

We celebrate the mystery of God coming to live among humanity as one of us in the person of Jesus, son of Mary, the saviour promised by the prophets of the Old Testament.

This great feast that marks the anniversary of Jesus' birth has inspired the many joyful customs and traditions that we use to mark Christmas. Many of these - carols, cribs, decorations, and special foods - are shared with and enjoyed by millions of people across the world. But there is more than tinsel, trees and reindeer. There is amazement, wonder and joy here.

The gospel accounts of the first Christmas provide so many ways for us to enter into the mystery of God becoming human. There are hosts of angels filling the night sky with singing; a group of astounded shepherds on a hillside who find their lives and expectations turn upside down; there is a shining star and the birth of a child, which, like many other births before and since, bring hope and possibility.

And the readings for Christmas day - including the prologue to John's gospel - invite us to look beyond the joy of Jesus' birth to the significance of his life, and the saving power of his future death and resurrection.

The season of Christmas lasts for twelve days, culminating in another feast - that of the Epiphany on 6th January, when we recall how Jesus was first revealed to the wider world in the visit of the Magi (or Wise Men).

[Matthew: Chapter 1, verses 18-23](#)