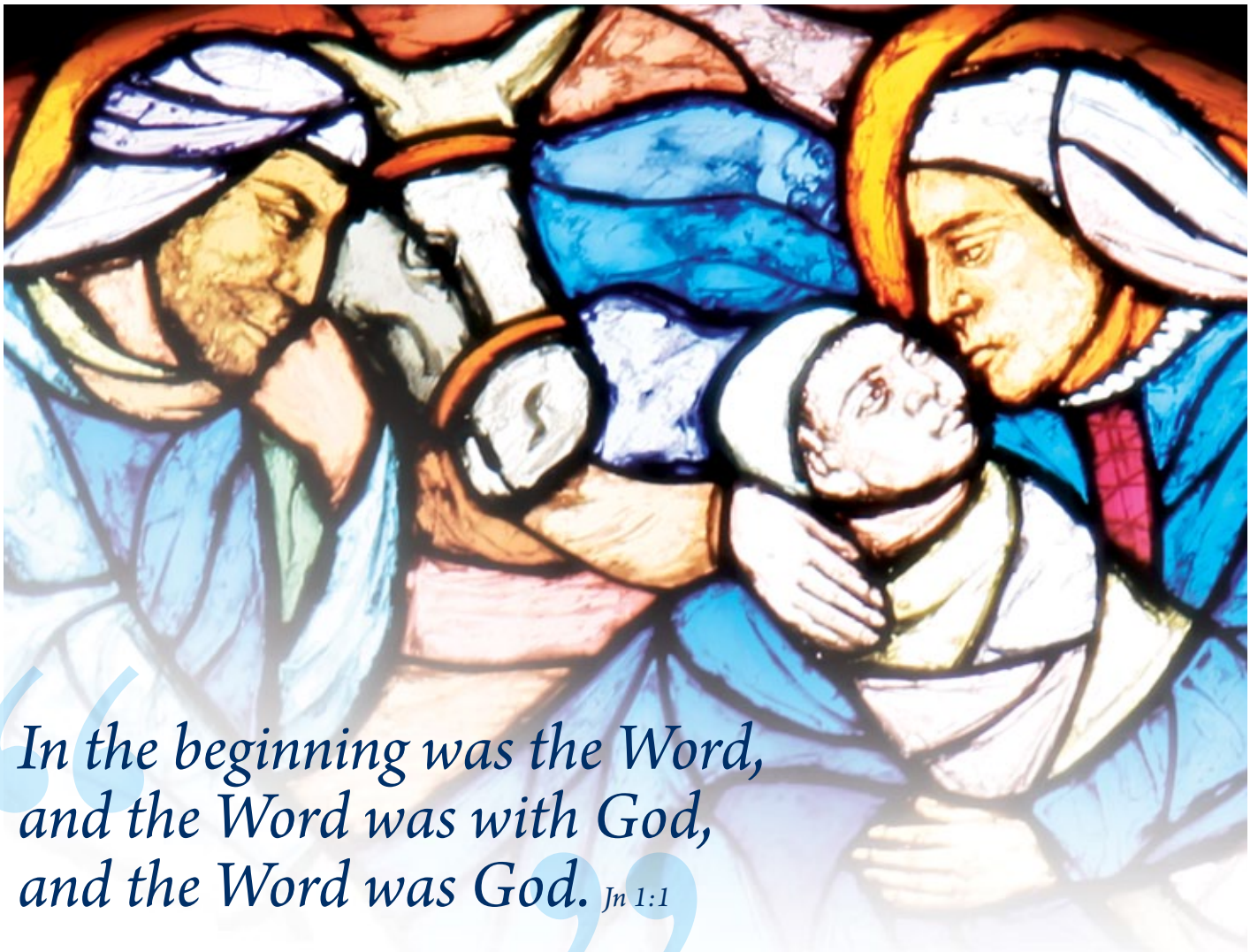


# PRAYER SERVICE FOR MERCY SISTERS AND ASSOCIATES

Christmas Eve or Day, 2010.



*In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God. Jn 1:1*

**GREETING:** In the calm of the cave a new Light shone upon the earth. The Word became flesh and Glory shone across the world giving new hope to all God's people.

All who welcomed the Word were empowered to become 'children of God' and will shine among the heavenly stars giving new hope for all eternity. Alleluia, alleluia.

**DOXOLOGY:** Glory be to our God, the source of Light and of every beginning;  
to the Word made flesh, who in today's saving act gifted us with new life;  
to the Spirit who hovered over the first waters and became the Fountain which gives life to everything on earth.

May the Light, Word and Glory which has existed since the beginning continue to surround us and be completed in us. Amen.

**HYMN:** Silent Night or any suitable Carol

**ANTIPHON:** In the awesome silence of the night, and gifting us with a new dawn, our God came to save us.

**PSALMS 97** 1-6, 8 & 11-12 *The Glory of God's Reign*

Let our God be praised! Let the earth rejoice;  
let the many coastlands be glad!  
Clouds and darkness have disappeared;  
righteousness and justice stand firm for ever.



# PRAYER SERVICE FOR MERCY SISTERS AND ASSOCIATES

Christmas Eve or Day, 2010.

The mountains melt like wax before our God,  
before the Creator of all the earth.

The heavens proclaim God's righteousness;  
and all the peoples behold God's glory.

Zion hears and is glad,  
and the daughters of Judah rejoice,  
because of your compassion, O God.

Light dawns for the merciful,  
and joy for the upright in heart.  
Rejoice in our God, O you hearers,  
and give thanks to God's holy name!

Glory be to our Creator, the source of Light and of every beginning;  
to the Word made flesh, who in today's saving act gifted us with new life;  
to the Spirit who hovered over the first waters  
and became the Fountain which gives life to everything on earth.

May the Light, Word and Glory which has existed since the beginning  
continue to surround us and be completed in us. Amen.

**ANTIPHON:** In the awesome silence of the night, and gifting us with a new dawn, our God came to save us.

**SCRIPTURE READING** JN 1:1-5 & 9-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.... The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

(Gospel for the final Mass on Christmas Day, Translation – New RSV).

**'REFLECTION:**

Generous God,  
I have read much about your Word throughout the two great Testaments:  
Your Word, creation took shape, the great beginning:

Light shone  
Darkness disappeared  
Life erupted  
Waters flowed  
Nature blossomed  
Humanity was born  
Your Word, humanity listened but did not hear  
Disaster threatened.





# PRAYER SERVICE FOR MERCY SISTERS AND ASSOCIATES

Christmas Eve or Day, 2010.

Your Word – a Promise, Abraham responded in faith – a new beginning and a new people  
Your Word – the Law, Moses responded taking your mantle from the mountain and enwrapping your people – a new way of living and loving – a covenant with your people.  
Your Word – the prophets listened and decoded your messages giving new hope to your people  
Your Word – Law, Revelation and Promise continued to be central to your message, an endless plea for a response from humanity.  
More than the food that the earth produced in such great variety; it was, and still is, your Word – the heavenly manna – that gave and continues to give nourishment to all who listen, hear and respond in faith.

It was the interior response of my foremothers and forefathers that demonstrated what it means to live an active life of faith hope and love. Ideally, it is the same today:

Faith, Your Word accepted and revered, your revelation of yourself as my God

Hope, Your Word to me and trusted as a promise of an eternity in glory with you

Love, Your Word welcomed by me as my rule of life to be lived out in loving service to others.

In Old Testament times you spoke your Word to a select few and trusted them with the spiritual care of your people. It often met with rejection!

\*\* In today's Scripture reading, John is taking us back to the origin of time and forward to the beatific vision.

Today the Word became flesh.

The intention was to enlighten humanity.

A new beginning was inaugurated

A new Light shone across the cosmos.

A new Revelation would generate a New Image

A new Dawn would bring forth a New Law

A new Prophet would carve out a New Path.

You would no longer speak to a privileged individual or small group.

From now on Jesus, your Living Logos, would address:

all peoples

all races

and ages.

The mantle of the mountain would be replaced by Nourishment from the manger because:

The Word had taken on our human nature and chosen humility over arrogance.

The new aim would be to enable humanity to share in your beatific vision!

The mystery of the prophetic Word initiated in the Old Testament would achieve its perfect completion in Jesus.

For this marvellous miracle, Gracious God, I thank you. I know that I like many of my brothers and sisters across the globe will:

'hear' (Mat 13:23)

'accept' (Mk 4:20)

and 'keep' (Lk8:15)

this Word with different degrees of love and fidelity at different times in my life.

Right now I kneel in awe at what you have done to redeem me.



# PRAYER SERVICE FOR MERCY SISTERS AND ASSOCIATES

Christmas Eve or Day, 2010.

On this Christmas morning I pray for:  
a greater love  
a deeper faith  
and a more profound understanding,  
so that, as I near my journey's end, you will find that my house has been built, not on sand,  
but on solid rock (Matt 7:25). Amen.

## IN AFFIRMATION AND PETITION:

Birth of God – Be the joy and thanksgiving of every couple blest with new life today and always.  
Gift of God – That this sacred time may reconcile me with those I have marginalised.  
Glory of God – Be your recognisable beauty in me as, in your name, I minister in Mercy.  
Light of God – Help me to recognise and transcend my shadow side in ministry.  
Love of God – So touch me that I may never let the sun set while I am angry or resentful.  
Son of God – You are my Role Model, my Way, my Truth, my Life and my Saviour.  
Word of God – Thorough Baptism in your name, I have been born anew as a child of God today.  
On this our shared birthday I pray that you will be recognised as active in every dimension of my life  
and in the lives of all those with whom I celebrate. Amen.

## TOGETHER WE PRAY:

Glory be to our Creator, the source of Light and of every beginning;  
to the Word made flesh, who in today's saving act gifted us with new life;  
to the Spirit who hovered over the first waters  
and became the Fountain which gives life to everything on earth.  
May the Light, Word and Glory which has existed since the beginning  
continue to surround us and be completed in us. Amen.

## BLESSING:

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation brought by our God, Alleluia, alleluia. Amen.

May we be ever aware that today's invitation to salvation calls for a response from us, Alleluia,  
alleluia. Amen.

May this New Beginning inspire us and make us aware of the price that has been paid in order to give  
us a right to be called 'children of God', Alleluia, alleluia. Amen.

May the Word which is Light bless us ✠ and give us generous and grateful hearts this Christmas Day  
and always. Alleluia, alleluia. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> This reflection covers the major theme in John's Prologue / Hymn which creatively and theologically brings the two Testaments together and affirms the fulfilment of the Promise and the Salvation of humanity through the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day thus making it the birthday of each of us Christians. An individual may choose to use the entire reflection and make it the day's meditation. A community or small group may just choose to use only the second part from

\*\* during their formal prayer together.

