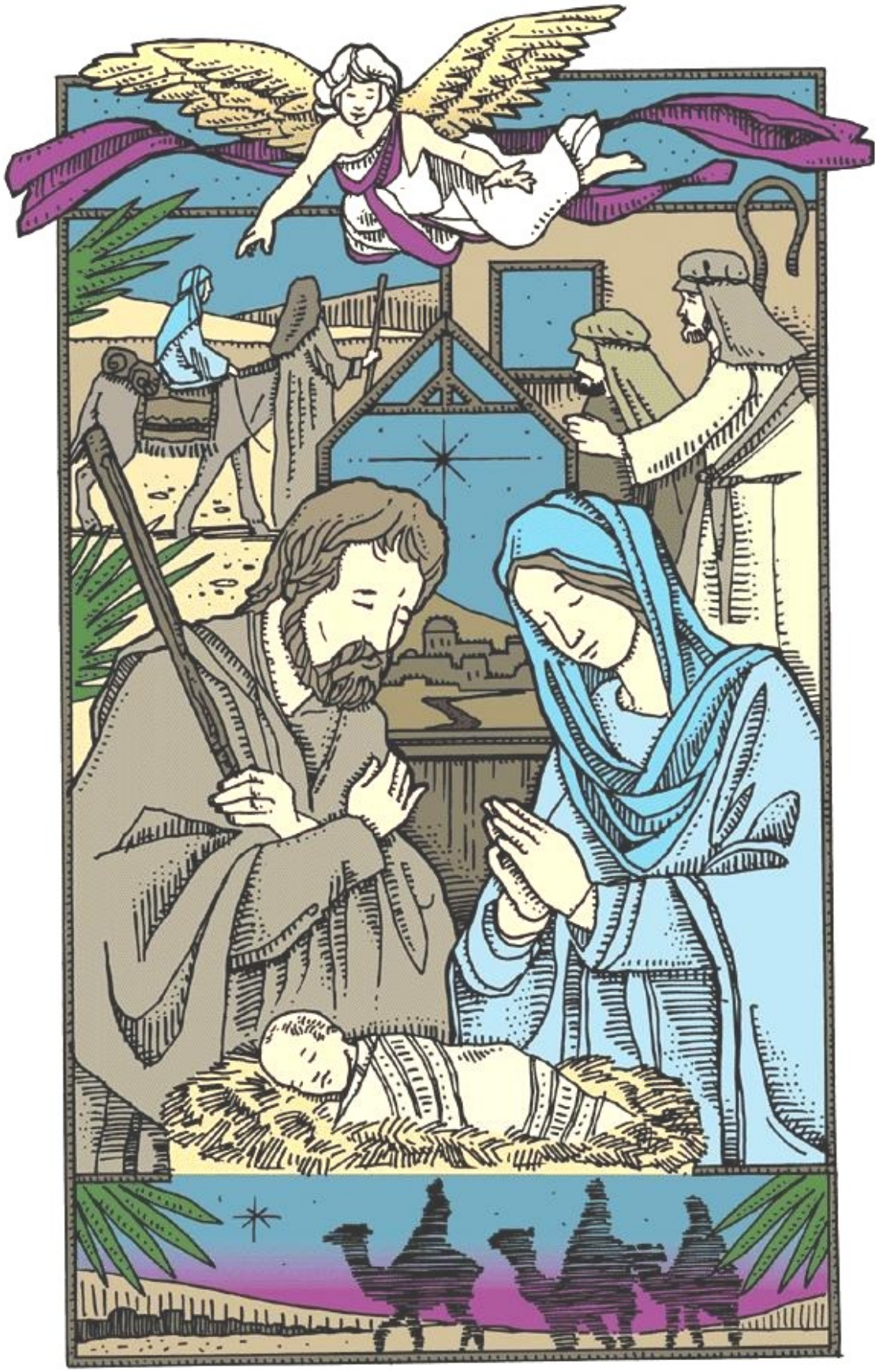


For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord

Luke 2:11

Nativity of the Lord

December 25, 2014

Our Lady of Lourdes

455 Hunter Avenue
West Islip, NY 11795
631-661-3224
Website: *ollchurch.org*

Msgr. Brian J. McNamara, Pastor
Rev. Robert Scheckenback, Associate Pastor

Welcome...

to Our Lady of Lourdes!

Christmas is a time for family. We are glad you decided to celebrate with our Parish Family during this Holy Season. We hope you will return often. If you would like to become a registered member of our Parish, please fill in the information below and place this form in the collection basket or send it to the Parish Office.

Family Name_____

First Names: Head of Household_____ Spouse_____

Children (please include ages, grades, and sacraments received)

_____ _____

_____ _____

Address_____ City_____ Zip_____

Phone_____ E-Mail Address_____

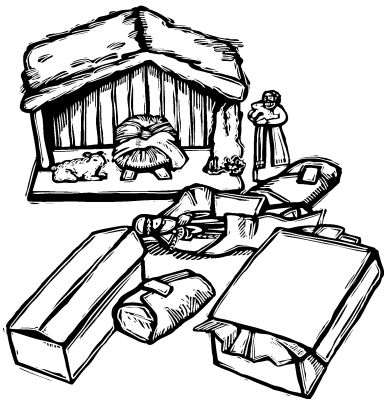
Below please find a set of 3 chances. It is a 50-50 drawing. Chances are $50 each or 3 chances for $100. 1st place winner will win 35% of the money, 2nd place will win 10% of the money and 3rd place will win 5% of the money. You have to be in it to win it! The drawing will take place on **Sunday, January 4 after the 12:30pm Mass**. Hopefully, the Wise Men will bring you a gift of a winning ticket!

Solemnity of Mary

The Parish Family of Our Lady of Lourdes will gather on **Wednesday, December 31 and Thursday, January 1** to celebrate the **Solemnity of Mary.**

We will celebrate the Solemnity of Mary on ...
Wednesday, December 31 at 5:00pm *(vigil)*
Thursday, January 1 at 8:30am and 12:10pm.
Please come and pray with us!

The First Nativity Scene



The origin of the display of the Nativity dates back to the time of St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis was concerned that people did not appreciate the gift of Christ's birth. St. Francis wanted to celebrate the Incarnation (God becoming a man) in a special way. He wanted to do something that would help people to remember the Christ Child and how Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

On Christmas Eve, in the year 1223A.D., at the proper time, St. Francis and his Franciscan brothers created a new Bethlehem. People, young and old, came to see this new sight. They carried torches to light up the sky as they approached the manger. Once again, shepherds came from the fields to come and adore the King. All were filled with joy over the mystery of the Incarnation. And a beautiful tradition was started.

As you look upon your own family Nativity set, may you remember and celebrate again God's love for His creation. In order to show His abundant love, mercy, and forgiveness for us, God became one like us. That is what the crèche ultimately symbolizes.

VISIT A COLLECTION OF NATIVITY SETS LOCATED IN THE PARISH CENTER!

Did You Know...

In biblical times, cakes were made with wheat flour and water, then sweetened with honey. Honey doughnuts were made into animal shapes and fried in olive oil. Locusts (grasshoppers) were dried in the sun, then mixed with honey and wheat flour before being baked into biscuits.

The poinsettia originated in Mexico where it was called the "Flower of the Holy Night." It was first brought to America by Joel Poinsett in 1829. In natural settings poinsettias reach a height of ten feet. December 12 is National Poinsettia Day.

An early version of a Christmas ball ornament was made by wrapping a walnut in tin foil and hanging it with a piece of thread.

The popular Christmas Carol, *The Little Drummer Boy*, has been commercially recorded more than 200 times in at least seven languages and has been performed in a variety of genres, including rock, rap and easy-listening.

The word "wreath" come from the old English word, "writhen", meaning "to twist." In ancient times, wreaths were often placed on the heads of heroes, royalty or winning athletes.

Two of the gifts from the Wise Men were made from plants; both frankincense and myrrh are herbs that come from small trees. The bible says that the Magi came from the East. If they came from Persia, as some scholars think, the trip would have taken almost a year by camels and the Wise Men would have travelled more than 1,000 miles.

A thirsty camel can drink 30 gallons of water in 13 minutes! When a camel does not eat, he uses the fat stored in his hump, so the hump slowly droops.

A candy-maker wanted to witness to this Christian faith, so he chose pure white candy to represent the virgin birth. The small red stripes were added to represent the blood that Jesus shed on the cross for us. It was shaped in the mode of a shepherd's staff.

The Flight into Egypt

The Gospel according to St. Matthew (Mt 2:13-15) tells us that on their journey, the Wise Men stopped at the palace of King Herod to ask after the new-born King. Herod asked the Magi to let him know the child's whereabouts that he too might worship him. In reality, the news of a new king born within his domain infuriated Herod. When the Magi failed to return to him, Herod ordered his army to slay every male child in Bethlehem under the age of two. The Gospel tells us that an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and warned him to take Mary and Jesus and flee to Egypt until the danger passed.

And so, Joseph took Mary and the Child and embarked on the long, hard journey to Egypt. The journey was an extremely difficult one across the Sinai desert, a triangular stretch of sun-baked land, full of rocky mountains and barren plateaus with high sand dunes. It is estimated that they would have traveled an average of 20 miles per day and would have reached Egypt in about 10 days.

Egypt was a place of refuge in those days. Whenever there was a famine, thousands would leave Israel and seek the life-giving banks of the Nile River. And so Mary and Joseph would have found welcome among the large Jewish community living in Egypt.

All the Gospels tell us about this time is that the Holy Family lived in Egypt until told by an angel to return to Israel after the death of Herod. They returned to Galilee, to the town of Nazareth, rather than to Judea which was in the control of Herod's son, Archelaus, also a power-hungry ruler.

We can only guess at the rest of the story of the time the Holy Family spent in Egypt. There's a Greek Orthodox church in present-day Cairo that houses a cave where it is said Jesus, Mary and Joseph lived during their Egyptian exile.

On Sunday, December 28, we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family.

Christmas Around the World

* "Hyvää Joulua!" In **Finland,** at about 5 or 6 o'clock, families go to the cemeteries to leave candles on the graves of loved ones who won't be there to celebrate Christmas any longer. Thousands of flickering lights, reflecting against the snow and trees, create a memorable scene.

* "Froehliche Weitnachten!" In **Germany**, families also celebrate St. Nicholas Day (December 6). On the eve of the feast, children leave shoes outside their bedroom doors hoping that St. Nicholas will fill them with treats.

* "Ye Dan Kua!" In **China,** it literally means "Jesus birth happy. Because China is still run by atheistic communists, Christmas Day is not a public holiday. In their homes, there are "trees of light" decorated with paper chains, paper flowers, and paper lanterns.

* "Boze Narodzenie!" In **Poland,** a traditional Christmas food is Oplatek-a piece of bread pressed with a holy picture on it. They share it with family and friends to wish them good things in the coming year and to forgive any hurts from the past year.

* "Joyeaux Noel!" In **France**, the crèche or Nativity scene is central in each home. The crèche includes little clay figures called santons which often times bear a strong resemblance to local dignitaries and characters. The main Christmas meal is called Le Revillion—the awakening– and is eaten after midnight Mass.

* "Nollaig Shona Dhiut!" In **Ireland**, lighted red candles decorated with holly are placed in windows on Christmas Eve to guide Joseph and Mary in case they are seeking shelter. Children put out Christmas sacks instead of stockings and to refresh a travel-weary Santa, they leave mince pies and a bottle of Guinness.

* "Buon Natale!" In **Italy**, children receive their gifts on January 6, the Epiphany. They are brought by a kind ugly witch called Befana. She rides a broom and is looking for the three Wise Men. It is said that they asked her to come along with them on their journey to visit the Christ child and she refused saying she was too busy. She regretted her decision and has been searching for the Baby ever since, leaving gifts at every house in case He is there.

* "Vesely Vanoce!" In the **Czech Republic**, during Advent Catholics fast from eating milk, eggs and meat. These foods return on Christmas and there is a tradition of putting fish scales under the dinner plates to bring luck in the coming year. During the time of the Communist repression, the atheistic Communists tried to outlaw Christmas and replace the Baby Jesus with "Grandfather Frost." It didn't work—and neither did atheistic communism for that matter!

* "Feliz Navidad!" In **Argentina**, it is very warm at Christmas. So, people place cotton balls on their Christmas trees to look like snow. On Christmas Eve, people light up and float "*globos",* colorful tissue-paper balloons lit from inside and fireworks are heard everywhere.

* "Srozhdestvom Kristovym!" In the **Ukraine,** the family places a loaf of bread with a candle in it in the middle of the table. The light reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world. Stalks of wheat are also scattered around the table to remind us of the manger where Jesus was born.

Roman Martyrology

Throughout the season of Advent, the Church has reflected on God's promises, so often spoken by the prophets, to send a savior to the people of Israel who would be Emmanuel, that is, God with us. In the fullness of time those promises were fulfilled. With hearts full of joy let us listen to the proclamation of our Savior's birth.

Today, the twenty-fifth day of December, unknown ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth and then formed man and woman in His own image.

Several thousand years after the flood, when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant.

Twenty-one centuries from the time of Abraham and Sarah; thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt. Eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the Judges; one thousand years from the anointing of David as king; in the sixty-fifth week according to the prophecy of Daniel.

In the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad; the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome.

The forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus; the whole world being at peace, Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father, desiring to sanctify the world by his most merciful coming, being conceived by the Holy Spirit, and nine months having passed since his conception, was born in Bethlehem of Judea of the Virgin Mary.

Today is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.

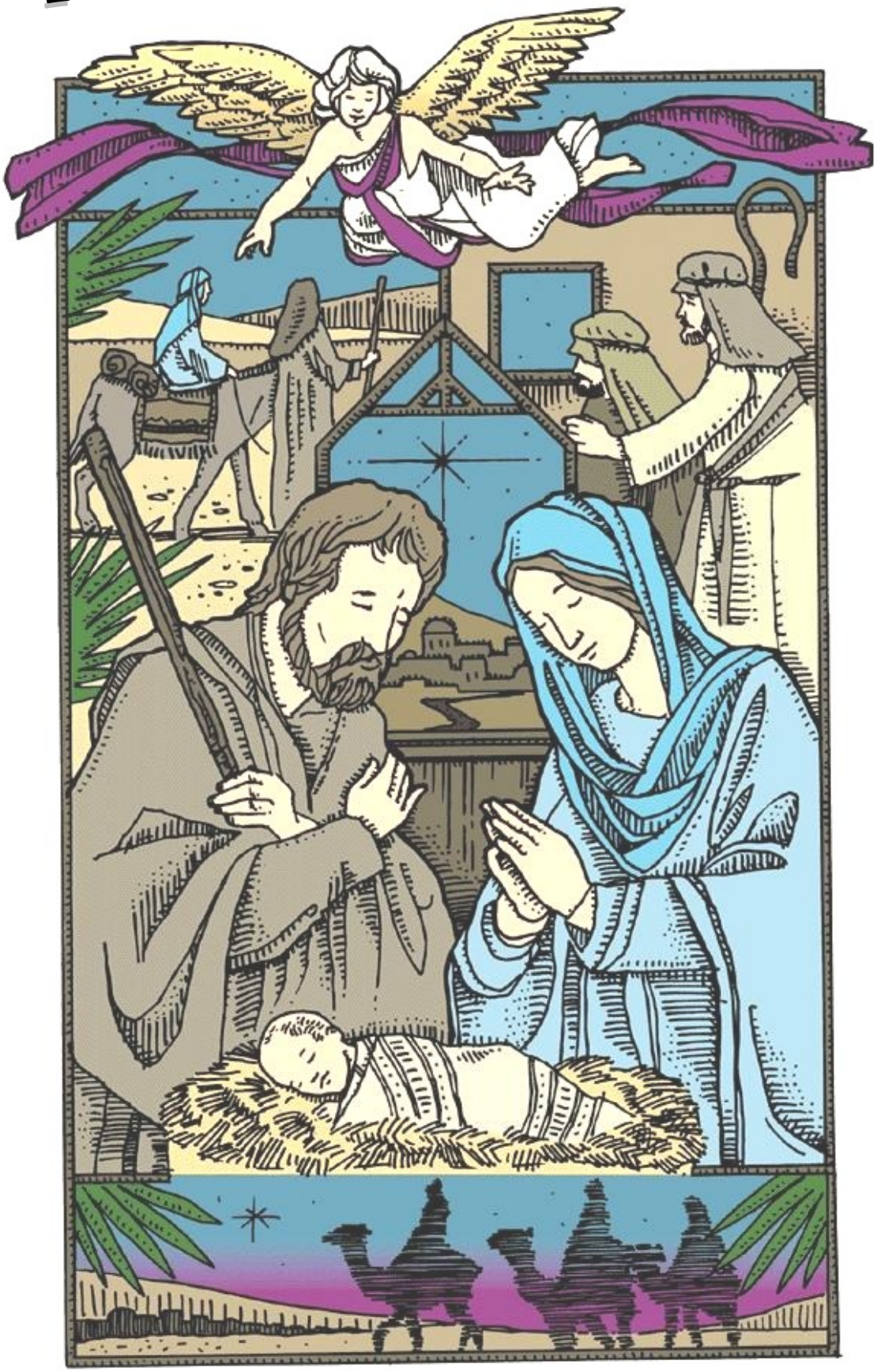
Come let us adore him!

THE NATIVITY SCENE

The Nativity Scene reminds us that CHRIST is the reason for the celebration of Christmas. In an increasingly secular world, let us boldly proclaim that God, the Father, sent us the first and greatest Christmas gift: JESUS CHRIST, Prince of Peace.

This tableau is to be placed in the FRONT WINDOW, or OTHER PROMINENT PLACE in your home, witnessing to WHOM and WHAT we believe in as Christians:

> "For God so loved the world that He sent His only Son That all who believe in Him may have eternal life."
>
> ~ John 3:16

We ask that you display this NATIVITY scene until SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2015, THE FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD. This marks the official end of the Christmas season. Let us do our part to keep Christ in Christmas!

Keep CHRIST in CHRISTMAS