

## Meditation/monologue

### Joseph – on the run with the baby Deliverer

*Joseph's meditation/monologue seeks to tell the inside story on what it might have been like for Joseph and his family to live through the events of the Christmas story. We specifically chose to give him the chance to speak to us from Egypt as we first wrote his perspective in the lead up to Christmas 2015. Alongside seeking to bring to life a part of the story that is less talked about and a desire to help people connect with the holy family as refugees generally, we are hoping it will also help people bring the current refugee crisis into their services and devotions.*

*To find further meditations/monologues at different people and points in the story (including from the point of view of Mary, Elizabeth, a shepherd, and a wise man), visit*

<http://www.thesanctuarycentre.org/whereworldandworshipmeet-seasonal.html>

*Please note that audio versions of these resources, as well as written pdfs, are being added as they become available.*

### Joseph – on the run with the baby Deliverer

None of it has worked out how I once dreamed it would. Betrothal, marriage, fatherhood.

It's been nothing like the wonderful home-coming to start a new life together I'd imagined during all those long years of waiting for her...

*Mary.*

I look up and see her with me now.

Cradling her baby in girl-slim arms; thick dark locks falling over her adoring, downward-tilted face. Eyes locked on his.

Oh how she loves. Oh how she treasures who he is and the secrets that have been shared with her.

So beautiful. So young to carry the weight of such near rejection, closely-avoided tragedy and very real struggle alongside her first child... so gentle to bear the heaviness of responsibility for this little one and all that his future might hold.

For he is a *king-child*. What other boy from Nazareth has ever been given gold and frankincense and myrrh? (Oh how the myrrh troubles us both.)

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And now we've had to bring him *here*. I don't know if I can possibly make you understand what it's like.

Fear of Mary's pregnancy being discovered and her character denounced stalked us all the way to Bethlehem. And then terror chased us all the way out of it again.

Leaving in the dead of night in haste but in willing obedience after that fearful dream. Herod wants to *kill* God's son!

And so suddenly we're fleeing. Fleeing for his *life*.

Fleeing *with a baby*. With hearts in mouths the whole time because of the preciousness of what we carry – what we've been charged by God to protect.

Fleeing through dark, cold nights and desert storm days.

Fleeing for weeks in exhausted speed – constantly willing each foot to put itself in front of the one before during the day and willing the heart, mind and body to somehow sleep despite the cold, hard ground and the eyes wide open watchfulness. So unsure of the future – not knowing much if anything about what lies ahead...

But knowing what is behind us is so terrible that we have to keep walking anyway.

*Herod.*

I'm just hoping the rumours of our people's settlement in Egypt are true and we will find refuge with them there. That if we do, they will honour the Lord's command to welcome the stranger. And that we can make it far enough to find them....

For if not, who will we be able to trust here? Who will welcome us? And how can we possibly know who is safe until it is potentially too late?

We are strangers and so far from anyone who values us as friend. And we are the worst kind of strangers to cross Egypt.

*Hebrews.*

We have hundreds of years of the wrong sort of history between us. How do I look an Egyptian in the eyes and tell him I had to flee – that I *had* to bring the boy here – that Mary's first born son was to be slaughtered. It's too close to home... they'll remember. Every first born son...

I can't tell anyone here how precious he is of course anyway. It's too dangerous and it's vital I protect him.

And so we hide. Hope to get by in this strange new-old place on our wits and our deeply held wish for wary kindness from just a few... far from our home and my bench and tools – and the community who would do anything for us.

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And so we're raising the one who's supposed to deliver us once and for all *here*. We've had to run away from the Promised Land – and even the *occupied* Promised Land is still the place all the prophecies about him are set – and we've had to come back with the Deliverer himself to hide in the very place we were oppressed for so long.

It makes you question... challenges your faith that real freedom could ever come. It makes you wonder whether you're mad sometimes. Whether you imagined it all – the angels visiting, the glorious heavenly chorus and the star, the shepherds and the strange men from the east, the priest and the ancient prophetess, and all those dreams...

And most of all... this tiny *baby* really being the one we've all been waiting for. Salvation come. Messiah born.

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Mary says we shouldn't be afraid. She says *God* can be trusted – he's never let our people down before and he's not going to start now. Especially not *now*. Not with this son given and born to us. Not with him growing up among us.

She sings her song over and over again as a lullaby. Sometimes I think she's singing to calm us as much as the baby!

This song reminds me of Nazareth and home and of all the wonder we saw in Bethlehem. It is a song of Zion, sweeter still in this new time of exile. The melody rises again now – sweetly confident – hushed then clear... till it reaches the bit for all of us:

“His mercy extends to those who fear him,  
 from generation to generation.  
 He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;  
 he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.  
 He has brought down rulers from their thrones  
 but has lifted up the humble.  
 He has filled the hungry with good things  
 but has sent the rich away empty.  
 He has helped his servant Israel,  
 remembering to be merciful  
 to Abraham and his descendants forever,  
 just as he promised our ancestors.”

And while she worships I see clearly again.

No, none of it has worked out how I once dreamed it would.

But amidst the terror and the danger and has been indescribable beauty and wonder and glory – such glory. He is *with us*. God is *with us*. My dreams really were messages from heaven. And the visitors really came! The time in the temple at his circumcision really was like that. These are no mis-remembered mirages after weeks in the hot, desert sun. They really did all recognise him as the One.

The promises must be true... the prophecies must, somehow, be being fulfilled even *here*.

And so we watch and wait as patiently as we can. We just need to keep hope alive and keep him from harm. We just need to hang on long enough till it's safe to go back home.

It will be safe to go back home someday won't it Lord?

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I walk over and kneel beside her.

*Mary.*

I place one arm round her and one on his head, to bless it again. To bless the one who *is* blessing itself.

*Jesus.*

I look again at their laughing smiles and I choose to do it. I choose to believe the truth all over again – one day this baby Deliverer will lead us all home.