



# stations of the crib

REFLECTIONS ON  
THE CHRISTMAS STORY



**THESE SHORT REFLECTIONS ON  
KEY MOMENTS AT THE BEGINNING  
OF JESUS' LIFE HELP US TO ENTER  
SPIRITUALLY INTO THE DEEPER  
MEANING OF CHRISTMAS. WHEN  
USED IN THE CONTEXT OF A PARISH  
OR YOUTH GROUP, CONSIDER**



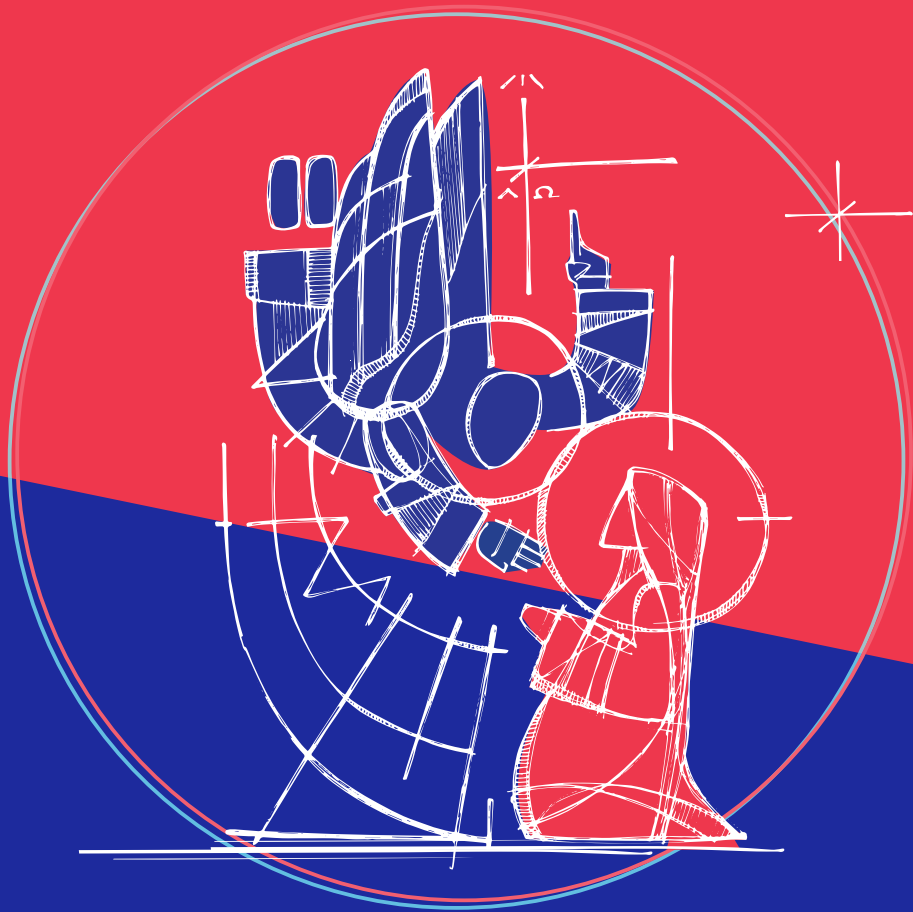
If it is possible for there to be physically different stations that those reflecting can move around (eg. around the church or school grounds, within the Church, within your hall etc), make use of them.



How you might creatively present each station. Depending on what time you have, maybe use music, say a Hail Mary or a decade of the rosary at each station, act it out a little or make a freeze frame at each station... make it your own!

# Station One

**ANNUNCIATION**  
*MARY'S VISITOR*



**LEADER:** The Word Became Flesh

**RESPONSE:** And dwelt amongst us

In the Old Testament, there were several occasions where people entertained angels and didn't even know it (for example, in Genesis 18, three mysterious men visit Abram and later reveal themselves to be angels).

Angels are messengers from God. When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, she was ready to hear the message God had for her, even though it shocked her.

Perhaps there are people around me - my family members, youth minister or leaders, teachers or friends - telling me some important things about my life that I need to listen to?

Quite possibly they are angel-messengers through whom God is speaking to me.

Am I prepared to listen to God through them?

reflection

Prayer

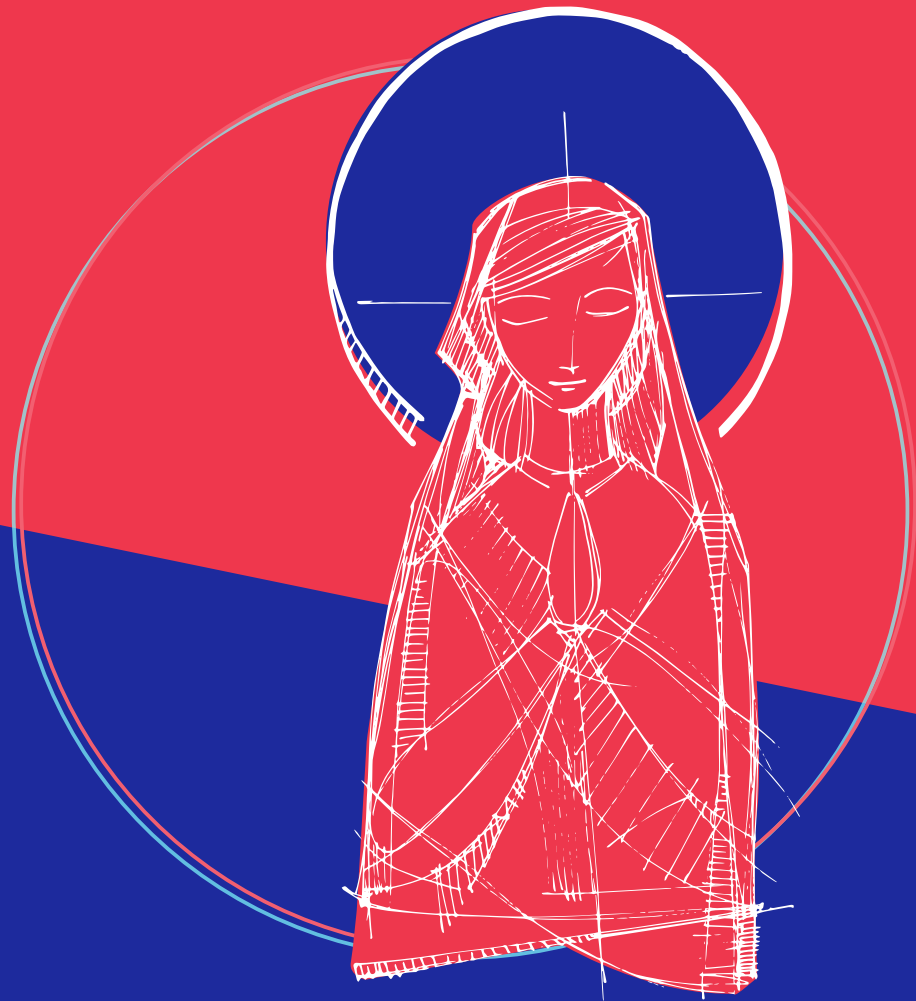
Lord God, open my eyes, ears and heart to be ready for any way that you wish to tell me your will for my life.

Help me to recognise your voice in those around me, as well as in your Word, in the Sacraments and in all my preparations for Christmas.

Amen.

# Station *two*

**THE FIAT**  
*MARY'S*  
*RESPONSE*



**LEADER:** The Word Became Flesh

**RESPONSE:** And dwelt amongst us

Mary received the biggest news anyone has ever heard in human history: she is chosen to bring into the world the Son of God!

Religious art throughout the centuries have shown the whole heavenly world paused, holding their breath as they wait for her response.

Do we realise the impact our big and small choices to follow the will of God may have on those around us - and on the whole world?

Our challenge is to trust God in the midst of all that may happen in our lives, saying with Mary-like courage: "I am the Lord's servant - may your word to me be fulfilled."

reflection

Prayer

Lord God, sometimes I don't see the full picture of what you are asking of me, but this just means I need greater trust.

Expand my belief in your goodness and in your love, so that I can willingly allow you free reign with the whole of my life.

Help me to say yes to all that you are asking of me.

Amen.

# station three

**VISITATION**  
*MARY VISITS  
HER COUSIN  
ELIZABETH*





**LEADER:** The Word Became Flesh

**RESPONSE:** And dwelt amongst us

Instead of dwelling on what is ahead of her, Mary takes one part of the angel's message and runs with it – her elderly cousin is six months pregnant.

How selfless is Mary in thinking of her cousin even in the midst of the chaos of her own situation – she is unmarried, young and pregnant, and therefore scared and confused and even in danger of her life, according to Jewish law.

However, on arriving at her cousin's home, Mary and Elizabeth and their unborn babies honour God's movement in their lives.

How often do we get so side-tracked by our own issues and circumstances that we fail to reach out to others, thereby robbing them and us of potential moments of confirming grace?

reflection

Prayer

Lord God, in the midst of the big and overwhelming things in my own life, open my eyes to the circumstances of others.

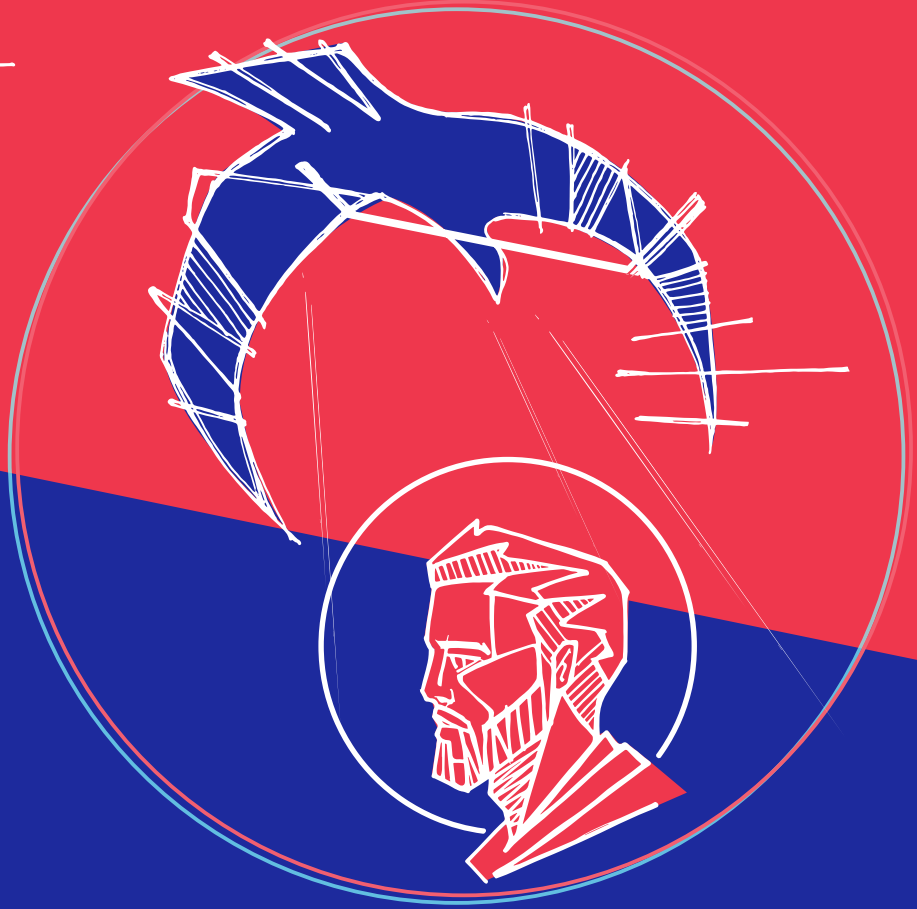
Help me to be generous in moving beyond the temptation to be self-focused.

Give me the ability to hear how you may be speaking to me through those I reach out to in your love.

Amen.

# station four

JOSEPH'S  
RESPONSE



**LEADER:** The Word Became Flesh

**RESPONSE:** And dwelt amongst us

When the young woman whom you are to marry tells you she's pregnant, and it's definitely not through you, you'd be pretty suspicious.

Joseph is described as a righteous man in the gospel and tries to handle this situation sensitively by privately breaking up with Mary.

On being told in a dream to marry Mary anyway, Joseph shows a radical trust in both Mary's goodness and in God.

How prepared am I to put aside my judgements, my perspective of a situation and my own feelings in order to support the vulnerable and obey God?

reflection

Prayer

Lord God, when it seems obvious that someone else has wronged me, help me to listen to your perspective and what you wish me to do. Clearly tell me how I should behave.

Give me the courage to continue to love when I feel betrayed and to think more of what is best for others than of myself.

Amen.

# station five

**MARY & JOSEPH**  
*JOURNEY TO  
BETHLEHEM*



**LEADER:** The Word Became Flesh

**RESPONSE:** And dwelt amongst us

Mary and Joseph have to journey to Bethlehem at the time of Mary coming to full term in her pregnancy.

It would have been a scary journey at the best of times, but made so much worse by being heavily pregnant.

What immense trust this family must have had in God - and how much they must have come closer as a family through this difficult roadtrip!

How well does my family come together in the difficult times? Is there anything I can do to make the journey any easier for the rest of my family?

reflection

Prayer

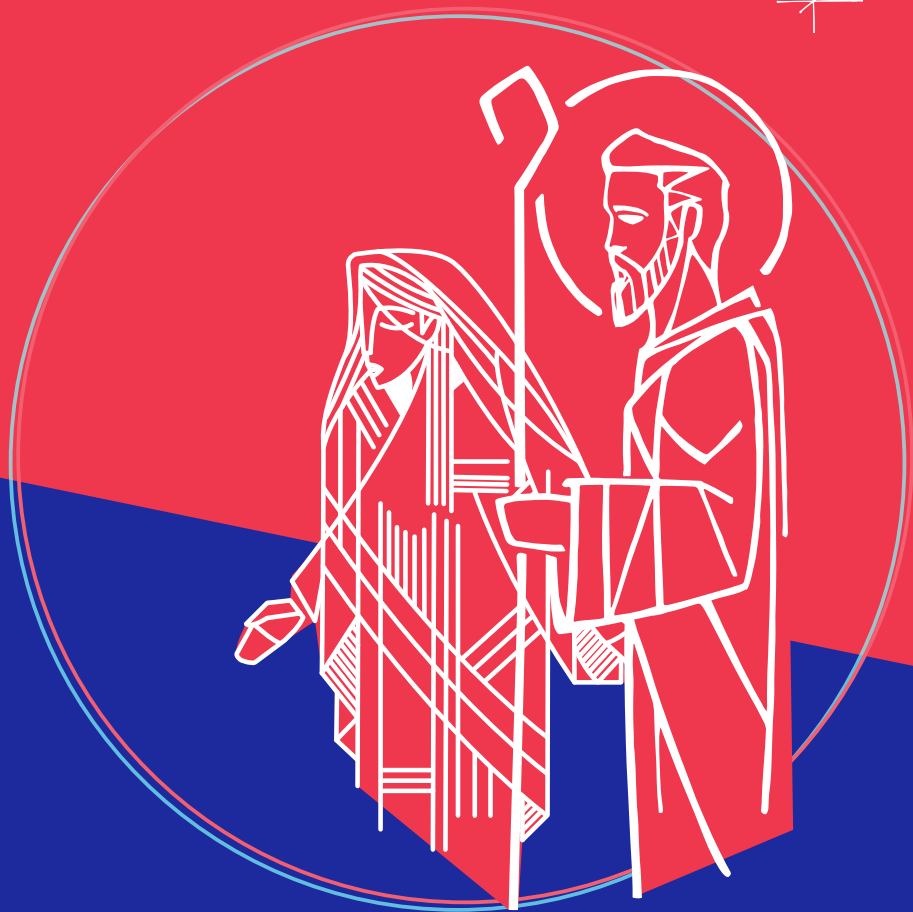
Lord God, thank you for the gift of my family, and thank you for the journey that you send us on together.

Strengthen the marriages in my family and help us to learn to depend on you in the midst of whatever roads we have to face together.

Amen.

# station six

**HOMELESS**  
*NO ROOM  
AT THE INN*



**LEADER:** The Word Became Flesh

**RESPONSE:** And dwelt amongst us

After making a long, uncomfortable and dangerous journey, Mary and Joseph find yet another challenge awaiting them. They are unable to find accommodation in Bethlehem.

What a frightening situation! And yet so many in our world are similarly homeless – sometimes because they are unable to find somewhere they can afford to live, and sometimes because they can't mentally or emotionally find a home in the society in which they live.

How ready am I to give of my time and attention to those who need homes?

How willing am I to help the unwanted and those who don't fit anyway to feel at home with me?

reflection

Prayer

Lord God, thank you for my home and for all the ways you provide for me.

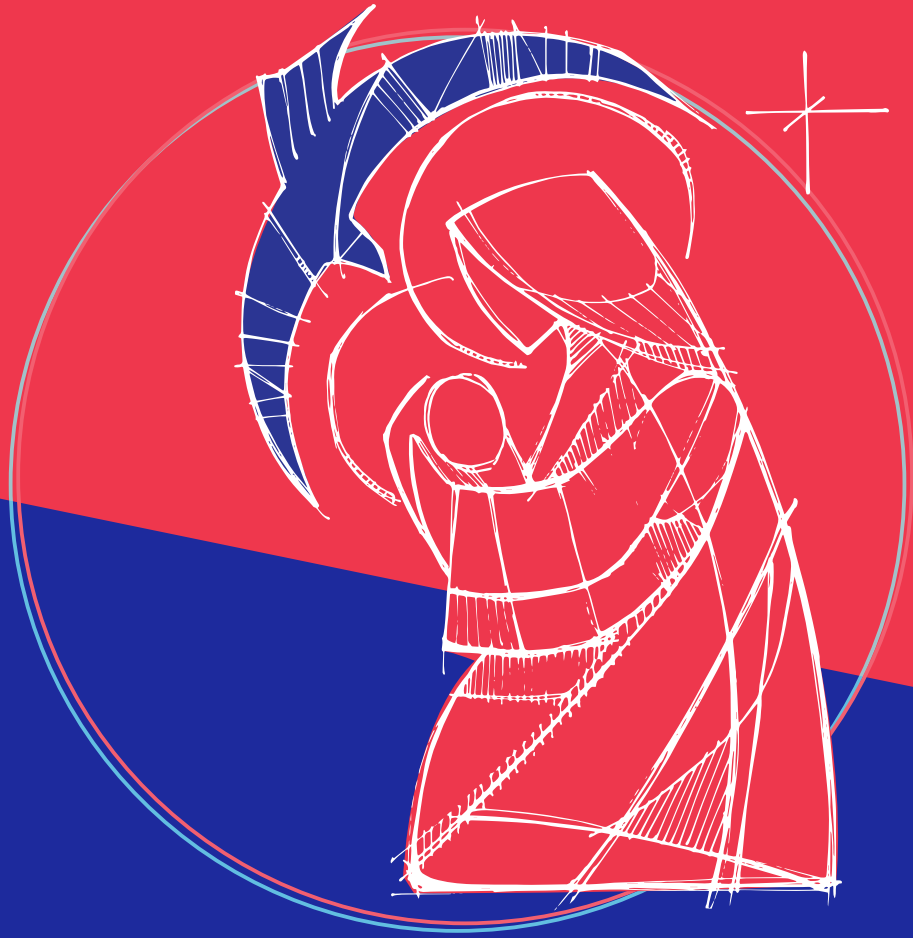
Open my eyes to see the need of those without homes or a place to rest.

Help me to give generously of my money and goods to those in material need, and to give my time and attention to those who need love and somewhere to belong.

Amen.

# station seven

**JESUS**  
*IS BORN*





**LEADER:** The Word Became Flesh

**RESPONSE:** And dwelt amongst us

It's a boy! What joy enters the world with the safe arrival of a baby, and never more so than when God enters into our human world.

And yet a stable is not the most sanitary or safe setting, and there was no doctor or midwife on hand.

How vulnerable God is in this moment, completely at the mercy of Mary and Joseph – and how vulnerably he comes to us even today in the form of a small piece of bread!

How welcoming am I of the Saviour of the world when I receive the Eucharist at Mass?

How freely do I allow him to enter into the whole messy reality of my life?

reflection

prayer

Lord God, thank you for coming into our midst and submitting to the chaos of human life.

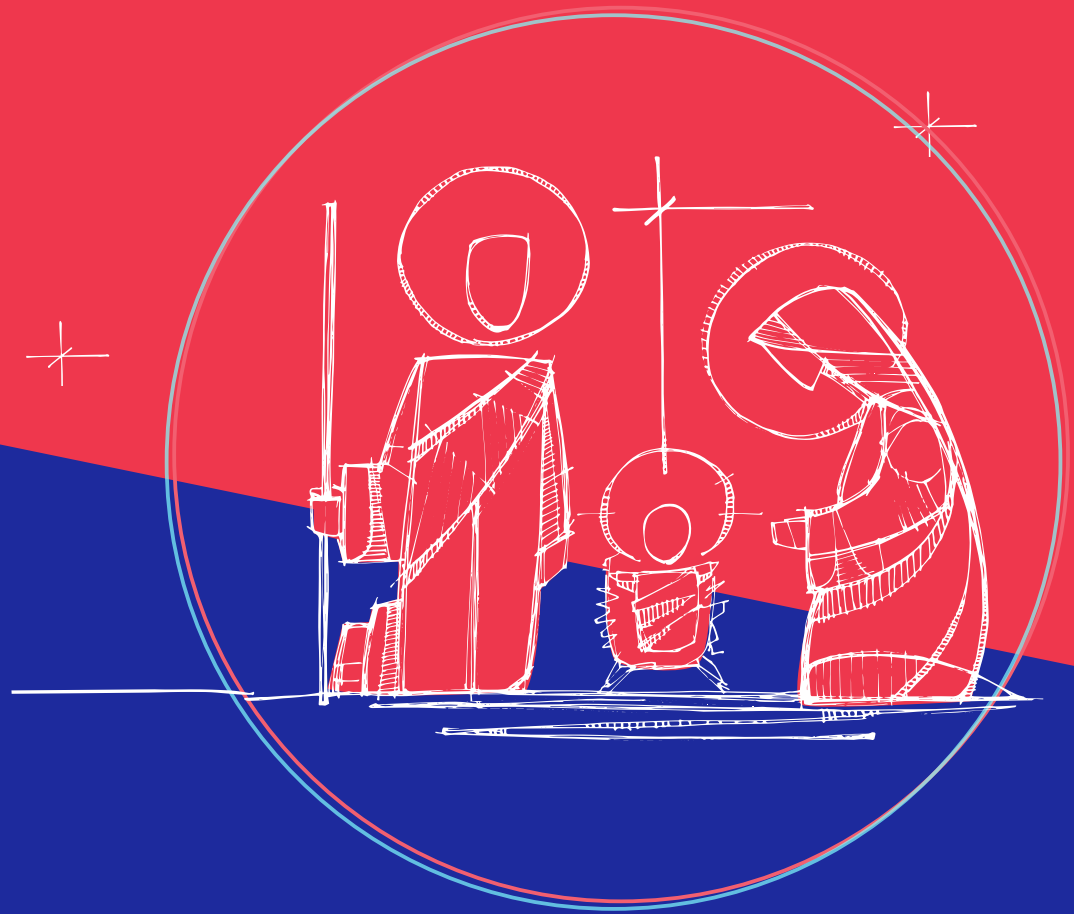
Help me to know you understand what I go through because you have lived this life too.

Give me the courage to be honest and real with you when I receive Holy Communion – and help me let you change my life.

Amen.

# station eight

MARY LAYS  
JESUS IN  
A MANGER



**LEADER:** The Word Became Flesh

**RESPONSE:** And dwelt amongst us

Instead of holding Jesus in her arms and close to her heart, Mary places him in a humble feeding trough.

She recognises that her Son is not for her alone, but is meant to feed a hungry and love-starved world.

How aware am I that my gift of faith is meant to be given to others?

How prepared am I to act with Mary-like generosity and not hold Jesus to myself but present him to the world?

reflection

prayer

Lord God, thank you for giving your Son to us and for us.

Like Mary, help me to not just keep my relationship with Jesus to myself but share him with others.

Through him, may I be open to feeding an emotionally hungry world.

Amen.

# station mine

**THE SHEPHERDS  
AND WISE MEN**  
*COME AND  
ENCOUNTER JESUS*



**LEADER:** The Word Became Flesh

**RESPONSE:** And dwelt amongst us

Both shepherds and wise men – the unwashed and the washed – come to worship Jesus.

In the midst of this first church service, different classes and occupations are side by side with no conflict and no discrimination as they encounter their infant Saviour. This is at the heart of what our parishes and schools and families should be like.

How much do I judge another person's clothes, behaviour, possessions or family in my local church?

How much do I realise I need a Saviour as much as the person next to me or in the next pew?

reflection

prayer

Lord God, thank you for all the people I have met simply because I have met you.

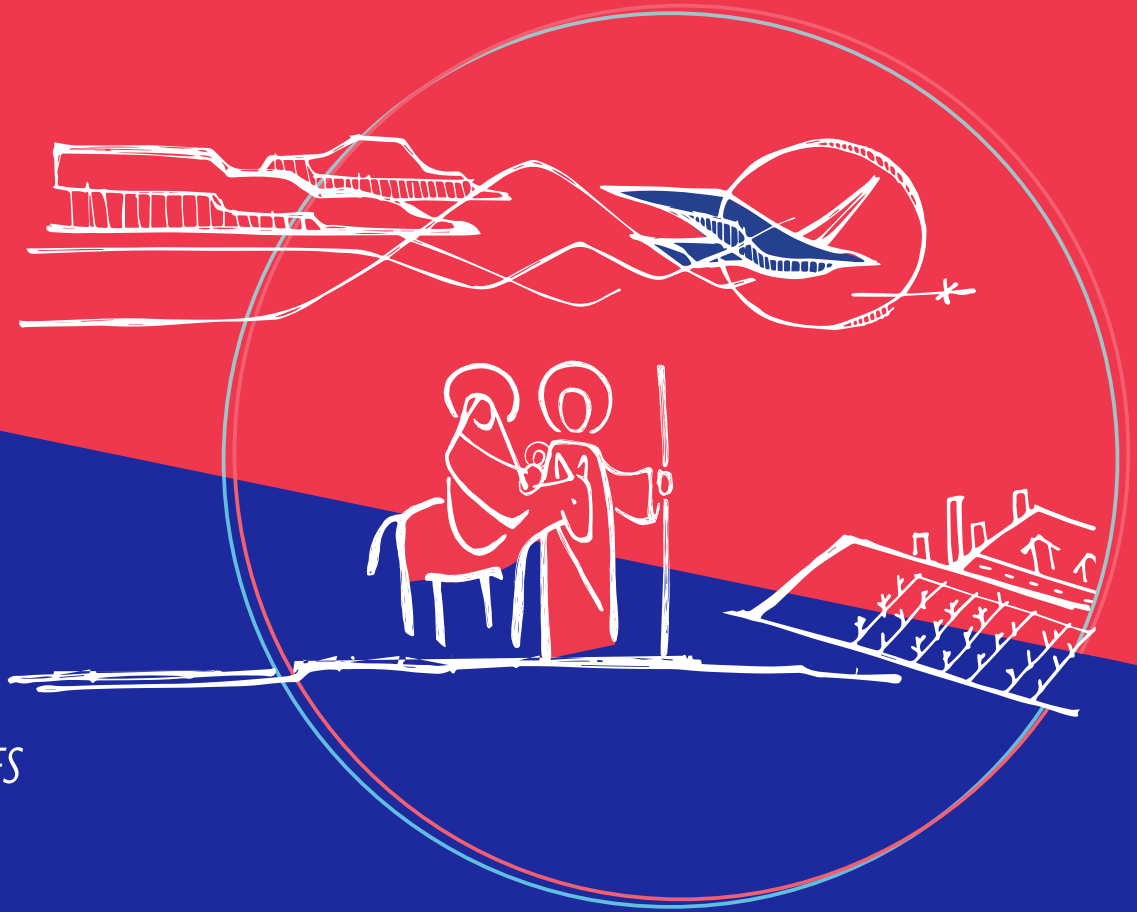
When I am tempted to judge someone else, help me see them through your eyes.

Help me to accept and love them as my brothers and sisters and make me aware of ways that I can support them as we share this journey towards eternal life with you.

Amen.

# Station ten

**THE HOLY  
FAMILY** *FLEES  
TO EGYPT*



**LEADER:** The Word Became Flesh

**RESPONSE:** And dwelt amongst us

When King Herod hears of the newborn King, he immediately feels threatened. In an attempt to protect his own interests Herod decides to wipe out a possible threat to his throne by killing all children of Jesus' age.

What immense fear and terror this political manoeuvre produces! Heeding another dream of Joseph's, the Holy Family are warned to seek asylum in Egypt, relying on the mercy of this neighbouring country.

So many people today experience the turmoil of these first years of Jesus' life and like him have been forced to seek refuge in other countries.

How concerned am I about the fate of the countless people fleeing their war-torn countries in order to save their lives? What might I do on their behalf?

# reflection

# Prayer

Lord God, when I get upset by conflict in my life, enlarge my heart to think of the situation of so many others.

Help me never to take peace for granted and open my eyes to see the needs of those whose lives have been broken by political conflict and terrorism.

Amen.

# concluding prayer







Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of your Son. This Christmas, help us to come closer to him than we ever have.

As we celebrate with our families and friends, open our eyes to see you in them, open our ears to hear your will for our lives, open our mouths to thank you and praise you, and open our hearts to love as you do.

We make this prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**





**CATHOLICYOUTHARRAMATTA.ORG.AU**