

*“...they will call him
Immanuel”
— which means,
“God with us.”*



Matthew 1:23

December 25, 2023

Our Lady of Lourdes
 455 Hunter Avenue, West Islip, NY 11795
 631-661-3224 | Website: ollchurch.org
 Rev. Dennis A. Suglia, *Pastor*
 Rev. Charles Mangano, *Associate Pastor*



Solemnity of Mary and World Day of Peace

The Parish Family of Our Lady of Lourdes will gather on **Monday, January 1** to celebrate the **Solemnity of Mary and World Day of Peace**.

Mass will be celebrated:

Monday, January 1 at 8:00am, 12:10pm and 5:00pm

Please come and pray with us!

NOTE: There will be no 6:00pm Mass on Sunday, December 31



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 _____

Dear Parishioners:

Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! May the joy and peace of this sacred season be with you.

I am sure that we remember Charlie Brown asking Linus about the true meaning of Christmas. St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (340AD – 397AD), gave us the following explanation of Christmas:

God became an infant so that you could become a full, mature human being. He came to earth so that you could live beyond the stars. There was no place at the Inn so that there could be many dwelling places in heaven for you. He was rich, but he became poor for us.”

As we know, Christmas has been infused with so much secularism. Pope Francis has challenged us to keep our eyes on Christ during this holy time. The Pope calls us to focus on the spiritual values and meaning of Christmas. He said, “Ensure that holy Christmas is never of celebration of consumerism, appearances, useless gifts or excessive waste but that it is a celebration of joyfully welcoming the Lord into your heart... Christmas must not be reduced to a sentimental or consumerist festival, full of gifts and good wishes but poor in Christian faith.” Rather than being poor in the Christian faith, let us be rich in the Christian faith!

How can we become rich in the Christian faith? Simply by asking Jesus into the inn of your heart. It is really that simple! Simply say to Jesus: “Jesus, I need you. I invite you to come into my heart, into my life. I am willing to trust you as my Savior and follow you as my Lord. Help me to feel your love for me.” Jesus is outside the door of your heart; let Jesus in!

Christmas is also an appropriate time to thank you for your Stewardship and financial support of our parish family. Through your service of your time, talent and treasure, our parish family continues to serve those in need and bring the message of Christ’s love to others. I ask you to continue to be generous to Our Lady of Lourdes this Christmas. With your assistance, we can live out our parish motto: “Together, we can do something beautiful for God.”

On behalf of the priests, deacons, religious sisters and parish staff, we wish you a Blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with much health, happiness and, above all, holiness.

In Christ,

Fr. Dennis Suglia
Pastor

Rev. Charles Mangano
Associate Pastor

New Year’s Eve/Day: Feast of Mary, Mother of God:
(Not a Holy Day of Obligation)

December 31: New Year’s Eve:
No Vigil Mass for New Year’s Eve

January 1: New Year’s Day:
8:30am Church
12:10pm Church
5:00pm Church

Don’t forget our Christmas Raffle. The tickets are \$25 each or six (6) tickets for \$100. You have to be in it to win it! When completed, drop them off (or mail them) to the Parish Office. Maybe you can give them as Christmas gifts, especially to your adult children. The drawing will take place in the All Purpose Room on Sunday, Jan. 14th after the 12:30pm Mass. The Raffle is a 50-50, so the more people who enter, the greater the winnings. Check the bulletin for additional tickets.



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Christmas 2023

To the People of God of the Diocese of Rockville Centre:

Merry Christmas to you and your families!

In recent years at Christmas, I have meditated on the relationship between the Nativity of the Prince of Peace and the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

I have been especially inspired by Pope Francis' analysis of the Parable of the Good Samaritan in the second chapter of his 2020 encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*. It is powerful and provocative, and I would recommend it for your mental prayer.

The short phrase in the Christmas Gospel narrative in the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke reads: "She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

"No room for them in the inn." No Good Samaritan stepped up to help the Holy Family. They were ignored and treated perfunctorily and impatiently. Some passed them by. Some pretended not to notice their plight.

Remember too that in the Parable of the Good Samaritan an "inn" is also mentioned. Luke 10 reads: "But a Good Samaritan while traveling came near him, and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn and took care of him."

The inn that the Holy Family approaches on the way to Bethlehem is a sign of rejection and indifference.

The inn in the Parable of the Good Samaritan is a sign of the Good Samaritan's compassion and commitment to go the extra mile and to make sure that the wounded man is taken care of until he is completely healed.

Contemporary literary criticism might very well emphasize that the use of "inn" by the Gospel writer in both the Nativity in Luke 2 and the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 is not by accident.

In a sense, the phrase “there was no room at the inn” in the Nativity foreshadows and connects with the phrase in the Parable of the Good Samaritan describing the callous indifference of both the priest and the Levite toward the wounded man on the side of the road: “[H]e passed by on the other side.”

As Pope Francis says in *Fratelli Tutti*: “Each day we have to decide whether to be Good Samaritans or indifferent bystanders.”¹

Our Lady, St. Joseph and the unborn Christ Child experienced the reality of people who decided to be indifferent bystanders.

The Christmas Gospel narrative from Luke 2 poses a question which is posed again later in the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10.

Will we be Good Samaritans?

Or will we be indifferent bystanders?

As the Holy Father reminds us, we make that choice every day.

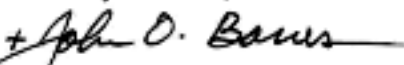
May our prayer, silent contemplation and creative family catechesis of the Nativity scene help us to be instruments of a Nativity Mystery. May the Good Samaritan Gospel revolution of humility, charity, mercy, tenderness and peace unite us in solidarity with the sick, the poor and the suffering, especially in the Middle East, Ukraine and all war-ravaged areas of the world.

May our commitment to “holiness and mission” bless our contemplative Synodal listening and our Eucharistic Revival and Evangelization.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your families!

May the Light and Love of the Christ Child animate and guide our global Catholic Missionary Spirit on this Christmas night and throughout the New Year.

Sincerely in Christ,


Most Reverend John O. Barres
Bishop of Rockville Centre

¹ Francis, encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, October 4, 2020: AAS 112 (11) 969-1074, at no. 70.

Christmas

FLOWER OFFERING

Fr. Pat Amabile
Fr. Joe Lukaszewski
Fr. Bill Shean
Fr. Bill Jablonski
Fr. Brendel
Fr. Toomey
Msgr. Wiest
Msgr. Minturn
The Victims of 911
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John & June Carrick
Elizabeth Finn
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Moore & Family
Joseph & Anne Molloy
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Joseph Horan, Eugene Grabowski
Mella Martino, Matthew Kreamer,
Kyle Dilegame
Andrew L. Velten, Anthony (Drew) Velten
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Mr. & Mrs. Edcwin R. Hawkins
John P. & Beverly Caparella
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Linda Miller, John Radosti, John Gullotta
John Carosone, Carl De Filippo
Bunting & Hirt Families, Rita Bunting
Mr. Kevin Cruze
Vincent M. Sepe
Lucy Loodus
Rita Leanza, Adele Bavuso, Matteo Bavuso,
Lena Leanza, Giovana Bavuso
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Mr. & Mrs. J. Aitken
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John & Dolores Oleksiuk
Thomas & Florence Brady
Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Denzler
Florence Borzell, Patricia Zitani,
Anthony Borzell, Mauren Borzell
Marjorie E. Henery, Herbert A. Henery
Dennis Radesky
Thomas G. Brando

Rose & Richard H. Landry
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Peter Rooney
Maher Family
Joseph C. Capo II
Carpentiere & Dontelli Family
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Felisa Baltazar, Rafael Baltazar
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Frank & Theresa Feliney,
John & Anna Lauria,
Alice B. Weckerle, RC
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Piazza Families
Bruce Ferland, Sr.
Phyllis & Peter Coppelli
Deceased Members of Brusca Family
Frank X. Bronkhurst
Deceased Members of Bronkhurst Family
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Nicole Ranieri, Mary Drabaneti,
Nick Romanello, John Romanello, Jr.
Maureen Ferro, Dorothy Ferro,
Rudolph Ferro
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Livecchi
Nancy & Jerry Esposito, Sr
Anthony Zafferese, Della Ratta Family,
Gertrude Dunne
Steven Christopher Perone,
Frances & Michael Torino,
Julia & Ralph Perone, Frank Perone
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Gallagher
Frank Aparo
Dowling, Kelly, McCarthy &
Petroni Families
Deceased Members of Lettieri &
Turano Families
Lawrence & Elaine Stehl
Mrs. Betty Chimento
Frederick C. Henning,
Bertrand & Anna Clarke,
Dorothy & Walter Henning
Clair, Bill, Viola, Nana
Salegna Family, Vega Family,
Lillian Daly, Nancy Harnos
Peter Lynaugh
Matthew Kuzmiak
Ireneo & Consolacion deLeon,
Raymundo & Carolina Herrera,
Edward Feeney, Giuseppe Mezzacappa,
Neoly & Edward Dijamco, Arthur deLeon,
Beneicto deLeon
Nancy Bencivinni, Jay & Patsy Perri
Sandy, Ronnie Koen, Richie Koen,
Geogia Larrocas, Bobby Waynes,
Michael Dorans, Mrs. Dean,
Wayn Marquant
Carolyn Wissing
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Finnegan, Jr.

Wilfred, Margret & Ralphie Corrigan
Christine Pascale
Margaret Cavallo, Anthony Cavallo,
Jennie Vella, Joseph Vella
Eugene Langan, Edwin Lucie
Edward, Kathryn, Peter, John &
George Herger
Raymond W. Everett, Jr.
Mr. Stephen Macquade
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McArdle Families
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Domenick & Jean Paladino
Mr. & Mrs. Angelko Telesmanic
Joseph Costantino, Gloria Costantino,
Maria Inoa
Dorothy & Robert Robertson,
Mr. & Mrs. Walter Alvarado
Deceased Members of Ryan &
Young Families
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Lupo
Donna Marie Neuman, Deceased
Members Neuman & Mathews Family
Carl & Janette Correa, Anthony &
Connie Vela
Louise & Charles Mangano, Sr.,
Frances & Sam Ferrara,
Joan Graham, Pat Jensen
Our Parents
Ray & Eileen Gearity, Vito &
Annunziata DePaola, Sal, Vitus,
Cono, Giovanni
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Lavelle
Fred N. Polik & Natalie Macari
William Mace,
Florence & Peter Roache
Anthony & Patrick Cafferty, John,
Mary & Kevin Cunniffe, Jane, Helen
& Loughlin Family, Donal, Nora,
John, Mike A M. All Family & Friends
Rick Munkwitz, Jamie Munkwitz
Mrs. Bernadette Arnone
Robert J. King, Paul DeSantis,
Michael Varanelli, Vera & Anthony
Desantis, Maria & Joe LaRocca,
Angela Ciaramella
Frank Aparo
Elsie Isopo
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Mr. & Mrs. Greg Arena
Joe Catuosco
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Benavides
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Sciaruto
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Ms. Mechelina Geddrie
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Josephine Montesanto, Linda Cosentino
Catherine Marrone, Alfred Ryan,
Thomas O'Leary, John Homan
Helen & John Ianno,

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The Angeloro & Caiati Families
Mr. & Mrs. William Mazzoli, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Matthew Kilkelly
Ms. Linda Kennedy
Deceased Members of Capoccia Family
Caroline Sullivan, Pat & Jim Koehler
Cleary & Reiser Families
Kyle Delagame
Ms. Estelle Culpepper
Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Balestrieri
Mr. & Mrs. John Sehn
Joseph Marrone, Sr.
Joseph Marrone, Jr., Marrone Family,
Colasuonno Family
Guider & Heartt Families
Member of the DiMino &
McKeefery Families
Mr. & Mrs. Gary Hague
Barry Siefken
Jim Weydig, Joseph Marrone,
James G. Johnson
Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Imperati
Stanley Renkas, Rosemarie Renkas
Deceased Members of Wilson &
Kopitsch Families
Rose & Sal Guastella
Mr. & Mrs. Norman Schlosser
Nicholas Macario, James Michael Macario
Marie & Ed Terribile, Terry & Don Rienzo
James Teague
John P. Lilly
Mr. & Mrs. R. Stagnitta
Michael & Catherine Maneri
Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Mascolo
Mr. Albert Ranzie
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Munch, Jr.
Mrs. Elena Nunez
Deceased DeRoxas &
Delfin Family Members
Rega & Costanza Family
Okurowski & Lee Family,
Eileen Okurowski
Kuhlwilm & Estelle Families
Helen Richichi, Robert Twibli
Ms. Krista Bourne
Mr. Peter Silvestri
deLeon & Espina Families,
Lee & Mitchel Families,
Molato & Barnett Families
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Yagarich
Mr. & Mrs. Richard T. Finn
Mr. & Mrs. Brian Sabella
Mangiaracina Family
Mr. & Mrs. William Gries
Peter Lynch, Annette Morata
Generosa Alfano, Dominick Alfano
Mr. & Mrs. M. Furfia,
Mr. & Mrs. G. Punzi
Janet S. McLean
Margaret Dugan, Jane Keegan

Mr. & Mrs. Jim & Rose D'Angelo
Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Baldassi
Mr. & Mrs. Jason DeLuca
Alice Hess, Veronica Pasini
Nancy Normandy, Ann Byrne,
Frank Byrne
Ted & Barbara Johnston
Ann & James Tamney, Rosalie &
Anthony Tascarella
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Sterling
Deceased members of Bono, Amabile
Families & Haimewitz, Feniello, &
Maccanone Family
Mr. & Mrs. John Muldoon
Al Kittner, Fred Zimmerman, Jr.,
Roy & Cecelia George
All Deceased Family Members
Pete & Marion Schreiner
James Cafaro, Mary Cafaro
Deceased Members of Colletti &
Guarino Families
Lanfair & Ruvolo Families - Living
and Dead
Catherine Peterson, Nial Peterson,
Donald Peterson
Lee-McNulty Family,
Finnegan Family, Robert, Charlie,
Bobby, Mike, Ed & Alice Lee, Pat,
Anna, Eileen & Tommy McNulty
Ellen Finn
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Fecteau
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Giuffrè
Michael Kaminski, Jean Kaminski,
Fred Stimpfel, Catherine Stimpfel
Hernandez & Duchman Families
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Mar,
Mr. & Mrs. Ernest Meyer
Mr. & Mrs. William Sheehan
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Gal
Ms. Janice Allen
Mr. & Mrs. Angelito Cruz
Pasquale Sgambati
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Lamb
Rose & Thomas Paradiso,
Celia & Julius DeCotis Fran Telesmanick
Jack, Laura, Steven, Jacklyn Dawson, Joe,
Laura, Laurie Campisi, Lee Sferlazza
Magliocco Family, Coasa Family
John & Rose Rickey, Christina Sanchez
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Raynor
Bessie Gruner
Mr. Joseph Rohan
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Hannon
Mr. Richard German
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Bovasso
Keane & Foley Families
Ms. Annette Yao
Charles & Dorothy Widdicombe
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph T. Mirro
Mr. & Mrs. Carl Nicolosi
Ben & Gloria Coppola

Charles & Anna Morreale
Marie Manley
Mr. Kevin O'Connell
Vincent McGuire
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Niewinski
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Nuzzo
Mr. & Mrs. Brian Haggerty
Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Kane
Dominick Stabile
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Avella
Sal Rotolo, Stephanie Morrissey
Mylo Manno
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Paul
Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Shannon
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Gefferio
Konopka Yuzef, Teodora Sokolonski
Maccaw, Zofia Pawet
Regina Truszkowski, Jan Jadwiga
Cedrowski
Thomas Kavanaugh, Ann Kavanaugh
Justin Behnke, Gary Behnke
Agnes Izatt, Alexander Izatt,
Frank Conway, Mary Conway
Ms. Cynthia Scherer
Eileen Okurowski
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Kane
Mr. Michael Poveromo
Ms. Julie Magee
Mr. & Mrs. Ragnar Sparby
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Brady
Robert Aziz
Mr. & Mrs. Terence Woodside
Mr. & Mrs. Fred Gallagher
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Piscola
May Family in Heaven
Berth & George West, Rita & Carl Peccola
Paul West & Peggy Hendel
Angie & James Anderson,
Charles Caputo, Milton Von G
Marie Conti
Edith & Francis Monaghan
Mr. & Mrs. Carl Czurda
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Manziak
Evelyn & Ed Carlin,
Rosalie & Joseph Pacini
Arthur Lusty Family,
Anthony Rendin Family
Ms. Cynthia Carlo
Ms. Dolores Beckerman
Mr. Thomas Calogero, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Carboni
Mrs. Madeline Swicord
Mr. & Mrs. Bruce O'Shaughnessy
Tom D'Achille
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Lehmann
Mr. & Mrs. Michael V. Porzio
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Bruno
Adriana Psomas
Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Papocchia

**Flower Offerings received after December 10th
will be published in subsequent bulletins.**



Week 4 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

OPEN YOUR HEARTS to Jesus this Christmas. Are you open to Jesus' presence in your life?

Slow down and let Jesus be with you.



Week 3 - Third Sunday of Advent - Gaudete Sunday

Are you sharing the good news of Jesus' birth with others?

Share the Good News through your words and actions with your family and those around you.

OPEN YOUR MOUTH in a big smile and share the joy.



Week 2 - Second Sunday of Advent

How are you hearing God this week?

Is it in the words from scripture or in the words from those around us?

OPEN YOUR EARS and really listen.



Week 1 - First Sunday of Advent

What gifts from God do you see along the way to Bethlehem this week?

Not only material things, but in the people around us.

OPEN YOUR EYES and look around.

Christmas Raffle

Below please find a set of 6 chances. It is a 50-50 drawing. Chances are \$25 each or 6 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! Completed raffle tickets, along with check/cash, should be returned to the Parish Office.



The drawing will take place on **Sunday, January 14 in the All Purpose Room after the 12:30pm Mass.**

Hopefully, the Wise Men will bring you a gift of a winning ticket!

<p align="center">CHRISTMAS RAFFLE</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p> <p>1 Ticket for \$25; 6 Tickets for \$100</p>	<p align="center">CHRISTMAS RAFFLE</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p> <p>1 Ticket for \$25; 6 Tickets for \$100</p>	<p align="center">CHRISTMAS RAFFLE</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p> <p>1 Ticket for \$25; 6 Tickets for \$100</p>
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Candy Cane Priest

A Catholic priest from the Diocese of Little Rock, Arkansas, invented the machine that shapes candy canes. Candy maker Bob McCormack (founder of Bob's Candies in Albany, Georgia) had begun making candy canes for his children in the 1920's. The process was tedious. Twisting could only be done by hand and the breakage often ran up to 22 percent of production. Perplexed as to what to do, Bob turned to his wife Anna Louise's brother, Fr. Gregory Harding Keller, for suggestions.

Fr. Keller had been dubbed the "family genius" because of his fascination for how things worked. As a student, he fixed the organ at the North American College in Rome. During summer vacations, he would travel to Albany and work at the candy factory. Fr. Keller listened to his brother-in-law's predicament. Within six months, he had perfected the Keller Machine which twisted soft candy into spiral striping and cut the sticks in precise lengths.

Born May 24, 1895, in Little Rock, Fr. Keller studied for the priesthood in Rome, where he was ordained. He returned to Little Rock and served in parishes there for 36 years. Fr. Keller gained national attention as a contestant on the popular TV show, "What's My Line" in the 1960's. He was the inventor priest.



O Holy Night

Originally, "O Holy Night" was written as a poem by French wine merchant and poet Placide Cappeau (1808-1877). Inspired by the Gospel of Luke, he wrote these famous lines in honor of the renovation of a church organ in Roquemaure, France. Later, Cappeau's friend and composer, Adolphe Adams, put the words to song. "O Holy Night" was performed for the first time on Christmas Eve by opera singer Emily Laurie at the church in Roquemaure. The lyrics were translated into English in 1855 by American minister and publisher John Sullivan Dwight.

Legend of St Joseph's Staff

When Mary was 14, so the legend goes, the high priest gathered the young women of marriageable age and told them that they should prepare for marriage. Mary said that she could not because she had dedicated herself to the Lord. The high priest did not want to dissolve her vow, but neither did he want to start a new custom that Jewish women should not marry. With other elders, he prayed for a solution. Since, according to the legend, Mary was a descendant of David, they decreed that all men of the line of David of marriageable age should gather and bring their favorite walking stick to the altar. If a flower should spring from one of these, this man would be the one to whom Mary was given. Joseph was an older man and did not want to participate, so he did not bring a walking stick. One by one, staffs were brought to the altar but nothing happened. So the priest demanded that the "missing walking staff" be brought forward. Joseph went and got his, and when it was brought to the altar, a dove perched on top of it. It was clear that he was to be Mary's husband.



The Legend of the Poinsettia

The brilliant red leaves of the Poinsettia are a common decoration at this time of year. Its association with Christmas began many years ago when the story developed of Pepita, a poor Mexican girl who had no gift for the Christ Child at Christmas. Her cousin Pedro told her that even the most humble gift given in love is a welcomed present. So, Pepita gathered a handful of weeds into a small bouquet. As she laid it at the foot of the crèche, it burst into blooms of red. From that day on, the Poinsettia has also been known as the *Flor de Nochebuena*, or Flower of the Holy Night (Christmas Eve).

Christmas Tree Origins

The German and English immigrants brought the Paradise Tree, or Christmas Tree, to Canada, the United States and South and Central America. Fruits, nuts, flowers and lighted candles adorned the early Christmas trees but, with all of the decorations, many of the trees sagged and drooped due to the weight of the decorations. Ingenuity prevailed as German glassblowers began to produce lightweight glass balls and decorations to replace the heavier natural decorations. The lights and decorations were symbols of the joy and the light of Christmas and at the top of the tree was placed a star that was symbolic of the “Star of the East” that led the Wise Men to the manger.

Another legend surrounds the use of the Pine Tree as the Christmas tree. When the Holy Family was pursued by the soldiers of Herod, many plants offered them shelter. When Mary was too weary to travel any longer, the Family stopped at the edge of the forest to rest. A gnarled and withered old pine tree that had grown hollow from its many years invited the family to rest within its trunk. When the Holy Family did so, the branches closed around them and hid them from the soldiers who sought their presence. When the soldiers had passed, the Holy Family left. When they did, the Christ Child blessed the pine tree and the imprint of the Infant Jesus' hand was left forever in the fruit of the tree, the pine cone. If a pine cone is cut lengthwise, the little hand of Jesus can still be seen.

When you and your family place and decorate your tree this year, you might want to thank God for the true meaning of the Christmas tree: *eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven.*



St. Teresa of Calcutta

Christmas held special meaning for Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who once said that her work with the poor began on Christmas Day in 1948.

A priest had come to India to spend the holiday with Mother Teresa, While he was visiting, there was a knock at the door. When the sisters opened the door, they found a small basket on the doorstep. Perhaps it is a benefactor donating food for Christmas, one sister exclaimed.

But when Mother Teresa opened the basket, she began to smile. “Jesus has arrived.” In the basket was a sleeping baby boy, left to be cared for by the sisters. Mother Teresa picked the infant up. “Look, now we can say that our Christmas is complete. Baby Jesus has come to us. We must thank God for this wonderful gift.”

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.

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” comes from the old English word, “wriþen”, 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.

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 Weihnachten!”* 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 Reveillon - 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.



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 7, 2024, 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**

