

## Midnight Mass 2017 St. Lawrence's

*Pause.* Listen.

Let your mind and your imagination go out beyond the church doors, out into the village. Listen.

Go through the quiet churchyard to the school, empty now, but hear the echoes: children playing, the stress of teachers, the busy-ness of families.

Come back to the High Street and into the pubs. Hear the hub-bub of conversation, the singing, the friendship and happiness. Hear too the man who's had too many, think of his family back home.

Go down in Watford, to the hospital. Listen to the sirens of the ambulances, the beeping of the machines, the anxious conversations by bedsides, the cry of the new born, the rattle in an old man's throat.

Go way beyond this place. Listen to the angry voices in Jerusalem, to the marching boots in Pyongyang, to the homesick refugees in camps all over the world.

Into all of this noise, a Word is spoken.

Not just any Word, not just more noise, which comes and goes, which fades away, which can be silenced. You cannot stop this Word. The world tried that once before, on a Cross, and God's Word came back – louder, deeper, clearer. You cannot stop this Word. It has been spoken, once for all, first in one life at Bethlehem, and now through Cross and Resurrection right into the heart of every human situation: into the school, into the drunk, into the hospital, the battlefield, the camp. The Word has gone right into the heart of every human situation, and He dwells there. He dwells there whether we are good people or not, whether we believe it or not, for now even whether we care or not. No matter who the person, what the situation: there is nowhere so dark, so desolate, even so dead, that Jesus Christ is not there. And because He is there, there is hope.

The good news is really, really simple. Jesus Christ is born. He was born once in Bethlehem, and he can be born once again in each one of us. And because he has been born, - if you let him, he will bear. He will bear. He will bear *you* – whatever you have done, whatever has been done to you, whatever you think of yourself – He will bear you. To His home, to His Father's house, to love, and joy, and peace. It is what you were made for, and because He has come, it is where you are going. It is where the world goes. He has made it our destiny. To him be the glory, forever and ever.