

Crib Service

24 12 14

Introduction

The story of Christmas is well known and well loved. This afternoon as we think again about Jesus' birth some 2,000 years ago, as we sing some familiar carols, as we place the figures on the altar, let us also see those familiar events through the eyes of five of the animals who may have been present at the birth of Jesus: a donkey, an ox, a lamb, a camel and a robin. But first let us pray.

Bidding prayer

May we this Christmas prepare to hear again in word and song the glad tidings of God's redeeming love made real to us in the birth of the Holy Child of Bethlehem and with the angelic host, let us give glory to God in the highest.

But first let us pray for the needs of the whole world: for peace and good will among all nations; for unity and brotherhood within the Christian Church especially here in Dinard and in the Diocese of Europe; for love and harmony in our community, our family and our home; and for blessing on everyone who is special to us, especially those we miss.

Let us remember people who find Christmas difficult: the poor and homeless; the hungry and sick; and those who mourn the loss of a loved one.

Lastly, we remember with thanks those we loved who have died but now rejoice with us on another shore in the light of God's heavenly kingdom.

These prayers we offer to God the Father in the power of God the Holy Spirit by saying the prayer which God the Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, has taught us:-

The Lord's Prayer

Carol 1 403 Once in Royal David's city

(during which the animals are brought up)

Part 1 The Donkey

Sophie Cospain Davidson

Carol 2 51 Away in a manger

(during which the figures of Mary, Joseph and Jesus are brought up)

Part 2 The Ox

Bill Hughes

Carol 3 554 While shepherds watched

(during which the figures of the shepherds are brought up)

Part 3 The Lamb

Helen Morgan

Carol 4 537 We three kings

(during which the figures of the Wise Men are brought up)

Part 4 The Camel

David Norris

Carol 5 34 Angels from the realms of glory

(during which the figures of the Robin is brought up)

Part 5 The Robin

Valerie Trevino

Carol 6 Hark the Herald

Prayers

Lord, help us to approach the Christmas story
with a fresh sense of wonder as we think of Jesus,
the Son of God yet born of Mary;
the incarnate word, yet a child without speech;
The Lord of Glory, yet a baby cradled in a manger,
Thank you Lord for your gift beyond words,
Amen.

Lord, we know the Christmas story so well.
Help us to understand it better.
Make it more real to us
so that with Mary and Joseph, we may journey in faith to Bethlehem;
with the shepherds, we may hear again the good tidings of a Saviour's birth;
and with the angels we may glorify your holy name.
Give us a new joy in our worship this Christmas
And fill our hearts with wonder, love and praise,
Amen.

Holy Child of Bethlehem,
born in a stable,
laid in a manger,
no place for you too low or mean
For you to enter in.
Come to us this Christmas,
dwell in our hearts and our homes
and fill them with your love,
with your peace, with yourself,
now and always,
Amen

Blessing

God our Father,
whose light was born a child in Bethlehem,
through our faith, may that light give light to our hearts
and shine through our deeds.
And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be with you and those you love
now, at this Christmastide, and forever,
Amen.

The Crib Service
St Bartholomew's Dinard
24th December, 2014

N Services: Crib 2014



The Donkey

Being a donkey could be worse:
we're beasts of burden;
we're used to carrying heavy loads.
But my master's a good man
and though he works me hard,
Joseph the carpenter treats me well.
He never overloads me.
I carry the wood for his work,
deliver some of the things he makes:
doors, mangers, tables, chairs,
simple things simple folk need.
He gives me food to eat,
clean water to drink,
fresh straw to keep me warm
and a stall to shelter in at night.
He was a bachelor
till he met Mary
then his life changed.
She was pregnant
so they married quietly
without a fuss.
But with all the fuss of the census,
they both had to travel to Bethlehem.
How silly people are
to make that journey in Winter
with a baby due at any time.
And they call me, a donkey, an ass !
Not an easy journey that
so they took me for Mary to ride on.
I tried my best to be careful,

tried not to jolt her overmuch,
swaying gently at an even pace
till at last we reached Bethlehem
where our troubles really began.
There was no place to stay,
not in any inn,
so I stood there in the cold night air
with Mary shivering on my back
till an innkeeper took pity on us
and led us round the back to a stable
where it's warm and quiet
and Mary is safe at last.

23 10 04

Revised December 2012

The Ox

Would you want to be an ox ?
Would you like to work hard in the fields,
dragging a plough to break up the ground ?
Would you like to work hard in the yard,
grinding the corn by turning a stone ?
Would you like to work hard on the roads,
pulling a cart weighed down with goods ?
Well, would you ? Would anyone ?

But at least at night I get peace,
safe in a stable at the back of an inn
with water and food, a stall and some hay,
safe in the warmth and the darkness of night.
But then one night, quite out of the blue,
my owner arrived with a man and his wife.
They cleared out a stall to make them at home,
cleaned out a manger and put in fresh straw.
Then all went quiet
Till the next thing I heard was a cry.
We'd been joined by a new baby boy.
They cleaned up the child
and wrapped him in cloth
then laid him gently
in the manger to sleep.

On that dark night, light came to my stable.
On that dark night, light shone from his stall.
That dark night makes light our load.

The Lamb

It's good to be a lamb:
the freedom of the hills,
the space to run,
to jump, to play.
There's milk from my mum
and grass enough to eat.
And the shepherds are okay
especially the boy, Reuben,
who picks me up
to cradle me in his arms.
There I feel safe
in the warmth of his smell.

One night in the fold,
sheltered from the wind
by a low wall,
by the light of a fire,
I could see Reuben,
talking with his friends
when suddenly,
without warning,
a bright light appeared
and I heard a voice
and I could feel their fear
as our flock stirred,
ill-at-ease.

"Don't be afraid,"
said the voice.
"Tonight in Bethlehem,

the Saviour has been born.
He's been wrapped in swaddling clothes
and been laid in a manger for a bed."
Then the night sky turned to day
and a choir of angels sang,
'Glory to God in the highest
and peace to his people on earth.'

Then the darkness surged back
and Reuben scooped me up.
We ran as fast as they could,
down to the sleeping town
where all was just
as the angel had said.

Shyly, Reuben set me on the floor
at the feet of the baby's mother –
a lamb for the Lamb of God.

25 10 04

Revised December 2012

The Camel

Ships of the desert,
are we camels not
stately beasts of burden,
the heart of a caravan train ?
Do we not bear
wealth across continents:
spices and silks,
perfume and ivory,
precious metals,
jewels fit for a king ?
But I am not
of the common herd:
my master is a Magus,
one who understands
the mystery of stars,
in the heavens
interprets Man's fate.
When news came
of a new star
rising in the East,
my master knew already,
had already seen the sign
of the coming Messiah,
the birth of the High King.
When the day was right,
we set off westwards –
a modest train:
three magi,
soldiers, servants,
sufficient for our needs.

Following the star,
we came to Jerusalem,
where Herod the Great
received us in his palace
with the respect
due to Magi
of my master's rank.
The child was not there
so off we set again
on to Bethlehem
where we found him,
paid him his due,
bestowed our gifts:
gold, frankincense, myrrh,
and then we left.
We had followed his star
to find the new star,
the light in the West.

27 10 04

Revised December 2012

The Robin

I'm not afraid.
I'm not afraid of anything
or afraid of anyone.
True, I'm small in body
but not in heart.
My heart's as big
as the tallest tree
up to which I fly.
My beak is sharp –
trust me !

Robins have always been here.
Rouge Gorge the French call us.
Robin Redbreasts,
the favourite Christmas card,
the image of the season
if not the reason for the birth.

But I was there
though the Gospels never mention it
nor tell you what I did.
Yes, they tell of an inn
and a stable where he was born
and a manger where he was laid.
And they mention it was night
but not how cold it was
or the fire which kept them warm.
It wasn't just the shepherds
keeping watch that night –
I was there too.

I saw them fall asleep.
I saw a burning twig
fall into the straw !
Before the flame could catch,
I caught it –
flaming in my beak !
Ignoring the heat,
I flew away
to drop it in water
out of harm's way.
But harm was done:
the flame had scorched my breast,
turning these feathers red . . .

And that is why today
robins are red breasts,
our badge of courage,
to mark our service,
to the Lord of Creation
then a sleeping child.

27 1 09

Revised December 2012