



The Immaculate Heart



**You are my son.
It is I
who have
begotten you
this day**

In this issue

- A Christmas Message P.1**
- 12 Days of Christmas P.2**
- Jesus Born of BVM**
- Affirmation**
- Christmas Traditions P.3**
- Prayers & Intercessions P-4**
- Ward Information**



A Christmas Message

Christ is born: glorify him. Christ comes from heaven: go out to meet him. Christ descends to earth: let us be raised on high. Let all the world sing to the Lord; let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad, for his sake who was first in heaven and then on earth. Christ is here in the flesh: let us exult with fear and joy —with fear, because of our sins; with joy, because of the hope that he brings us.

Once more the darkness is dispersed; once more the light is created. Let the people that sat in the darkness of ignorance now look upon the things are made new. He who has no mother in heaven is now born without father on earth. The laws of nature are overthrown, for the upper world must be filled with citizens. He who is without flesh

becomes incarnate; the Word puts on a body; the Invisible is seen; he whom no hand can touch is handled; the Timeless has a beginning; the Son of God become Son of Man — Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and for ever.

Light from light, the Word of the Father comes to his own image, in the human race. For the sake of my flesh he takes flesh; for the sake of my soul he is united to a rational soul, purifying like by like. In every way he becomes human, except for sin. O strange conjunction! The self-existent comes into being; the Uncreated is created. He shares in the poverty of my flesh, that I may share in the riches of his Godhead.

Gregory of Nazianzus, Bishop of Constantinople (389)



The Twelve Days of Christmas

From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young children. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of their church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember.

- *The partridge in a pear tree was Jesus Christ.
- *Two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.
- *Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love.
- *The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke & John.
- *The five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.
- *The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.
- *Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit--Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.
- *The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.
- *Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit--Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control.
- The ten lords a-leaping were the ten commandments.
- The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.
- The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed.

Affirmation

I believe that Christmas is more than a time for parties and ornaments; it is a time for remembering Christ and the incarnation of God's love in human flesh.

I believe there are gifts more important than the ones under the Christmas tree, the things we detach our children, the way we share ourselves with friends, and the industry with which we set about reshaping the world in our time.

I believe that the finest carols are often sung by the poorest voices; from hearts made warm by the wonder of the season.

I believe in the angel's message that we should not be afraid—that the Child of Bethlehem is able to overcome all anxieties and insecurities.

I believe in prayer and quietness as a way of appropriating Christmas—that if I wait in silence I will experience the presence of the one born in the manger, for he lives today as surely as he lived then.

I believe in going away from Christmas as the wise men went: "another way." I want to be different when these days are past—more centered, more thoughtful, more caring.

And I believe God will help me. Amen

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
(Anonymous)

Jesus Born of the Virgin



That He became man as a tiny, helpless baby, this is the wonder of it.. He could have come in all His majesty but He chose to come as a little baby.

So often the nativity scenes are untrue to the wonderful reality. They make the Infant a big child, looking almost as if He could speak. But the truth is far more wonderful. He was a tiny bit of humanity, completely helpless in His Mother's arms.

How can we help but love Mary. God loved her so much that He placed in her arms and in her care His only-begotten Son. This is the baby who has come to redeem the world, this is our Savior. This tiny little baby is true God and true man. He who will help us all, who will open the gates of heaven for us, is a helpless little infant in His Mother's arms.



The History of Christmas Traditions

Christmas, as we know it today, is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, which happened over 2000 years ago. The word “Christmas” translates to “Mass Of Christ”. However, we can all be sure that the celebration of the Christmas holiday did not start right away. So how did the actual celebration of the Christmas holiday begin?

Believe it or not, many of the traditions that we observe during the Christmas holiday season began way before the birth of Christ. Exchanging gifts, decorating trees, and the burning of the Yule log were all winter traditions that began before Christ was born, but were eventually incorporated into the holiday that became known as Christmas, and became part of Christmas history.

Over 4000 years ago, the Mesopotamians celebrated each new year with a 12-day festival, called Zagmuth. It is from this festival that the 12 days of Christmas is believed to have originated.

The ancient Romans held a celebration each year in honor of their god Saturn. The Romans decorated their homes with garlands, as well as trees upon which they hung candles. During the festival the citizens of Rome would visit each other’s homes and hold great feasts. One of the theories of how the tradition of the giving of Christmas gifts came about was from the Roman practice of exchanging gifts between family and neighbors during the festival of Saturnalia to promote good luck.

During the winter in ancient Scandinavia there would be a certain amount of days where the sun would not shine. Upon the return of the first sunlight, the Scandinavians would hold a festival called the Yuletide. A Yule log would be burned in a special fire, and everyone would gather around the fire and hold a great feast. To remind themselves that the spring and summer would surely return again, people in some areas of Scandinavia would tie apples to tree branches. The tradition of the Christmas tree is believed to have evolved from this ritual, as well as from the Roman ritual of decorating trees with candles during the festival of Saturnalia. Some believe that the tradition of singing carols began when people in Scandinavia would sing celebration songs on the Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year, which happened around December 22nd.

One theory about the evolution of the winter celebrations to the celebration of the birth of Jesus is that the Roman emperor Constantine, who converted to

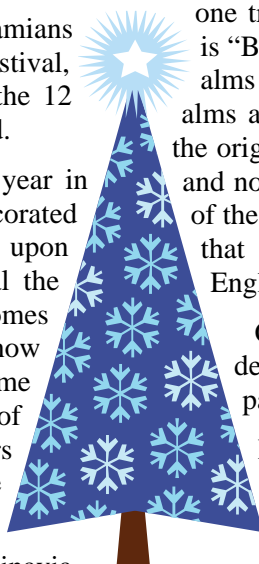
Christianity, wanted to incorporate the pagan winter rituals together with the celebration of Jesus’ birth. In this way, Constantine hoped to help both pagans and Christians celebrate together. Many believe that this is the reason for celebrating the birth of Christ on December 25th. It is widely believed today that Jesus was not actually born on, or even close to, December 25th. Eventually, the Roman church became almost completely successful in making the December celebration only about the birth of Christ, replacing any celebrations that were in honor of pagan gods.

Though the celebration of Christmas is basically based on the same belief today, it is not celebrated in exactly the same way in every country. In Great Britain, one tradition they observe during the Christmas season is “Boxing Day”. On Boxing Day, the boxes containing alms for the poor are opened at every church and the alms are distributed to the poor. An alternate theory to the origin of carols is that they originated in Great Britain and not Scandinavia. Whether or not this is true, many of the Christmas songs that we sing and Christmas music that we hear today were written in 19th century England.

Christians in China celebrate Christmas by decorating their homes and trees with paper lanterns, paper flowers, and paper chains.

It is believed that British painter John Horsley designed the first Christmas card in 1843. The card showed a family celebrating Christmas, and read “A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You”. The tradition caught on quickly in England, and it was not long before the first Christmas cards began showing up in the United States and other countries as well.

One cannot talk about the history of Christmas without mentioning Santa Claus. Bishop Nicholas of Smyrna, who lived in the 4th century A.D. in what is known today as Turkey, was a very wealthy and generous man, who especially loved children. He was known to throw gifts into the houses of poor children in order to brighten their spirits. He was later titled Saint Nicholas, and became the patron saint of children and seafarers. From his story evolved the legend of Santa Claus – the jolly man who brings gifts to children all over the world on Christmas Eve. In England he came to be known as Father Christmas, in China he is known as Dun Che Lao Ren, which means “Christmas Old Man”. Many believe that the giving of gifts originates from the deeds of Bishop Nicholas, and not the Roman tradition. *(Excerpts taken from an article author unknown)*





Prayer before the Manger

Lord Jesus as I kneel before your manger in adoration, let my first Christmas word be: *Thank you.* Gift of the Father for coming to save me from my sins.

May your Presence, Prince of Peace, bless the world with peace, the poor with care and prosperity, the despairing with hope and confidence, the grieving with comfort and gladness, the oppressed with freedom and deliverance, the suffering with solace and relief. Loving Jesus you are



the only real joy of every human heart. I place my trust in you.

Oh, divine Fruit of Mary's womb, may I love you in union with the holy Mother of God. May my life be filled with the obedience of Saint Joseph and the missionary fervor of the shepherds so that the witness of my life may shine like the star that leads the Magi to your manger. I ask all this with great confidence in your Holy Name. Amen.

Prayer to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Father, You prepared the heart of the Virgin Mary to be a fitting home for Your Holy Spirit. By her prayers, may we become more worthy temples of Your glory. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

Ward Prayers and Intercessions

Guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit for the Church.

God's guidance for the United States and its elected and appointed officials.

Help for those facing challenging economic times.

That peace in this world may soon come to those areas of natural disasters, conflict and war.

Safety for our men and women serving in the military forces

around the world and our police, firefighter and first responders here at home.

Guidance, direction and support for Kurt Behrel and Richard Higginbotham,

Health and recovery for Marilyn Bakalaraki, Ethel Cairns, John Mittlesteadt, and Arlene Siegel.



Eternal

rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

Lois Anderson, Marian Axelrod, Jack Beyer, Bruce Flood, Bertha Escabi, Glen-Ann Jicha, Kathryn McElroy, June Nickerson, Edna Keller, Fr. Wayne Olmstead, Ken Peck, Leonard Rumpsa, Mildred Shadick, Stanley Watson, Fr. Joel Webb and, Ruth Wredan.

MEETINGS	MEETING LOCATION	SECRETARY/TREASURER
First Saturday of the Month	Holy Cross Chapel	Linda Brissey
9:00 A.M.	500 Park Ave. Unit 102	P.O. Box 6088
Rosary	Lake Villa, IL. 60046	Lindenhurst, IL. 60046
Mass or Morning Prayer	Ph: 847-543-7371	Email: chaseco@AOL.com
Coffee/Study Hour		
Angelus		

CHAPLAIN EMERITUS	Web Page	Newsletter Editor
The Rev. Richard A. Crist	www.societyofmary-ne-il.org	James R. Strang
Email: racrist@racrist.com		