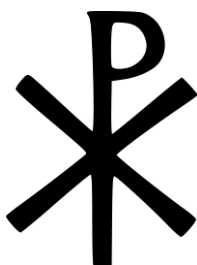


The Way of the Nativity





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Except where noted otherwise, Scripture is taken from *The Holy Bible: Evangelical Heritage Version*,
www.wartburgproject.org.

Prayers are written for *A Collection of Prayers*,
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Instructions for Printing

In Adobe Acrobat, click on “File,” and then “Print.”

Near the middle of the print menu, under “Page Sizing & Handling,” select “Booklet.” Right beneath the “Booklet” button, make sure “Booklet subset” is “Both sides.”

Make sure your printer is loaded with 8.5” x 11” paper. Click “Print,” and if needed, follow your printer’s instructions for printing on both sides.

The Way of the Nativity

The Way of the Nativity is a set of fourteen devotions in the same spirit and style as the ancient Christian devotion of the Way of the Cross. While there are several versions of the Way of the Nativity, there is no official or dominant one. The stations and Scripture selections presented here were prepared for this booklet and for *A Collection of Prayers*.

The versicle and response, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen his glory, ...” is from the Christmas Day Gospel, John 1:14.

The prayers that follow each scriptural devotion are newly written for *A Collection of Prayers*. The first line of each prayer, “Jesus, brightness of your Father...” is taken from a hymn by Rhabanus Maurus, *Tibi, Christe, splendor Patris*.

All art is by James Tissot except for the ninth station. The illustration for the ninth station is by Guido Reni.

First Station: The Annunciation



The + Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin pledged in marriage to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women." But she was greatly troubled by the statement and was wondering what kind of greeting this could be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, because you have found favor with God. Listen, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end." Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Listen, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age even though she was called barren, and this is her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible for God." Then Mary said, "See, I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said." Then the angel left her. *Luke 1:26-38*

Jesus, brightness of your Father,
calm our troubled hearts
with the word of your promise,
for nothing is impossible for you;
you live and reign, now and forever. **Amen.**

Second Station: The Visitation



The + Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

In those days Mary got up and hurried to the hill country, to a town of Judah. She entered the home of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. Just as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She called out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why am I so favored that the mother of my Lord should come to me? In fact, just now, as soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy! Blessed is she who believed, because the promises spoken to her from the Lord will be fulfilled!"

Luke 1:39-45

Jesus, brightness of your Father,
you have shown us your Father's favor
by coming here to be our Savior.
Grant that we also may believe your promises,
and receive your blessings;
you live and reign, now and forever. **Amen.**

Third Station: The Song of Mary



The + Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

for he who is mighty has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

And his mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

he has brought down the mighty from their thrones

and exalted those of humble estate;

he has filled the hungry with good things,

and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

as he spoke to our fathers,

to Abraham and to his offspring forever.” *Luke 1:46–55* ESV

Jesus, brightness of your Father,

you have done mighty things

and looked with favor on us,

your lowly servants.

Help your servants

that we may remember your mercy

and magnify your holy name;

you live and reign, now and forever. **Amen.**

Fourth Station: The Dream of Joseph



The + Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

“This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother, Mary, was pledged in marriage to Joseph. Before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her. So he decided to divorce her privately. But as he was considering these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son. And they will name him Immanuel,” which means, “God with us.” When Joseph woke up from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him. He took Mary home as his wife, but he was not intimate with her until she gave birth to her firstborn son. And he named him Jesus.” *Matthew 1:18–25*

Jesus, brightness of your Father,
you became like us in every way,
yet you were without sin.
Save us from our sins
through your pure and holy sacrifice;
you live and reign, now and forever. **Amen.**

Fifth Station: The Journey to Bethlehem



The + Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governing Syria. And everyone went to register, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the town of Nazareth, into Judea, to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the house and family line of David. He went to be registered with Mary, his wife, who was pledged to him in marriage and was expecting a child. *Luke 2:1–5*

Jesus, brightness of your Father,
guide every event in our lives
for your highest purpose
and for our good,
until we arrive in your house,
and stand before your throne;
you live and reign, now and forever. **Amen.**

Sixth Station: The Birth of Jesus



The + Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

And so it was that while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. *Luke 2:6-7*

Jesus, brightness of your Father,
make room for yourself in our hearts,
that you may dwell there
until we dwell in heaven with you;
you live and reign, now and forever. **Amen.**

Seventh Station: The Announcement of the Angels



The + Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

There were in the same country shepherds staying out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified! But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. For behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all people: Today in the town of David, a Savior was born for you. He 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.” Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude from the heavenly army, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward mankind.” *Luke 2:8–14*

Jesus, brightness of your Father,
show us your glory
that we may not be afraid,
but be amazed at your humility
and the hidden glory of your love;
you live and reign, now and forever. **Amen.**

Eighth Station: The Shepherds Come to the Manger



The + Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Now let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they told others the message they had been told about this child. And all who heard it were amazed by what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. *Luke 2:15–20*

Jesus, brightness of your Father,
amaze us
with the good news of great joy,
and open our mouths
to tell all we have heard and seen;
you live and reign, now and forever. **Amen.**

Ninth Station: The Name of Jesus



The + Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

After eight days passed, when the child was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. *Luke 2:21*

Jesus, brightness of your Father,
you were given the name
that is above every name,
that name that means
YAHWEH IS SALVATION.¹
Reveal that name to us
that we may know you,
accept your truth,
and trust you;
you live and reign, now and forever. **Amen.**

¹ *Jesus* is the Greek form (*Iesous*) of the Hebrew name Joshua (*Yeshua* or *Yehoshua*) which is a combination of the divine name in the Old Testament (*YHWH*, sometimes rendered in English as *Yahweh* or *Jehovah*) and the Hebrew word for *save*.

Tenth Station: The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple



The + Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (As it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male will be called holy to the Lord.”) And they came to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the law of the Lord, “A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.” Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, waiting for the comfort of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. Moved by the Spirit he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary according to the law, Simeon took him into his arms and praised God. He said, Lord, you now dismiss your servant in peace, according to your word, because my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel. *Luke 2:22–32*

Jesus, brightness of your Father,
you fulfilled all of the law
so that you could be
our holy and righteous Savior.
Reveal your light to us,
be our glory,
and make us your new chosen Israel;
you live and reign, now and forever. **Amen.**

Eleventh Station: The Visit of the Wise Men



The + Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, when Herod was king, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, “Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” When King Herod heard this, he was alarmed, and all Jerusalem with him. He gathered together all the people’s chief priests and experts in the law. He asked them where the Christ was to be born. They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, because this was written through the prophet: You, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are certainly not least among the rulers of Judah: because out of you will come a ruler, who will shepherd my people, Israel.” Then Herod secretly summoned the Wise Men and found out from them exactly when the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report to me, so that I may also go and worship him.” After listening to the king, they went on their way. Then the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them, until it stood still over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with overwhelming joy. After they went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Since they had been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route. *Matthew 2:1–12*

Jesus, brightness of your Father,
shine like the brightest star
in the darkness of this world
and in the darkness of our hearts.
Shepherd us, your people,
and receive our prayer, praise and worship;
you live and reign, now and forever. **Amen.**

Twelfth Station: The Flight to Egypt



The + Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

After the Wise Men were gone, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to Joseph in a dream. He said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, because Herod will search for the child in order to kill him.” Joseph got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and left for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod. This happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.” *Matthew 2:13–15*

Jesus, brightness of your Father,
as Israel lived in Egypt
until you led them out by Moses,
you lived in Egypt
until you could return in safety.
Bless and keep
all who live under the shadow of trouble,
and when the time is right,
lead them on;
you live and reign, now and forever. **Amen.**

Thirteenth Station: The Death of the Innocents



The + Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Wise Men, he was furious. He issued orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and in all the surrounding countryside, from two years old and under. This was in keeping with the exact time he had learned from the Wise Men. Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and she refused to be comforted, because they are no more. *Matthew 2:16-18*

Jesus, brightness of your Father,
the darkness of this world
fills our heart with pain
and our eyes with tears.
Wipe away all tears
and hold your promise before our eyes
that you have overcome the world;
you live and reign, now and forever. **Amen.**

Fourteenth Station: The Return to Nazareth



The + Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

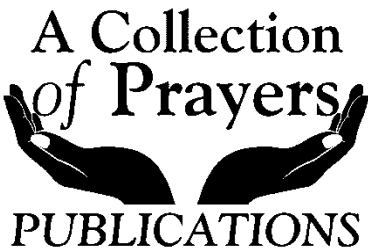
We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. The angel said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to kill the child are dead.” Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus, Herod’s son, had succeeded his father as ruler in Judea, he was afraid to go there. Since he had been warned in a dream, he went to the region of Galilee. When he arrived there, he settled in a city called Nazareth. So what was spoken through the prophets was fulfilled: “He will be called a Nazarene.” *Matthew 2:19–23*

Jesus, brightness of your Father,
your heavenly and earthly fathers kept you safe,
even as the devil and the world
raged against you,
until the appointed time.
Keep us safe from all danger
until you finally deliver us from all evil
when you take us to yourself;
you live and reign, now and forever. **Amen.**

A Collection of Prayers

A Collection of Prayers is an ongoing project of Paul C. Stratman, a Lutheran pastor. The collection has nearly 1,500 prayer entries from every era of Christian history. The prayers are carefully selected and edited to be immediately usable for private and public devotion.



A Collection of Prayers: Publications makes special collections of prayers available as books through www.amazon.com.



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A Collection
of Prayers

A stylized black silhouette of two hands, palms up, holding the text above. The hands are positioned symmetrically, with fingers slightly curled and thumbs pointing towards the center.

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