

Monthly reflection, February 2014

Choice

'When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons".'

Luke 2.22-24

Early on in Jesus' life, his family were forced to make several choices that were not really choices at all. They had no choice but to travel to Bethlehem whilst Mary was heavily pregnant, no choice but to lay Jesus in a manger and no choice but to flee to Egypt to escape Herod.

The sacrifice they chose when presenting Jesus at the Temple was a small choice, but a telling one. Only those too poor to afford a lamb would sacrifice turtledoves or pigeons instead. (Leviticus 12.8).

Poverty forces families into choices that can seem impossible. Our recent report, [Behind Cold Doors](#), found that in Britain today, three million families say they are likely to have to cut back on food so that they can pay their energy bills this winter. And more than half of the families who have to lower their heating because of the cost, say they are worried that their homes will be so cold their children will become ill.

People are facing a stark choice between heating and eating, yet it is really no choice at all.

The government does have a choice. There is a solution. One simple measure it can put in place is to make sure that all children in families living in poverty can automatically receive the Warm Home Discount: a £135 rebate to help low-income families with their fuel bills.

Saving on energy bills is one way to make sure that those most in need can keep their homes warm, and help put an end to parents having to make the harsh choice between heating or eating.

Please join us by [emailing your MP](#) to ask the government to ensure no child's health suffers because of a cold home.