

## Scripture Reading

### **A Reading of the Gospel According to Luke** (*Luke 2:1-7*)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a Son. She wrapped Him in cloths and placed Him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Reflection – Re-Writing the Script of the Christmas Play**

**There was no guest room available for them.** An account was told of a Christmas play staged by little children in a small town. The little children were all dressed up to act the various roles of Mary pregnant with child and Joseph looking for lodging at an inn. This was a play that was enacted every year and the audience smiled indulgently at the little actors. Little Joseph was a particularly good actor. With little Mary hanging onto his arm, he understood the urgency of their situation, and pleaded with the inn-keeper with huge sorrowful eyes that were near tears.

The inn-keeper was acted by another little boy who was confused at the situation he found himself in. On one hand he remembered his script to refuse help to the desperate couple but on the other hand, he found his little heart melting at the sorrow and desperation in the eyes of Joseph and Mary, his good friends. Acting on a natural instinct he threw open his door in a warm gesture of welcome. Almost immediately an embarrassed silence descended on the hall. The little boy had forgotten his script and changed the whole Christmas story! However, barely two seconds passed when the whole house erupted into thunderous applause for the little inn-keeper. It was the right thing to do, and it was the type of ending the people would have preferred. The inn-keeper who was supposed to be the villain of the play became its hero!

**The same unchanged Christmas story is re-enacted everywhere in the world even 2,000 years later.** *The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it (John 1:5).* The world has written the script of the Christmas story and would like us to follow it. Christmas has become a season of commercial activities, revelry and festivity without reference to the Person whose birthday Christmas celebrates. In some places even the traditional greeting of “Merry Christmas” is now no longer politically or socially correct. In this perverse age, such traditional greetings have been replaced by “Seasons Greetings.” The world certainly makes sure that the Infant Jesus remains in the cold without a room in the inn to rest in.

**Will the Infant Jesus be borne in the manger of my heart?** What God wants most from us is a loving heart that welcomes Him, a heart that is sincere, humble and contrite, that makes room for Him in our lives. Am I too busy with my activities, agendas, my career, my family and myriads of things I find myself in to prepare my heart for Jesus? Will Infant Jesus be yet again denied room and be born in a cold manger?

### **Conversation with Jesus**

Precious Lord, when You consent to be borne incarnate as a defenceless little baby of Mary, You knew that You will be rejected by the people that You love and will have no warm bed on which to lay Your little head when You were born on that cold December night. Yet, You did it out of love for me. Again and again You are to experience the same rejection of the first Christmas night by indifferent and cold hearts many generations after. Lord, I wish to change the script of the Christmas story. I refuse to let the world evangelise to me. With all my love, I welcome You into my poor heart. Make my heart loving, sincere and contrite that it may offer a warm manger for the Infant Jesus. You are my life and my eternal joy and I wish to make You the centre of my life. Bless my holy intention and empower me by Your Holy Spirit. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, form my heart for Jesus only. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.