Priest
Let us pray to almighty God, our heavenly Father, as we celebrate the Son’s birth at this time.

Reader
The first reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus speaks of **honour for fathers and mothers**. We pray for all families as we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family, asking that respect and value for the family continues in our society. *Pause:* Lord in your mercy … **hear our prayer**

We pray for the leaders of our Church, for Pope Francis, our bishops and clergy. We ask that they continue to spread the word of God such that, as St Paul says, **the message of Christ finds a home with all** who hear it. *Pause:* Lord in your mercy … **hear our prayer**

The gospel reading reminds us that the Holy Family were refugees as they fled to Egypt. We pray that governments and people in first world countries welcome refugees. *Pause:* Lord in your mercy … **hear our prayer**

We pray for the New Year, we pray to enter this next decade with hope, compassion and dedication to our faith as we begin it with a focus on **The Word of God**, as requested our bishops in England and Wales. *Pause:* Lord in your mercy … **hear our prayer**

We remember all who have worked over this holiday period: those in the emergency services, doctors, nurses, fire fighters and paramedics and those helping with flood defences. We pray that there will always be those willing to care for others as we have seen this holiday. *Pause:* Lord in your mercy … **hear our prayer**

We continue to pray for those areas of the world torn by conflict, especially areas around the Holy Land: may God inspire all people to abandon violence and seek lasting peace. *Pause:* Lord in your mercy … **hear our prayer**

As we celebrate the Christmas octave, we take this opportunity to bring in silence our own needs to the Lord.

**PLEASE TAKE A LONG PAUSE**

*Pause:* Lord in your mercy … **hear our prayer**

In considering the model of the Holy Family, we bring our prayers together with Mary our Mother, as we say: **Hail Mary, full of grace**…

Priest
Loving and forgiving God, you are there for us at all times and in all places. We offer our prayers in your name through your son, our Lord, Jesus Christ who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**