

## A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE INCARNATION

*By Verna Kwiatkowski, December 2012. Inspired by A THANKSGIVING PRAYER, written and sent to me by my cousin, Louise Rabold, in November 2012.*

Dear Lord, How we thank you for the Incarnation, for coming into the world in a human body, starting out your life on earth the way we do: as a helpless, sweet little baby. Knowing that you were the one who designed the birth process in the first place, we cannot IMAGINE how it happened that you yourself were born! We can only join others in saying – with awe – “Thanks be to God for his INDESCRIBABLE GIFT!”

Thank you, God, for choosing Mary and Joseph to be the earthly parents for your son Jesus. Thank you for the amazing example they are to us of saying YES to you, even though not everyone would understand, and of the restraint they showed in their behavior toward each other. Thank you for the comfort this story gives to those whose children are being raised by others.

Thank you for waiting, as Scripture tells us, until “the time had fully come” before sending your son, showing us the importance of learning how to wait. Thank you for every prophecy given about the birth, and thank you that EVERY ONE was fulfilled. Thank you for the decree from Caesar Augustus that brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem at the right time and thank you for the Innkeeper who gave them a private place for Mary to have her baby. Thank you for giving us the written Word, that we might meditate on it day and night, always finding new things to bring us delight, even about your birth.

In the Incarnation, thank you for giving us a GLIMPSE of the love with which you SO LOVED the world that such a supreme sacrifice could be carried out. Thank you for wanting us “to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge.” Thank you for the indwelling Holy Spirit, who helps us to know what is humanly unknowable. And thank you for the blessed assurance that NOTHING “will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Thank you for the memories we have of all the programs we have prepared, participated in, and attended through the years as we have attempted to commemorate your birth. Thank you for the carols we sing, the costumes we wear, the props we use, the sermons we hear, the decorations we display, and the gifts we give – all designed to keep the story alive in the minds of everyone for another year.

As people of faith, may we take a fresh look into the manger and see not only a dear baby lying there, but Emmanuel: GOD with us! May we see the enormity of the gift that lies in a manger, wrapped in strips of cloth: This truly is Christ the Lord, Creator of the universe, named Jesus because he would save his people from their sins. Yes, may we see YOU, Lord, crucified, risen, ascended, exalted! We don't have words to fully express our gratitude so again we simply say: THANK YOU, Lord! – Amen