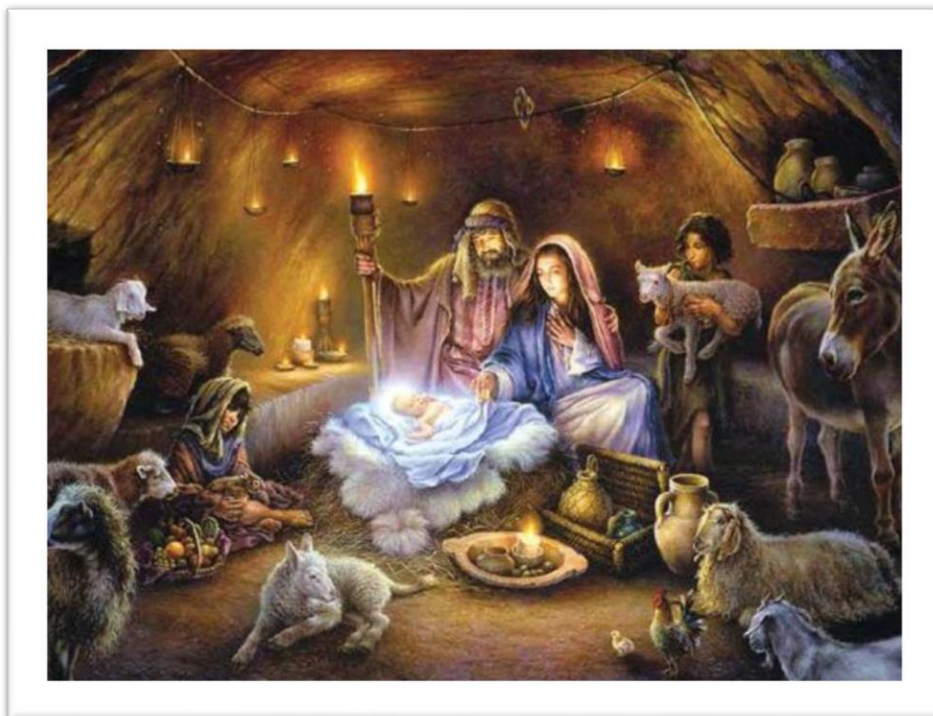


Prayers for Putting the Crib in Place

As you place the following items in the crib or as you draw attention to the following items in the crib, you could reflect on and pray the following.



The Manger

Jesus was laid in a manger, a wooden box normally used as a feeding trough for animals. We think for a moment of those who go hungry in our world, in our country and in our neighbourhoods.

May God nourish and heal us in body soul and spirit and may we in turn be a source of nourishment and hope for others.

The Donkey

The Donkey carried the pregnant Mary to Bethlehem.

We think for a moment of those we know who are sick or tired, lonely or weary. We also think of those who have carried us in our lower moments.

We pray for them all and we pray for the strength and generosity to carry others in their lower moments.

The Star

The star led the shepherds and then the wise men to the stable.

We think for a moment of those who have guided us on our journey in life – our parents, family, teachers, friends and neighbours. We think of decisions that are ahead for us, where we are not sure what to do.

We pray that God will guide us each day and help us to be the best we can be. As others have been guiding lights for us, may we live our lives in such a way that we will be a source of light for others especially those in darkness.

The Angel

The word Angel comes from the Greek word 'Angelos' meaning messenger. We think for a moment of the messages that we have received this year, both the good and the bad, those messages that lifted our hearts and sadly those messages that broke our hearts. We think of the messengers of God's love, light, joy and healing in our lives.

We pray in thanksgiving for these people and we pray that we will be messengers of love and hope to others.

The Cow

A cow often features as one of the animals in the nativity scene.

We think for a moment about creation, the wonderful gift of life and nature.

How do we play our part in minding the planet? How could we do better? Some stories talk about the cow breathing on Jesus to keep the baby warm. We pray that we will live our lives in such a way that we bring warmth into the lives of others with our love and generosity.

The Shepherds and Sheep

The shepherds came to worship the wonder of God becoming man in the least likely of places and in the least likely of forms, a helpless infant. They could see in this bleak stable and in a new born child the presence of God.

We think for a moment of where we see God in ourselves and in our daily lives.

We pray for those who see the best in us and may God help us to see the best in others and may help us to see beneath the surface and see the depths of everything.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph – the Holy Family.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph are referred to as the Holy Family. Their first moment as a family was pretty much as homeless refugees away from home and family. We think for a moment of our family – the people we love and the people who love us. We think of family members who are sick or struggling or living with division or separation. We think of family who are at a distance and those who have died. We think of refugees.

We pray that there will always be room and a welcome in our homes and hearts and we pray that we will never take family for granted and that we will strengthen the bonds of love that knit us together as family.

In the midst of all the presents and the giving Christmas reminds us that the things that matter most are things that can't be bought – family, friendship, health and love. We pray that we will never take our family, friends and our health for granted. Amen.