

Midnight Mass 2025

By God's Grace may I speak in the name of the God who was and is and is to come. Amen.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

The world around us can feel pretty dark these days. There is so much hatred, so much violence, so much suffering. As cost of living rises relentlessly more and more people are struggling to know how to pay their bills, how to make sure there is enough food. Human greed and selfishness over generations is having increasingly serious consequences as climate change and environmental disasters show, costing more and more lives, livelihoods and homes around the world.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Mary and Joseph were forced to travel on foot to Joseph's place of origin, Bethlehem, because the Roman emperor had said so. No consideration for loss of income, the risk of such harsh travel arrangements during pregnancy and no ensuring there would be sufficient accommodation for all the people forced to travel so the emperor would know exactly how much tax was owed to him by people, who mostly earned minimal wages. There was generally little

medical care available, so the risk of dying from a disease, an accident or while giving birth were high. One bad harvest, an outbreak of war or armed conflict very quickly could bring about a famine. Life was fragile and most people had little to no power to change anything about the injustices they faced on a daily basis. There was plenty of darkness in the world Jesus was born into as well.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Into this world that can feel like a very dark and cold place, God comes. God became one of us, not in a position of power in a glamorous palace, no as a vulnerable and needy infant. Pushed to the margins, wrapped in strips of cloth and laid in a manger. A God who truly knows what it means to live in a world that is often unkind and harsh to those most vulnerable. A God who enters a world with much darkness, in order to bring us light.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Into the dark places of this world shines the light of the Christ Child. Into the darkness of violence comes the light of the gentleness of a tiny infant. Into the darkness of hatred comes the light of God's unconditional love, welcoming smelly shepherds and dignified magi alike. Into the darkness of selfishness and greed comes the light of God, who gives up all to shine the light of gentleness, love and giving into our darkness.

Yes, the darkness in our world is all too real, but all around the world today, people also continue to celebrate the light of the gentle, loving and giving Christ Child. 2000 years ago, the celebration of Jesus' birth was happening in a little town called Bethlehem, somewhere in a stable because there was no space in the inn. But today, the birth of the gentle, loving and giving Christ Child is celebrated by millions of people all around the world. And all around the world, the birth of that gentle, loving and giving Christ Child continues to inspire people, even if just for a moment, to show kindness and care, to be generous where they can, and to share love.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Amen.