his arms open, showing that he came for everyone, he is calling everyone, and he is gathering all to come close to him.

Pope Francis writes in his Apostolic Letter on the significance of the Christmas crèche (2019), *“It seems impossible, yet it is true: in Jesus, God was a child, and in this way He wished to reveal the greatness of His love: by smiling and opening His arms to all.”*

We are all called to follow Jesus in discipleship, we are called to be in communion with him, we are called to imitate his actions.

As we focus on Jesus in crib, how will his coming into your heart this Christmas, change you?

This Christmas, who can we invite to come with us to the crib?

Listen! What is Jesus saying to us as we fix our eyes on him?

MARY AND JOSEPH



Let us now focus on Mary and Joseph, the mother and father of Jesus. Mary obediently accepted God's will to bring to bring Jesus to us, she exclaimed '*I am the servant of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word*' (Luke 1:38). Mary had great courage to say 'YES', let us now reflect on Mary's 'YES'.

Over the 4 weeks of Advent, is there anything we can now say yes to?

Mary carried Jesus in her womb and in her heart, to give him to the world. As you carry Jesus in your heart, how can you give him to the world in a way that makes a difference?

Pope Francis in his Apostolic Letter describes Joseph as '*the guardian, the just man, who "entrusted himself always to God's will."*' He was called to be Mary's husband and a father to Jesus, this was not an easy task at the time, however, Joseph understood and accepted God's call.

Mary and Joseph are examples of putting God's will before their own, and if we do this great things can be achieved through this. Keep your eyes focused on Mary and Joseph and reflect upon the following questions.

How do we put God's will before our own?

What one thing can we do in order to commit ourselves as we go through the Christmas Season into the new year?

THE SHEPHERDS

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:8-12



Mary invites everyone to come to Jesus, and the shepherds were first to arrive. The shepherds were greeted by an angel who calls them to visit Jesus. The angel states that Jesus' birth will be a *'great joy that will be for all people'* (Lk 2:10). Jesus came for those who need him most, nobody is excluded, how fitting it is that the Shepherds, who were seen as poorer members of society, were called to be the first visitors to see Jesus.

Pope Francis once again in his Apostolic Letter writes: *“The shepherds respond to God “who comes to meet us in the Infant Jesus by setting out to meet Him with love, gratitude and awe”*”.

How would we respond to God's call to come and visit Jesus at the Crib?

A shepherd leads his flock, how would you lead and encourage people in their faith? How would you accompany them to the stable?

THE KINGS

‘Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

Matthew 2:1-3



The Kings we can use as models for evangelisation. They travelled from far away to visit the Infant Jesus and then returning to their own land they took the good news with them.

Pope Francis writes in his Apostolic Letter:

“The Magi teach us that people can come to Christ by a very long route”, but returning home, they tell others of this amazing encounter with the Messiah, “thus initiating the spread of the Gospel among the nations.”

The Kings were determined to go and meet the Infant Jesus, they wouldn't have had it easy traveling from afar.

When God speaks to you, how attentive are you at following what he says?

How have you spoken to others about Jesus who are not in our local communities? For those at World Youth Day, how did you meet others from around the world and share the Gospel message?

PLACING YOURSELF AT THE CRIB

We have now looked at all key figures of the crib. Now it's time to reflect on our own position there.

How were we called to crib today?

What were your thoughts and feelings when you arrived?

What do you want to offer to Jesus at this moment?

Offer a prayer in thanksgiving

What will you take from your time at the crib? What will you tell others?

We hope this Christmas time Jesus has called you into a deeper relationship with him. Be open and attentive and allow God to work in your life. What is he wanting you to commit to as you move forward? Perhaps visit the crib more than once on other occasions with this leaflet and see how this draws you closer to hearing God's voice.

The quotes from Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter on the significance of the Christmas crèche can be found: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-12/pope-francis-apostolic-letter-nativity-scene-meaning.html>

All Bible quotes were taken from the ESV (English Standard Version)