**Daily Prayer & Encouragement Thursday 24th December -** Pam Pyke

**Colossians 1:15-20**

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Have you been watching the new series of The Crown? Don't worry – no spoilers! In this series I have been struck by all the pomp, precedence and procedure which surround the Queen and how very different that is to the kingship of Christ.

Here we have the king above all kings and one who is 'the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being' (Hebrews 1:3) yet who is born in the most deprived circumstances and who came to know sharpest betrayal, cruelty and rejection.

We can imagine the privations of the stable and the far from ideal circumstances of Jesus's birth. It is harder for us to get our heads around the cosmic reality and the enormity of what God did. Jesus, who was 'the firstborn over all creation' put on a completely different form and he did it for us. As the song says, 'You set aside your majesty, gave up everything for me.' He left the splendour and sweet order of heaven for the mess and chaos of earth. Christ, who was both fully human and fully divine, set aside his divine glory and put on humanity so that we might transcend our humanity to put on his divine nature.

So – as we make our final preparations for Christmas, let's centre our thoughts on the fact that Christ -whose hands 'flung stars into space'- became a helpless baby and so set in train God's rescue plan through which we are able to become His children now and for all eternity.

***Prayer:***

*Lord Jesus Christ, this Christmastide, I acknowledge again your kingship. Thank you for the unending love which brought you to earth as a baby. As you transformed yourself for my sake, help me to allow the Holy Spirit to transform me to become more like you.*

*Amen*

Let Warlock's "Bethlehem Down" take you to Bethlehem:

<https://youtu.be/6KvlLsozZi4>

Here are the words to the song:

When He is King we will give him the King's gifts,
Myrrh for its sweetness, and gold for a crown,
Beautiful robes", said the young girl to Joseph
Fair with her first-born on Bethlehem Down.

Bethlehem Down is full of the starlight
Winds for the spices, and stars for the gold,
Mary for sleep, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

When He is King they will clothe Him in grave-sheets,
Myrrh for embalming, and wood for a crown,
He that lies now in the white arms of Mary
Sleeping so lightly on Bethlehem Down.

Here He has peace and a short while for dreaming,
Close-huddled oxen to keep Him from cold,
Mary for love, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.