

The Road to Bethlehem

'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.' (Luke 2:1-5)



A Reflection

It would have taken Mary and Joseph about a week to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem. The roads, dusty and uneven, would have stretched before them. Tiring days and cold nights, a heavily pregnant young woman would have surely wished to be somewhere comfortable, somewhere familiar, with loving help close by.

However, within both Mary and Joseph there was a trust and a faithfulness. A love for God that meant they found themselves on this dusty road. Mary knew this was part of God's plan - the angel had spoken to her, and that visit to Elizabeth had been so strangely joyful she had broken into song, which wasn't like her. Joseph too knew this was part of something big for God for he had dreamed some strange but amazing things. He knew in his heart what he had to do.

This journey to Bethlehem perhaps gave them opportunity to ponder on God's plan. They didn't know what awaited them in Bethlehem, apart from possibly the birth of their child. All they could do was place themselves in God's hands and trust Him. Trust Him, and obey Him. Many said they trusted God but when it came to doing what He asked, that didn't necessarily follow. Mary and Joseph chose to trust God and obey Him even when the way ahead wasn't clear and the journey wasn't particularly pleasant.



Is God calling you at the moment to put your trust in Him? Can you recall a time when you have trusted God?

How have you been obedient to God in your life? Have there been moments when you have felt called to obey God even when it hasn't made sense to you, or when the way has felt unclear?

A Prayer

God of the journey,
You led Joseph and Mary along the road to Bethlehem.
Guide my steps when your way seems unclear,
Help me to trust you and obey you,
And to follow you to the place
where Christ is born anew in me.
Amen.