

Friends

The 2.3 per cent of the population who are Christians in India live alongside a majority Hindu population (82%), Muslims (12 %), Sikhs (2%) and a few other minority religious communities. It's worth reflecting that the 2.3% minority group of Christians in India represent around 26 million people. The celebration of Jesus' birth does not evoke special curiosity in this context. Hindus celebrate the birthday of gods, goddesses and saints; Muslims celebrate the birth of the prophet Mohamad, and Sikhs honour the birth of Guru Nanak. The people of each faith respect Jesus in their own way. I like this reflection written by Indian Christian Chandran Devanesen.

God of God... Only the sound of an infant crying in the night,

A familiar, homely, human sound like the sound of hooves on flagstones,

Like the rattle of chains tethering cattle, like the crunch of straw in the mouths of oxen, like the rustle of hay tossed into a manger.

Light of light... Only the light of a star falling on an infant crib,

Like the light in a shepherd's lantern, like the light in the eyes of a mother,

Like the light in the learning of the wise men,

Like the light that lightens each dawn.

Very God of very God... Only a pillow of straw

And in infant in rags and tatters,

Like the weatherworn blankets of shepherds, like dusty, travel-stained garments of travellers, like old clothes thrown to a beggar, like cloths stuffed in a stable window to keep the draught out and the cattle warm.

God is with us, terribly, simply with us, and the shadows of men and women with arms outstretched to take him

Fall across the manger in the form of a cross.

God bless, Vicci