

whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's

side, he has made him known. (John 1:1-18)

Reflection:

He has come! The Word made flesh. Emmanuel. God with us. Jesus Christ our Savior! Today is a day of rejoicing-joy to the world! Today is a day of peace on earth and goodwill to all men, everywhere. Today is a day of hope- grace upon grace! Today is a day of God so loving the world that He made a way. And today is a day to look forward to another day, another coming. "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Revelation 22:20

Prayer Prompt:

God, you spoke and your Word became flesh, breathing a new song of joy and praise into the world. Grant that we may bear the good news of your salvation, proclaiming your promise of peace to the ends of the earth. Amen.

[selected from the Revised Common Lectionary]

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Reflections for Christmas Week

Use this mini-devotional to help prepare your heart and mind for Christmas. You can use it alone, or with friends and family.

Choose a Day This Week: Sunday-Wednesday

Scripture:

I have loved you with an everlasting love. (Jeremiah 31:3b)

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

Reflection:

Everlasting love. That's a love that is without end, forever and always, never failing. In the beginning God began with two. And those two broke His heart. But He didn't stop loving them or any of those He created after them. Through all and in all of their brokenness and sin, He had a big plan, a divine plan, an extraordinary play to save the ones He loved from the darkness they lived in. He would send them His only Son. And His Son would die for them. His Son would save them. But first, His Son would be born in the humblest of ways to show them that His everlasting love was not grandiose or flashy or gilded with the trappings of wealth. His everlasting love is big enough to reach the lowliest places. It is powerful enough to pierce the darkest night. It is wide enough to circle the whole world. It is long enough to reach the furthest heart. His love was strong enough to come and die so that you could live. When you meditate on this love, how is your heart filled with hope, with peace, with joy?

Prayer Prompt:

God of all ages, in the birth of Christ your boundless love for your people shattered the power of darkness. Be born in us with that same love and light, that our song may blend with all the choirs of heaven and earth to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

[selected from the Revised Common Lectionary]

Christmas Eve

Scripture:

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

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. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths 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, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it

wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (Luke 2:1-20)

Reflection:

No matter how many times you have heard or read the story of Christ's birth, let it continue to stir your heart toward wonder and awe. Close your eyes and imagine yourself in the story:

Imagine being Joseph, leading Mary on such a long journey only to find no place to stay, wondering how you will take care of her on the most important of nights...

Imagine being Mary, heavy with child, weary with labor, struggling in a pile of straw to bring a new life, to bring The Life, into the world...

Imagine being a shepherd, doing what you have always done, surrounded by sheep, keeping watch through another long night, interrupted by the most amazing sight...

Prayer Prompt:

O God of Elizabeth and Mary, you

visited your servants with news of the world's redemption in the coming of the Savior. Make our hearts leap with joy, and fill our mouths with songs of praise, that we may announce glad tidings of peace, and welcome the Christ in our midst. Amen. [selected from the Revised Common Lectionary]

*If you're celebrating with those you love, ask someone to read the Christmas story out loud and take turns describing the awe and wonder that each person must have felt on that night so long ago. How do your feelings compare on this Christmas Eve night?

Christmas Day

Scripture:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. ³All 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.

There was a man sent from God,