This is a book of reflections on the ancient prayer known as the 'joyful mysteries': the annunciation to Mary, the visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, the nativity of Jesus, the presentation in the temple, and the finding of Jesus in the temple. For each, the author provides the scripture passage on which it is based, a reflection, a prayer and some questions to promote further reflection and prayer.

The author's reflections, which are the main content of the book, have a strong theological content, exploring how the scripture passage concerned with the 'mystery' connects with other passages to do with this period in Jesus' life or with the teaching that the evangelist is revealing. For example, the Visitation provides a springboard for discussing the work and gift of the Holy Spirit in enabling us to respond to God and to recognize the divine presence. There is some 'credibility check' in her engagement with the scripture passage, as she offers some cultural input relating to the original setting and also recognises the questions that may arise in twenty-first century minds, and these questions are addressed in practical and faith-full ways. But the main thrust of the reflections is to relate the 'mysteries' to our time and our world, and the relationships which we build in the communities around us. They are also an encouragement to live the faith with confidence, for, as she states in the preface, this is a hallmark of 'joyful Christianity'.

While this book is especially relevant to the seasons of Christmas through to Candlemas, its scope is broad enough to be a valuable aid to prayer at any time of the year.

Maureen CSF