



Road To Bethlehem

We all have our own Road to Bethlehem, a path that resonates with our life's trials and joys; a journey that reconnects us to remembrance of what is holy and sacred to our hearts. As children we are born with wonder and excitement at this beautiful world and this gift of life we have been endowed with. Children represent everything good and exuberant; with imaginations that know no limits and aspirations that bear no burdens. The joy of Christmas and the true meaning of the Christ child's birth ring true to the innocence of youth when we are not lost in the rhetoric of doubts and society's expectations that what we dream can't always come to pass.

I disagree that dreams lose their brilliance as life progresses. We each have inside of us a desire for greatness, a chance to shine that resonates with our inner creativity and intentional ability to excel! We are creators in the greatest time, holding lanterns to brighten the way for ourselves and others who are looking to find refuge from darkness and discouragement. Christ was born to bring hope and everlasting light! We are God's children and we are each on our own Road to Bethlehem, living though ups and downs, joys and losses, smiles and tears. I envision the Road to Bethlehem as an example of each of our individual life's journey. This Road to Bethlehem asks each of us to stretch ourselves sometimes beyond what we think we can bear; yet this road also brings greater understanding of ourselves and our teachable hearts in ways we could never have predicted.

When I think of dusty, worn sheets that Joseph and Mary traveled on to reach a place of rest that Christmas Eve so long ago, I can close my eyes and imagine the scents of spices, the voices of those who were pushing through crowds in the hustle and bustle of finding accommodations for the night. I can hear the angels that heralded the coming of the Savior's birth as they sang to the lonely shepherds watching over their sheep. I can also hear the cries of those sheep as the shepherds herded them on through the darkness of the cold night guided by a glittering lone star leading them on their way—a compass for their weary hearts. I can see the silhouettes of the three wisemen as they journeyed on their camels though the desert following that same compass to bring gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the holy family sometime after Christ's birth.

I sense Mary and her discomfort as she rode on the donkey days away from giving birth. I can hear the animals in the stable as she and Joseph prepare for labor. I'm awed to think that Joseph may have been the only one present to assist Mary. Their Road to Bethlehem was filled with many opportunities to increase the bonds of love and sacrifice as they humbly travelled far away from family and friends as a newly married couple. They both knew sorrow but celebrated over triumphs in their lives as they raised Jesus and his siblings in a loving home. I envision heavenly light glowing through the slats of the stable on Christmas Eve bringing warmth and comfort to those inside and outside. Whether we would imagine ourselves standing close to the glorious babe laying in the manger or gathering outside the stable amid others to pay our respects; we are offering up our vulnerable hearts and celebrating the Christmas spirit when we stand as a witness of this awesome experience and promise to share that gift with others through our love and service. When we remember Him, we remember our true power and strength to open our minds and let Christmas memories-past and present-resonate our beings; breaking through the hurts, fears and worries that we've carried as we let go and continually receive faith and love for ourselves and others while renewing our vision of our hopes, dreams and aspirations. Christmas joy can be contagious, may we all catch it and spread it around! -written by Suzette Rose-



Oils of the Road to Bethlehem Blend

1. **CASSIA: Oil of Self Assurance.** It is extracted from the bark of the cassia plant and has a warm and spicy smell. In biblical times, Cassia was part of Moses' holy anointing oil (along with Cinnamon and Myrrh) and was used as an incense in the temple.
2. **CINNAMON: Oil of Love and Respect.** It is extracted from the bark of a tropical tree. It has a warm and spicy aroma. In Biblical times, it was considered very expensive. It is also one of the oils Moses was instructed to use to make holy anointing oil.
3. **CLOVE: Oil of Boundaries.** It encourages independence and positivity. It is extracted from the dried flower buds of the clove plant. One of the oldest spices in history, it is also known for its warm and woody aroma. In Biblical times, it was an exceedingly rare spice.
4. **CYPRESS: Oil of Flow and Motion.** It encourages balanced energy and adaptability. It is extracted from the needles and twigs of the Cypress tree. In Biblical times, it was celebrated as a symbol of strength, security, and prosperity and its wood was used for building, trading, and currency.
5. **DOUGLAS FIR: Oil of Wisdom.** It encourages connection to all generations-past and present. It is extracted from the needles and twigs of the evergreen fir trees. It has a sweet, citrus, piney, and woodsy smell. The Douglas Fir tree smells like a Christmas tree.
6. **FRANKINCENSE: King of Oils & Oil of Truth.** It supports spiritual enlightenment and wisdom. It is extracted from the resin of Boswellia trees. In Biblical times, it was considered holy and was used in incense and during religious ceremonies. It was one of the three oils the wisemen brought to Jesus.
7. **JUNIPER BERRY: Oil of Joy.** It encourages light and happiness. It is extracted from the dried needles or fresh berries of a coniferous tree. Its woody, spicey, yet fresh aroma has a calming, grounding effect.
8. **MYRRH: Mother Oil.** It supports trusting the good things of life, connecting and nurturing. It is a valuable and potent oil extracted from the resin of a Myrrh tree with a woodsy smell. In Biblical times it was used as an incense during temple rituals and it was one of the three oils the wisemen brought to baby Jesus.
9. **SANDALWOOD: Oil of Sacred Devotion.** It helps calm the mind and brings peace. It is obtained from the steamed distillation of chips and billets cut from the heartwood of Sandalwood trees. Sandalwood is known to be one of the oldest materials used. In Biblical times, it was used for incense and perfume.
10. **WILD ORANGE: Oil of Abundance.** It supports creativity and positivity. It is cold pressed from the peel of the wild orange which is like sweet orange. It has a sweet and refreshing smell that invigorates the spirit.