

Good News! [Luke 2: 1-20](#)

There was once a village which used to create a nativity scene on a prominent street corner every year. By the last Sunday before Christmas, a layer of straw would be set down and the models of animals would be arranged, placidly eating hay from the manger, which took centre stage. Then, Joseph and Mary would appear, and on Christmas Eve night, just before the people who had gone to the Midnight Mass came out from church, someone would quietly place Baby Jesus in the manger.

It was a beautiful tradition. Families would go out for walks on Christmas Day and would be delighted to see that all was well: Jesus had come, safely wrapped up and lying in the manger. Even though the figures might have got a little bit weather-worn over the years, it didn't matter. Jesus had come.



Only on one Christmas morning, the families were shocked. Jesus wasn't in the manger! Those who had come out from the midnight service were sure that they had seen him there as they went home, but he certainly was not there now!

People gathered to stare at the empty manger, where the animals continued to study the hay without any occupant to bother them. Who would want to spoil this scene? Who would be so heartless as to steal the Baby Jesus?

Suddenly, from several hundred yards away, there was a loud whoop of joy. A little boy on a bicycle came freewheeling down the hill, laughing and cheering. As he approached, the people looked at his delighted face, and then froze in shock, staring at the plump little figure perched on the handlebars of his bike, strips of white linen flying like a scarf behind it.

"Young man..," began one lady. She could not take her eyes off the little boy and his strange passenger.

“What on earth are you doing with Baby Jesus bouncing along on your bike?” said a gentleman, as the boy drew up next to them. Very gently, the boy gathered up the baby, carefully wrapped the cloths round it, and returned it to the manger.

“Well,” explained the boy, “it’s Christmas Day, isn’t it? I’ve been praying for a new bike for ages and look what I got for a present! I wanted to bring Jesus out with me to share it and say thank you!”

In this most challenging of Christmas times, when plans and expectations have been thrown into disarray, may the unchanging Good News of Christ’s birth bring you comfort, joy and peace. May you know his presence with you at all times and in all situations. May you be unafraid to share the Good News of Jesus here among humanity this Christmas.

With love,

Vicky

