

LIVING FAITH

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)
DECEMBER 25, 2017

THE GOSPEL FOR TODAY

Luke 2:1-14



In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

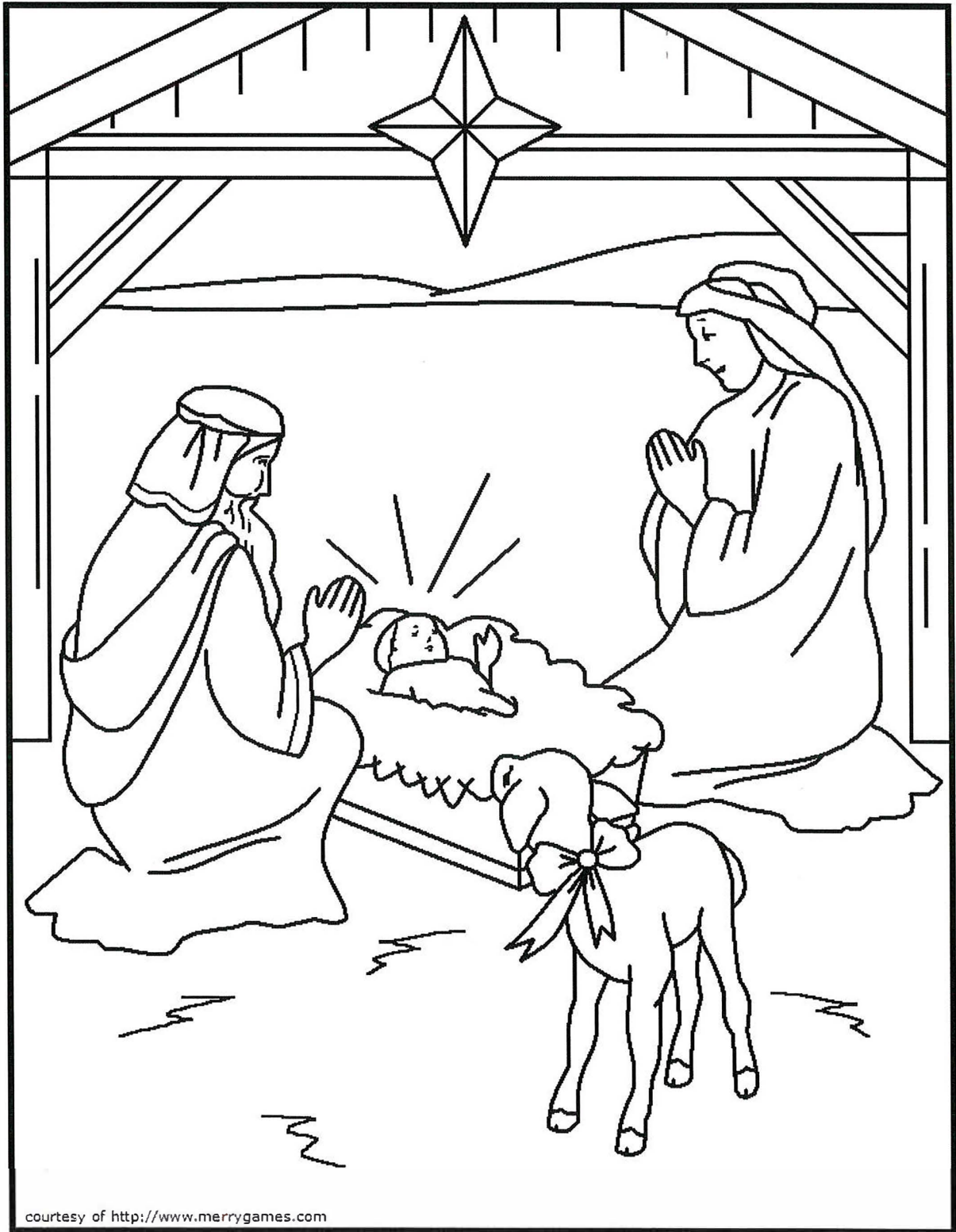
TAKING THE GOSPEL HOME

This story is full of unexpected things, for our God is a God of surprises. Who would have expected that the Son of God would be born to a young, poor couple? Who would have thought that the Son of God would be born to refugees? Who would have thought that the Son of God would be born, not in a palace, but a barn? Who would have thought that the angels would tell this good news not to the rich, but to the poorest of the poor, the shepherds?

You are made in the image and likeness of this God of surprises.

- Who will you surprise today?
- What good news will you bring?

Nativity Coloring page



The archdiocese of St. John's has begun the exciting and challenging process of implementing our renewal plan, "A Promise of New Life . . . Courage to Renew." For more information please contact Peter Whittle, Renewal Plan Coordinator

**709-726-3660 Ext 280 Fax: 709-726-8021 Cellular: (709) 697-1998 pwhittle@rcsj.org
Visit: <https://rcsj.org/strategic-planning-2>**

THE CHURCH TEACHES THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION



A “mystery,” in the Catholic understanding, means “that which awaits disclosure or interpretation”. In the Catholic Church, the Latin term is *mysterium fidei*, “mystery of faith”, defined in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1997) to mean a mystery hidden in God, which can never be known unless revealed by God. We are not meant to understand these mysteries, but to live them.

The Incarnation is one of the central truths of our faith. It describes how, in Jesus, God took on human flesh, and became one of us. Why? Because God loves us.

This is a deep and beautiful teaching. The Creator of the Universe became human for our sake. In becoming fully human, Jesus was also fully God. This is what is meant when we talk of the “two natures of Jesus: human and divine.

Have you ever watched a person from one of the Eastern Rites of the Catholic Church bless themselves? Their fingers tell so much about this teaching... take a look!

MAKING THE SIGN OF THE CROSS



With the Right hand, place the Thumb, First and Second finger together. This represents the Holy Trinity – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit – One God.

The last two fingers are placed to the palm of the hand. This represents the two natures of Jesus Christ, both fully human and fully Divine, who came down to earth (2 fingers placed in palm) for the salvation of mankind.

With the Right hand in this position:

- Touch the forehead first. Then,
- Touch the center of the chest. Then,
- Touch the right shoulder. Then, lastly,
- Touch the left shoulder.

The significance of this action is blessing one's self in the name of the Holy Trinity – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It is the physical action of dedicating one's entire being to the Will of God. Often the crossing is accompanied with the words, “In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”.

The movement of the hand in the Orthodox Tradition can also be thought of as a personal prayer that is aligned with the wisdom and the teachings of the Apostles, Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; and Luke 10:27. “I will love the Lord my God with all of my mind (touch the forehead), all of my soul (touch the center of chest), all of my strength (touch the right shoulder), and, all of my heart (end on the heart)”.

Orthodox Christians end the sign of the Cross over their heart.

✠

Subscribe to our weekly catechetical resource. E-Mail: Familycatechesis@rcsj.org

CHRISTMAS PEOPLE BRINGING THE GOOD NEWS WHERE PEOPLE MOST NEED TO HEAR IT



L'Arche Avalon, an incorporated charitable organization, is dedicated to the establishment of L'Arche homes and communities. Adults with intellectual disabilities - who are the core members - and their assistants live together in family-like settings, where mutual dependence is fostered, where spiritual and social well-being is promoted and supported.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

- How can you welcome Jesus today?
- Can you think of a time when Jesus came to you in an unexpected way?

THE PURPOSE OF L'ARCHE AVALON IS TO...

- Establish home(s) for individuals with intellectual disabilities and their live-in assistants.
- Plan and host gatherings which reflect the L'Arche model of community and celebrate diversity, promote socialization, enhance belonging, and support mutuality.
- Plan and organize activities specifically for the involvement of our core members (the term used for those with intellectual disabilities in L'Arche communities - because they are the core!). We come together as a community and offer monthly 'walks' and 'jam circles' which help foster the growth of our community.



YOU CAN CONTACT L'ARCHE AVALON FOR MORE INFORMATION:

L'Arche Avalon
PO BOX 1573, Stn. C
St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador
A1C 5P3

e-mail: office@larcheavalon.ca



<https://www.cornerstonehousingociety.ca/>