

The Road to Bethlehem

Reflections on the Nativity

A SANCTUARY DRAMA BY ROBERT BLASKEY

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

**PRAYER LEADER
ELIZABETH
INNKEEPER
JOSEPH
HEROD
WISE MAN
SHEPHERD
MARY**

PRODUCTION NOTES

THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM can be performed anywhere. Each character should stand where everyone can see him/her, with or without scripts. Prayer leaders stand off to either side.

Ideally, lighting should be changed from character to prayer leader to shift the focus.

Costumes are optional. Since this is an exercise relating the Nativity to contemporary concerns, it might be preferable to wear modern clothes appropriate to character.

OPENING
by Prayer Leader

We're in another Christmas Season.

While we celebrate our different family traditions, let's take the time to return to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke to remember the one true Christmas Story.

As we recall what happened, picture each member of this story beside you. Who do you identify with? Who would you prefer to be?

Think back to that time now and the story which began when the angel Gabriel visited a woman named Elizabeth ...

ELIZABETH

Nothing is impossible with God.

I used to believe that - now I know it.

I'm Elizabeth, a cousin of Mary. She's about to give birth tonight to her first child. But this is no ordinary child. He's from God.

My own baby is now six months old. He was also born with the help of God.

You see, my husband, Zechariah, and I had been trying to have a child for years and years. We prayed for this but were willing to be childless if that was God's will.

Then one day while Zechariah was working in the temple, the angel Gabriel appeared to him. Gabriel said we would have a child and we were to name him "John." We were excited and praised God for His kindness.

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When I was six months along in my pregnancy, I was visited by Mary. As she was approaching our house, something strange and wonderful happened. My baby stirred inside my womb - and I was filled with such incredible joy! I knew then that Mary was carrying a special child.

I ran out to meet her. "Blest are you among women," I cried, "and blest is the fruit of your womb." Then I stopped - why would the mother of my Lord visit me? Why should I have this special favor?

Suddenly I was filled with a rush of calm as I realized that blest are those who trust in the Lord's words.

So, for whatever reason I was chosen to bear a child at my old age and to be visited by the mother of our savior, I knew that these were roles I was chosen to fulfill ... and I thanked God I was able to help Him in whatever way I could.

PRAYER by LEADER: Jesus, just as Elizabeth and Zechariah never gave up praying for the child, help us to keep hoping and praying ... and to accept whatever is Your Will for us.

INNKEEPER

I knew this would be a good time for me as soon as we heard of the census decreed by Caesar Augustus.

Everyone was supposed to return to the home of their father. That meant many would be coming to my city - Bethlehem, also known as David's City.

Many people are descendants of King David - or claim to be. That meant thousands would be coming here to be counted - and looking for a place to stay.

My inn isn't the biggest in Bethlehem but in a time such as this, everyone would get business. If I were smart, we'd be able to make enough money to make up for the next three poor seasons.

I was right. Within two days of the deadline, the entire city was filled with travelers, including my inn! Even if everyone stayed for just one night, we'd surpass even my expectations!

Everything would've been perfect - except for that couple from Nazareth. On the third night of the census, we were once again filled. A large group from Capernaum was throwing a party and everyone was having a good time. Then came the pounding on the door. I pretended not to hear it - after all, there was no room for anyone anyway.

But the knocking continued. I tore myself away from the party and answered the door. There was a young man there - he looked as if he had been traveling for weeks. He was so tired he could barely stand.

Behind him, on a weary donkey, was a woman even younger than him - and it looked like she would soon be having a baby.

The man asked for a room. I told him we were full. All the other innkeepers had told him the same thing. We were his last hope.

I said I was sorry and tried to return to the party. But the man was insistent. His wife was about to have a child - their first - and he wanted her to be comfortable.

Again I told him I was sorry and tried to shut the door. In the distance, his wife called to him. She seemed to be in pain. The man looked at me again, a silent question on his face.

I felt bad for him - for both of them. But what did he want me to do? I couldn't ask my other guests to share a room. They were paying good money! And this guy looked like he couldn't pay at all!

I was sorry for him and his wife, but business is business - right? I wished him luck and shut the door. But somehow, when I returned to the party, it didn't seem as much fun as before.

PRAYER by LEADER: Lord, often we turn You away when we don't help others. Help us to help others - for then we are really helping You. Don't let us miss the opportunity to serve You by serving others.

End of Freeview

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