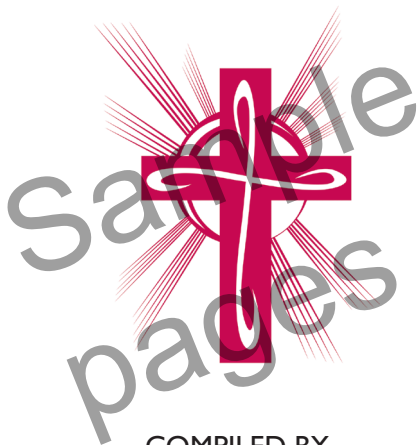


My Prayer Book



COMPILED BY
MICHAEL HOLLINGS

MCCRIMMONS
Great Wakering, Essex

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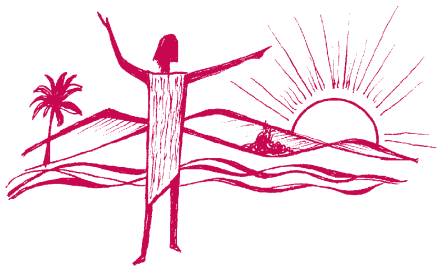
Introduction

THIS IS A PRAYER BOOK put together for use at home, at school or in prayer groups.

Prayer is getting to know God and each other; we can learn about God and each other when we pray, alone or with others. Prayer helps us to share and explore some of the deeper things within us. In a group we can share our thoughts and hopes, our sadness and joy.

We can pray by using the familiar prayers – like the ones in this book – or by making up our own. We can pray in song or by making music with guitars, keyboards or drums or just by listening to music that others compose. We can pray in quiet times or in lively times. We can feel free with the God who has made us free.

Michael Hollings
(1921–1997)



Daily Prayer

IF YOU REALLY like someone, you want to spend time with them and be in regular contact. Well, God really likes you, his love is deeper than you can even imagine. So he wants you to keep in regular touch with him; at least in the morning and the evening. The following prayers can help you to do that. Your daily prayers don't have to be long and boring; just a phrase or short little sentence will do. You could use written prayers, like those that follow, or, better still, make up your own.

Jesus – God – Love
God loves me.

My Lord and my God
Lord, he whom you love is sick
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy
on me a sinner
Jesus, mercy; Mary, help.
Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit
O God, take heed and save me; O Lord,
make haste and help me.

Here are some prayers which are known and loved by all Catholics.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

*Many Christians use another version of the prayer Our Lord taught us.
Here it is:*

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
Amen.

Hail, Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee:
blessed art thou amongst women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God,
the Father almighty
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father
almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.



Prayer of St Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred let me sow peace,
where there is injury let me sow pardon,
where there is doubt let me sow faith,
where there is despair let me give hope,
where there is darkness let me give light,

O Divine Master, grant that I may
not try to be comforted but to comfort,
not try to be understood but to understand,
not try to be loved but to love.

Because it is in giving that we receive,
it is in forgiving that we are forgiven,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Prayer of St Richard of Chichester

Thanks be to you, my Lord Jesus Christ, for all the
benefits and blessings which you have given to me,
for all the pains and insults which you have borne for
me, O most merciful Friend, Brother and Redeemer.
May I know you more clearly, love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly.

A modern version of the St Richard of Chichester prayer

Day by day,
O dear Lord,
three things I pray:
to see you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
follow you more nearly,
day by day,
by day, by day.

Hail, Holy Queen

Hail, holy queen, mother of mercy; hail, our life, our sweetness, and our hope! To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.

To you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy towards us; and after this our exile, show to us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

That we may be made worthy of
the promises of Christ.

This prayer follows the Hail, Holy Queen when the Rosary has been said.

Let us pray: O God, whose only-begotten Son, by his life, death and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life; grant, we beseech you, that, meditating upon these mysteries, in the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may both imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.





The Order of Mass

JESUS SAID “When two or three are gathered in my name I shall be with them.” This is especially so when we gather for Mass.

Jesus comes to us in so many ways. He comes to us in the whole community gathered for prayer. He comes to us in the sacred Scriptures. He comes to us in the ministry of the Priest. He comes to us above all in the bread and wine that become his body and blood, holy food for a holy people.



– THE INTRODUCTORY RITES –

When the people have assembled the Priest and ministers go to the altar. A hymn or Entrance Chant is sung.

Sign of the Cross

Everyone makes the Sign of the Cross as the Priest says:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

The people reply:

Amen.

Greeting

The Priest greets the people saying:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

or:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

or:

The Lord be with you.

All respond:

And with your spirit.

The Priest invites the people to repentance in these or similar words:

Brethren (brothers and sisters),
let us acknowledge our sins,
and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred
mysteries.

Penitential Act

After a brief silence there follows one of the forms of the Penitential Act.

Penitential Act / 1st Form

All say:

**I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do,**

Striking their breast, they say:

**through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;**

The Prayer of the Faithful

The whole assembly now prays for the needs of the world, the Church and the local community. After each intention there is a pause while the faithful pray.

Minister: We pray to the Lord.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

or

Minister: Lord, in your mercy.

All: **Hear our prayer.**

The Priest says the concluding prayer, after which the people reply:

People: **Amen.**



– THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST –

Having listened to the ‘great works of God’ in the Scriptures, we give thanks in the way Christ taught us, following his command to ‘take, bless, break and eat’ in memory of Him.

The offerings are brought to the altar. The assembly may sing a hymn, which may continue while the Priest says the following prayers in silence. If there is no hymn the Priest may say the prayers aloud and all make the response.

Priest: Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
for through your goodness we have received
the bread we offer you:
fruit of the earth and work of human hands,
it will become for us the bread of life.

People: **Blessed be God for ever.**



THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

In the Eucharistic Prayer the whole assembly unites to praise and give thanks to God and to offer sacrifice.

There are four principal Eucharistic prayers in the Roman Catholic Rite. The first section of most of the Eucharistic prayers, called the Preface, varies according to the day or season. Some Eucharistic prayers, such as Eucharistic Prayer 4, have fixed prefaces which must always be used.

The whole prayer is of great solemnity. As we pray it we remember Jesus at the Last Supper asking us to 'do this in memory of me'; we remember his self-offering at Calvary; and we remember his resurrection and ascension. In the saying of the prayer Jesus is again present for us in the bread and wine that becomes his body and blood, offered in thanksgiving to the Father and shared amongst us in Holy Communion.

Preface Dialogue

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: **And with your spirit.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right and just.**



THE CONCLUDING RITES

If they are necessary, any brief announcements to the people follow here.

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: **And with your spirit.**

The Priest blesses the people saying:

Priest: May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

Then the Deacon, or the Priest himself says the Dismissal:

Deacon or Priest: Go forth, the Mass is ended.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

or

Deacon or Priest: Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

or

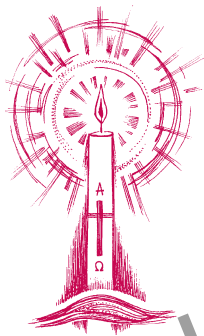
Deacon or Priest: Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

or

Deacon or Priest: Go in peace.

People: **Thanks be to God.**



Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament

IN THE FIRST three hundred years of the Church thousands of Christians were put into prison, tortured and brutally killed because they believed in and followed Jesus. To help them and give them strength other Christians secretly took them Holy Communion. So the practice began of keeping the altar bread (hosts) – the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread – safely stored in a special cupboard (tabernacle). This was called the Blessed Sacrament. Time passed and the practice continued of reserving the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle in order to be able to take Holy Communion to the sick and to provide a focal point for public and private prayer.

Exposition

You may have noticed that in your parish there is ‘Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Adoration’. This means that a large



The Sacraments

THE HIGHLIGHT of our year, as Christians, and the centre of our lives as friends and followers of Jesus is Easter. It is far more important than Christmas, because if Jesus had not risen from the dead, there would be no Christian Faith. (Christmas was not celebrated by Christians for the first 400 years). We must always remember that we are Easter Christians not Christmas Christians. The Risen Jesus is always with us; in our prayer life and especially, the Church teaches, in the seven sacraments.

– BAPTISM –

The Risen Christ comes into our lives first at Baptism. For hundreds of years this only took place at Easter; and nowadays it is at Easter that we re-new the promises first made at our Baptism; to renounce evil and confirm our beliefs in our God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Baptism, or Christening, is not just a naming ceremony, it is a very serious and life-long commitment to live the Christian life. As the following words from the service attest.

The Priest says to the parents:

You have asked to have your children baptised. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring them up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbour. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?

The parents answer:

We do.

The Priest says to the godparents:

Are you ready to help these parents in their duty as Christian mothers and fathers?

They answer:

We are.

After the parents have professed their faith and the child has been baptised, a lighted candle is given to the parent or godparent, and the Priest continues:

Receive the light of Christ. Parents and godparents, this light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly. These children of yours have been enlightened by Christ. They are to walk always as children of the light. May they keep the flame of faith alive in their hearts. When the Lord comes, may they go out to meet him with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom.



At the beautiful first Easter ceremony on Holy Saturday, the church reminds us of the light of Christ, and asks us to join in renewing our own baptismal promises. Do we do this?

– HOLY COMMUNION –

(See Mass and Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament)

The Risen Jesus comes into our lives in a close personal way when we receive the Eucharist at Mass. (Do respond to the words of Jesus when he said ‘drink from this cup, all of you, for this is my blood’, *Matt. 26:26-27*). Because Jesus, our friend, cares deeply for us we should never miss any opportunity to receive Him in Holy Communion.

– PENANCE or CONFESSION –

Jesus told us that he came, as our Saviour, for the sake of wrong-doers. We all do wrong, from time to time, and need to have a change of heart and say ‘sorry’. We can, of course, do that, in our prayers anytime.

Not all failure and wrong-doing needs the sacrament, because we can turn to God ourselves, declare our sorrow and in sorrow and joy receive communion. But sometimes we are so selfish and destructive in what we say or do, or fail to do, that we break off our relationship with God. Then we need to restore this, not only within ourselves, but ‘publicly’ by asking the Priest for absolution and so reconciling ourselves with Christ and his church.

It is also spiritually wholesome and growthful to put ourselves humbly before the church (in the person of the Priest) and Christ in confession regularly, but not necessarily very frequently. Some like a week, some a month, some three months. The church urges once a year at least.

Confession used normally to be in a confessional. More recently the practice of confession in a room, face to face has increased. This is useful in helping Priest and penitent to go forward in Christ: it is simpler to give help and direction face to face.

Myself

- Do I give God enough of myself?
- Do I give time to think out where I am going?
- Do I try to learn more about God by reading,
listening to talks, discussions?
- Do I listen?
- Do I give in to pride – lying, anger, and so on?



These thoughts are just to stir you. Sit openly and think/pray your life through, your relationship with God, with nature, with people. Admit your failings before God.

– CONFIRMATION –

Confirmation is the ideal time to make a free, personal choice for Jesus. It is of no value if a young person is pressured, by family, into making the commitment. The Risen Jesus wants free, loving followers, not reluctant, unloving, people.

The Holy Spirit is vital to each of us. Yet we can easily forget him and his presence in us. Today there is a greater sense of his power at work in the church and people of the world. Giving us new life in Baptism, the Holy Spirit strengthens us in Confirmation. Those who have been confirmed should remember daily their pledge to go out into the world to witness to Christ, and renew it. Remember, too, the words of the Bishop as he laid his hand on you and made the sign of the cross on your forehead with Chrism:

‘Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit’.

Frequently call upon the Spirit in your life, with praise and thanksgiving, asking Him to fill you with his gifts.



Sickness and Death

SOMETIME OR OTHER, one of your friends or relatives will be ill or even die. Do not be afraid to visit a sick or dying person or to see a dead body. Try to face death with its sadness and tears and loss and emptiness. If we believe in Jesus, we accept that we all die, in order to go to be with Jesus and to meet again all those we know and love... in heaven, in joy. But when a person is sick or old, he or she needs lots of care and love. They can be very lonely. Why not try to visit a sick or old person. Chat to them, laugh with them, cry with them... and do a little to help them. They need things done, they need company, they love young people. For you it may sometimes be a bore... for them it is joy... and if you visit them, you may well come to enjoy it too.



The Stations of the Cross

IT IS SAID the early pilgrims to Jerusalem and the crusaders brought back this devotion from the pilgrimage round the streets of the Holy City. Each church or home becomes today's Jerusalem if we walk and pray the Stations. As we join Christ on his last journey our thoughts can be our own on the Passion or from the Gospel story or a suggested text, like the one below.

It is good sometimes to join others, sometimes to pray alone. One single station may prove enough one day – on another all fourteen. You can add other 'incidents', especially the Resurrection.



One way of praying the Stations is to look at each Station, kneel and say:

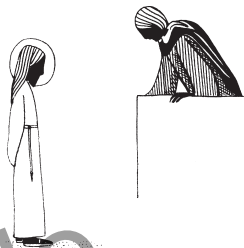
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.
Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.

Then stand and think and pray the message of the Station.

FIRST STATION – Jesus is condemned to death

Our Journey in prayer begins as Jesus' journeys come to an end. He has travelled far and wide offering people healing and forgiveness, calling them to new life, to live the life of the Kingdom. Now he stands bound, condemned to die on the cross. Yet while others might see this as an opportunity for despair he sees it as a further opportunity for faith.

**Save us, Saviour of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.**



SECOND STATION – Jesus takes up his cross

Jesus told his disciples - if anyone would follow me, let them take up their cross and follow me.

As we remember Jesus carrying his cross, let us call to mind the cross we carry. Crosses of pain and sickness? The Cross of having to spend more time than we would like caring for someone? The Cross of being the 'odd one out' because of our faith, and wanting to live that faith like Jesus did?



**Save us, Saviour of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.**

THIRD STATION – Jesus falls for the first time

It is humiliating not to be as strong as we would like. No sooner has Jesus started this last journey than his weakness is displayed for all to see. Sprawled on the ground just like anyone else. As we understand his weakness, so he understands ours.



**Save us, Saviour of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.**

FOURTH STATION – Jesus meets his mother



To see someone you love suffering is always hard to bear. And so often you can do nothing to take the suffering away. This is Jesus' experience at this time, and his mother's too. Yet she is there, with her son, staying with him in his pain and humiliation, in his dying – because she loves him. How could she want to be anywhere else?

**Save us, Saviour of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.**

FIFTEENTH STATION – Jesus rises from the dead

Early in the morning the disciples come and find the tomb empty. Mary Magdalene remains, weeping. Jesus comes to her, and ask why she weeps. Her tears of sadness turn to tears of joy. May the joy of the resurrection live in our hearts, turn our tears into laughter. May we like Mary carry in our hearts and on our lips the good news that Jesus is risen from the dead. He has conquered death and his kingdom of peace and love will last for ever.

**Save us, Saviour of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.**



When praying the stations in a group it is common to sing a chant or a verse of a hymn, or say prayers, while walking from one station to another.

Suitable chants include:

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold the Lamb of God.
He takes away the sin,
the sin of the world.

or perhaps sing quietly these verses from 'Were you there when they crucified my lord?'

After Stations 1–10

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble,
tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

After Station 11

Were you there when they nailed him to a tree? ...

After Station 12

Were you there when the sun refused to shine? ...

After Station 13

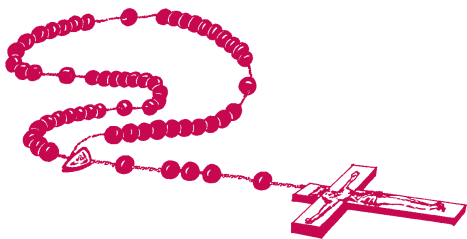
Were you there when they took him from the tree? ...

After Station 14

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb? ...

After Station 15

Were you there when he rose out of the tomb? ...



The Rosary

THIS WELL-TRIED and ancient devotion is so simple and effective, it should be known to all and loved by many. The repetition of three basic prayers *Our Father*, *Hail Mary* and *Glory be to the Father* makes a rhythm which stills the person, occupies part of the mind and leaves one free to grow in meditation and contemplation.

Each person might well carry a rosary (either beads or a small wheel-rosary) and use it wholly or in part throughout the day.

The touch is important, and makes a prayer-memento. One or two *Our Fathers* or *Hail Marys* may be said anywhere, any time.

The layout of one *Our Father*, ten *Hail Marys* and one *Glory be to the Father* need not be used rigidly. But the suggested method is that each group or decade gives opportunity for thought on part or parts of the story of Jesus Christ and his Mother Mary. But just the words may be used, or one thought may fill all the decades. Other incidents in Christ's life could also be used.



– THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES –

Any of the happy events in the life of Jesus or Mary may be commemorated, such as the wedding at Cana, any of the healings, the calling of the Apostles, the teaching to pray, the sermon on the mount, the Last Supper and so on. But the traditional ones are as follows:

1. THE ANNUNCIATION

Luke 1:26-38

The angel comes to Mary. The blessedness of Mary is that she said ‘Yes’ to God’s request. Do I/we say ‘Yes’?

Thoughts: Wonder; joy; acceptance; listening; doing.

2. THE VISITATION

Luke 1:19-56

Mary goes to her cousin Elizabeth. Her love and care is rewarded by Elizabeth’s welcome and Mary responds with *the Magnificat*. Do we do out to others in joy and love? Do we proclaim the greatness of the Lord?

Thoughts: Reaction to others; meeting Christ in others; wonder of God; humility; small is beautiful.

3. THE NATIVITY

Luke 21:1-20

Jesus is born... God really lives among us. The world and human beings can never be quite the same again. Do we sit in contemplation of this ‘happening’? Can we try to realise what it means to mankind?

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

Grant that we your servants, Lord, may enjoy
unfailing health of mind and body, and through the
prayers of the ever blessed Virgin Mary in her glory,
free us from our sorrows in this world and give us
eternal happiness in the next.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Magnificat

My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her nothingness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

The Almighty works marvels for me.

Holy his name!

His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength
and scatters the proud-hearted.

He casts the mighty from their throne
and raises the lowly.

He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.

He protects Israel his servant,
remembering his mercy,
the mercy promised to our fathers,
for Abraham and his sons for ever.



Reading the Bible

A BIBLE LOOKS LIKE a book; but it isn't! It is a collection of books, like a library. Just as in a library you get many different types and styles of writing, so in the Bible. In the Old Testament there are books containing history, and books of poems, proverbs, laws and myths and legends. In the New Testament there are the four Gospels, letters and the Book of Revelation. All these different kinds of writing, although written by people who were living in the life style of different centuries, are the inspired Word of God; the Holy Spirit reveals and teaches wonderful religious truths through and by them.

Do read the Bible; but not as you would a novel; do not start at the beginning, select books and passages carefully. Here are few suggested places to start; these are followed by extracts you might like to read and reflect upon.

- **I Samuel** Chaps 16-17 David and Goliath
- **Genesis** Chaps 37-47 Story of Joseph
- **Book of Tobit** (*A surprisingly modern story!*)

The Good Shepherd Psalm

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit.
He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your staff;
with these you give me comfort.
You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.
Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever.

Psalm of Joy

Psalm 100

Cry out with joy to the Lord, all the earth.
Serve the Lord with gladness.
Come before him, singing for joy.
Know that he, the Lord, is God.
He made us, we belong to him.
We are his people, the sheep of his flock.
Go within his gates, giving thanks.
Enter his courts with songs of praise.

Give thanks to him and bless his name.
Indeed, how good is the Lord,
eternal his merciful love;
he is faithful from age to age.

The Word made Flesh

John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word: and the Word was with God: and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made. In him was life: and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness: and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to give testimony of the light, that all men might believe through him. He was not the light, but was to give witness to the light. That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world: and the world was made by him: and the world knew him not.

He came unto his own: and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name. Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.

The Birth of Jesus

Luke 2:1-7

Now it happened that at this time Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be made of the whole inhabited world. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and the everyone went to be registered, each