



Reading Luke 2.1-3

Thought The powerful can move the powerless at will: Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem; inconvenient, dangerous, but dictates must be obeyed. The world abounds in population movements now, and the powerless ignore the powerful at their peril. Jesus came into that situation.

Prayer **Lord Jesus, at this season of your birth, we pray for those who are in transit from home to strange places at the decree of the powerful. Bless families who are away from familiar places and people, and may we not forget in the celebrations, that you were born in an alien city.**

Reading Luke 2.8-20

Thought The shepherds were looked down on. They had a hard and dirty job, long hours and no respect. Many today, including children, have hard and dirty jobs, no respect or status. Devalued people are one step away from valueless people in the eyes of the abuser, and a reminder that human value withheld is a failure.

Prayer **Creator God, it is written that you created human beings from dust. Forgive us when we treat others, or allow them to be treated as no more than dust. It is also written that you breathed into them the Breath of God. Help us always to remember that human beings are of infinite worth. May we never treat anyone as less than a child of God or allow silence to condone torture or abuse. The Christ-child was protected: may our voices speak out for the vulnerable.**

Reading Matthew 2.13-18

Thought Mother, father, child, running from danger and possible death to a strange country. Seeking refuge, so refugees. Seeking safety, so asylum seekers. An ongoing saga in which God is still heavily involved.

Prayer **Merciful Father, still the broken ragged lines of your children come. Hounded and pursued on the way to a safe haven. Forgive the failings that allow such fear to exist. Forgive the silence that does not speak a word for justice. The Christ-child one day returned home; may the time come when there are new rulers in the countries of the oppressed, and may they too be able to return to a home of safety and justice.**