

SUNDAY PLUS

Happy Christmas!

Creating Christmas



By **Natasha Pritchard**

As a hospital chaplain, the most moving encounters often came on Christmas Day.

Christmas had to be created in such unusual circumstances. Lights and tinsel were strung up around beds and gifts were presented by nursing staff. Our chaplaincy volunteers visited patients, reading today's Gospel and giving Holy Communion to patients and their visitors at the bedside. Families would thank us, teary eyed; patients would reach out a hand

to touch ours in silent thanks. God was more visible to us in those stirring moments than in even the grandest of cathedrals. In their great darkness, we were able to see the light of Christ coming into the world like never before.

We cannot help but be uplifted by the hopefulness of Isaiah's words today: our God reigns; shout for joy; all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God! Today we joyfully and confidently welcome the light of Christ into whatever darkness we are facing.

Natasha Pritchard has worked in Catholic hospital chaplaincy, youth ministry and is now Area Support Chaplain at Methodist Homes.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, watch over, protect and bless me, my family, friends, colleagues and all those whom I know and love. May this Christmas be a celebration of love and happiness. ☩ Amen.

Happy Christmas!

By **Michael George**

Christ is born for us! Christ is born for you! Christ is born for me!

Today we rejoice and give thanks for the gift of God-made-flesh, the light of the world: born for us, born for you, born for me.

The Gospel narratives of Luke and Matthew, recounting the wonder of the birth of Jesus, are illustrated in Christmas cards, are retold in the words of carols and are depicted in cribs. When we sing carols, or we sit in front of a crib we are reminded of the events of Jesus' birth – the place, the surroundings, the visitors. We are reminded of what happened more than two thousand years ago.

The beginning of the Gospel of John speaks to us of God's pure love for all of us, made manifest in the birth of his Son.

In the incarnate Christ, the light of the world has been shared with us and with all. One beauty of a candle flame is that, however many times it is shared to light other candles, it is never diminished. The flame burns just as brightly while other candles are brought out of darkness and into light.

The light of the world has been given to us. All that we see in the crib and all that we sing of in carols, happened for us, for you and for me – and the glory of the Lord shone all around.

May the light of Christ shine in – and out from – our hearts today.

Michael George has served Catholic primary schools as a teacher and headteacher for more than twenty years in Aberdeen, where he is also the editor of the diocese's magazine, The Light of the North.

Feast of the week
Friday 30 December



The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary, bless our family. Graciously inspire in us the unity, peace and mutual love that you found in your own family in the little town of Nazareth.

Mary, Mother of Jesus and Our Mother, nourish our family with your faith and your love. Keep us close to your Son, Jesus, in all our sorrows and joys.

Joseph, foster-father to Jesus, guardian and spouse of Mary, keep our family safe from harm. Help us in all times of discouragement or anxiety.

May we always have God at the centre of our hearts and homes until we are all one family, happy and at peace in our true home with you. Amen.

Missionaries of the Holy Family

The Word of God, who created the world and who gives meaning to history and to humanity's journey, became flesh and came to dwell among us. He came like a whisper, like the murmur of a gentle breeze, to fill with wonder the heart of every man and woman who is open to this mystery.

Pope Francis

Mass During the Night: Isaiah 9:1-7 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14	Mass at Dawn: Isaiah 62:11-12 Titus 3:4-7 Luke 2:15-20	Mass During the Day: Isaiah 52:7-10 Hebrews 1:1-6 John 1:1-18	Monday: Acts 6:8-10; Matthew 10:17-22	Tuesday: 1 John 1:1-4 John 20:2-8	Wednesday: 1 John 1:5 – 2:2 Matthew 2:13-18	Thursday: 1 John 2:3-11 Luke 2:22-35	England: St Thomas Becket Colossians 1:24-29, Luke 22:24-30 or Matthew 10:28-33	Friday: Ecclesiasticus 3:2-6, 12-14 or Colossians 3:12-21 Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23	Saturday: 1 John 2:18-21 John 1:1-18	Next Sunday: Numbers 6:22-27 Galatians 4:4-7 Luke 2:16-21
--	---	--	---	---	--	--	--	---	--	--