

# The Journey of Peace: To the Manger, The Cross and Beyond

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Over 2,000 years ago in the small village of Nazareth, the journey began. God saw the world and its inhabitants that He brought into existence. He wanted to show his **love** for his creation; he wanted to send a gift to all.

The Angel Gabriel visited Mary to announce she was to share this gift. She was troubled, but had the **freedom** to accept or reject this gift. The gift was a child. The **truth** was she was with child.

Her fiancé Joseph was a just man and did not want Mary or the child harmed. He decided to settle it quietly. God wanted his gift to be shared with all and showed Joseph true **justice** in a dream. The journey continued

As the gospels record, Mary and Joseph went to the town of Bethlehem to be counted in a census. Their child, this gift, was born in a stable and placed in a manger. Reflect on its shape and who crafted it. The manger has four legs representing – **love, freedom, truth and justice** and a trough representing **peace**. A humble carpenter built this manger. Into this manger was placed **Jesus, the Prince of Peace**. We are called to build that manger in our hearts and world.. The journey continued.

This holy family traveled to Egypt and returned to Nazareth. Jesus taught that we are to **love** God, our neighbors as ourselves **and** our enemies. He gave **freedom** to the prisoners of suffering and sin. Jesus preached that **justice** takes time in the parable of the persistent widow. He lived **justice** when confronted with the adulterous woman. He came to testify to the **truth**. He called humble men and women to share this message with others. Are we open to be chosen to share this message? **Peace** was alive and the journey continued.

When Jesus died, he died on a cross. The Prince of Peace on a cross. Reflect on its shape and who crafted it. The manger has now changed shape. The four legs of the manger now are the four ends of the cross representing - **love, freedom, truth and justice**. A humble carpenter built this cross. We are called to build this cross in our hearts and world too. Yet, the story did not end. Peace continued on its journey

This Prince of Peace rose and the Holy Spirit came as promised. How will Peace continue its journey today? The journey continues as we build **PEACE** in our hearts and world using the strong, sturdy wood of **LOVE, FREEDOM, TRUTH and JUSTICE**.

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