



### **Gospel reading:**

Now at this time Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken.

This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be



registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.

In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, "Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is

Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy his favour."

Now when the angels had gone from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us."



So they hurried away and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw the child they repeated what they had been told about him, and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds had to say.

As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds went

back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen; it was exactly as they had been told.

### **Prayer at Christmas:**

Lord, these days we are all very busy. Even in our relationship with you we concentrate on the miraculous and the extraordinary, glorify and praise you because things turn out exactly as we were told they would. Mary teaches us on the contrary to see in every event a call to grow, a sacred word you speak to us, to be welcomed as a treasure and pondered in our hearts,

Lord, we thank you for all the contemplatives in the world, those called, like Mary to live in their families and in secular surroundings. Help us to know how to be silent, treasuring things and pondering them in our hearts. Help all those suffering in the middle East and especially those in Gaza this year

Lord, help us and our world to be more like Mary.  
Amen