

## Pastoral Prayer on Christmas Eve



We praise you, O loving God,  
who gave your very self in human  
form,  
your majesty born into our poverty,  
your love lying in an out-house.  
We thank you that, amidst Bethlehem's  
noisy rush,  
we find in you  
a focus for our activity,  
a hope for you humanity,  
a love for all eternity.

But we confess that  
Christ's birth has gone unnoticed.  
Now, as then, we have not made room  
in our day to day lives.  
Now, as then, we have mislaid  
your message of reconciling love.  
Now, as then, we have ignored  
the stillness of your presence.

Gift-giving God, forgive us.  
Free us from our self-centeredness.  
Help us to accept your love so freely  
given  
that we may live  
as you have called us to live.

We are called to be the light of the  
world.  
We bring from our homes and  
countries, cultures and traditions

different memories and images of light.  
Let us remember and celebrate light.

We pray for those in the darkness of  
waiting,  
not knowing what is to come,  
of staying ready and quiet and attentive.

We pray for those in the darkness of  
staying silent,  
for the terror of having nothing to say,  
and for the greater terror of needing to  
say nothing.

We pray for those in the darkness of  
loving,  
in which it is safe to surrender,  
to let go our self-protection and to stop  
holding back our desire.

We pray for those in the darkness of  
choosing,  
when you give us the moment to speak  
and act and change,  
when we cannot know what we have set  
in motion,  
but we still have to take the risk.

We pray for the darkness of hoping in a  
world which longs for you.  
For the struggle and the labouring of all  
creation,  
for wholeness and justice and freedom.

Darkness and light are both alike to  
you.  
We thank you for this, God,  
and ask you to open our eyes  
that we walk in the light of your love  
and share your light and your love with  
others.  
And we start when we pray: Our  
Father...  
Amen.