



December 25, 2022
Nativity of the Lord
Year A
Newsletter



**Merry
Christmas**



CHRISTMAS 2022

Dear Parishioners,

It was also completely unexpected. The people awaited a king. The wise men followed a star. The star did not stop at a regal palace but at a humble Bethlehem dwelling, and indeed at its downstairs cave reserved for animals. When God became man, he was making a very definite statement about our value system. 'Change everything, God was saying. 'Forget everything you once held dear, sell off your possessions, give to the needy, share your talents, follow me. 'One Christmas (the author of Under the Eye of the Clock) wrote on the meaning of Christmas on a British newspaper. He said, "As we grow forward in sophistication we fall backward in belief. Technology has juxtaposed hesitance in scientific advancement with belief in a Christ Child. Who may blame modern man? Now that he has split the atom, conquered space, harnessed nuclear energy, and birthed new life inside a test-tube. Who needs a baby on a manger? Ask yourself."

The God who sent his Son on earth to bring men back to him self must be full of pity as he watches man in ant-hill hurry darting this way and that still searching for a Saviour. For those of us who gather in church at Christmas, we know that the Star of Bethlehem revealed to us our Saviour.

We celebrate at our Mass the birth of a Child who was laid on the wood of a manger, the death of an adult who lay on the wood of a cross, and the resurrection of a Son of God who is with us to grace our efforts to serve God and human-kind throughout the year. We exchange Christmas presents to express thankfulness to God for his gift of such a Son, and to state our own love of another person, and our appreciation of that person's love of us. At Christmas we become aware again of how our earthly notions of fame and success are turned upside down. Long after the Herodian castles and fortresses of Sepphons and Masada have crumbled into ruins, the cave of Bethlehem still stands strong and holy, a place of hope for generations yet unborn, because one starry night the Son of God was born there. With the birth of this child, a new way of relating to each other, one of total love, is asked of us.

There are some people who dread Christmas. It may be because of recent bereavement. More often, it is because of loneliness. The visit on Christmas Day, the invitation for Christmas Day, is vastly more important than that on the Feast of Stephen. Yet such people may be much closer to a Christ who was born in a cave-space. He has given a meaning to loneliness and pain. He is our Brother who comes to share our lives, to help us carry our burdens, to walk the road of life at our side. Mary, our mother, understands the joy of the manger, the sorrow of the cross. She will ensure that, even though our Christmas may lack some superfluous items, it will have the one thing necessary, the water of life who is Jesus Christ.

It would be a great pity if the Star of Bethlehem were to disappear in the sky because of our refusal to follow its beckoning forward. We pray for divided peoples in the birth-place of Jesus on this night (day) that they may find a way forward to peace. We pray for all nations in conflict throughout our world that 'those who are enemies may forget their hatred and be healed'. As for ourselves in California, we are all now acutely aware that our political leadership, pandering to our own self-centeredness, has led us into economic captivity. It would be a tragedy if the Star of Bethlehem should disappear for our young people, our elderly, our sick, our unemployed, because of the financial dictates of outside moguls, and a continuing subservience to the power-lust and greed of our western world.

On this Christmas Night (Day) we look to the Star in the east, and resolve to help all people who are in need to travel on that road to Bethlehem. "O come, all ye faithful," we sing, joyful and triumphant. O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem." For Bethlehem is no long a hill-side cave. It is, rather, the place where we create justice, freedom and love, which leads peace with one another and brings Jesus Christ, Son of God, to birth in others. "O come, let us adore him!"

May the Prince of Peace bless each of you, and grant you the joy of his Christmas.

Christmas Traditions

Holly, Ivy and Greenery

In Northern Europe Christmas occurred during the middle of winter, when ghosts and demons could be heard howling in the winter winds. Boughs of holly, believed to have magical powers since they remained green through the harsh winter, were often placed over the doors of homes to drive evil away. Greenery was also brought indoors to freshen the air and brighten the mood during the long, dreary winter. Legend also has it that holly sprang from the footsteps of Christ as he walked the earth. The pointed leaves were said to represent the crown of thorns Christ wore while on the cross and the red berries symbolized the blood he shed.

Poinsettias

A native Mexican plant, poinsettias were named after Joel R. Poinsett, U.S. ambassador to Mexico who brought the plant to America in 1828. Poinsettias were likely used by Mexican Franciscans in their 17th century Christmas celebrations. One legend has it that a young Mexican boy, on his way to visit the village Nativity scene, realized he had no gift for the Christ child. He gathered pretty green branches from along the road and brought them to the church. Though the other children mocked him, when the leaves were laid at the manger, a beautiful star-shaped flower appeared on each branch. The bright red petals, often mistaken for flowers, are actually the upper leaves of the plant.

Christmas Carols

Christian scriptures detail a world of spirits and nine choirs of Angels who were sent by God into the lives of humankind. Legend tells that in Bethlehem, people heard the Angels sing one time in unison to announce the birth of the Christ Child. The words thought to ring out at that moment were: Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Therefore, this is considered to be the first Christmas carol. According to ancient tradition, Christmas carols of all times and all nations should adhere strictly to the narrative of Saint Luke, which has three distinct points: the recitative of the Angel of the Lord, the choir of the multitudes of Angels and the reaction of the shepherds.

Christmastime music began with the litanies, or musical prayers, of the Christian Church. An early historian wrote that in approximately 100 A.D., the Bishop of Rome urged his people to sing "in celebration of the birthday of our Lord." By 400 A.D., priests would stroll around their parishes on Christmas Eve singing these Latin hymns. St. Francis of Assisi is credited with being the "Father of Caroling." Only church officials had been encouraged to sing carols prior to the time of St. Francis. In 1223, however, the saint placed a crèche (miniature Nativity scene) in a hermitage at Greccio, Italy. After this, many churches began displaying such scenes at Christmas and soon, people began to act out the events of the Holy Night. The actors composed Christmas carols to sing during their Nativity plays and, later, would stroll through the streets still singing. In that manner, did street-caroling come to be.

By the Middle Ages, wandering minstrels were traveling from hamlet to castle performing their carols. Later still, villages had their own bands of "waits." Waits were originally watchmen who patrolled the streets and byways of the old walled cities, keeping guard against fire and singing to while away the night hours. During the holiday season, the waits would include carols in their repertoires. Not everyone was delighted with this display of musical entertainment, however, and many townspeople complained, declaring they would rather get a good night's sleep than have somebody singing under their windows. Eventually the term was used to describe groups of musicians who sang and played at various civic events during the Christmas season. (continue on page 5)

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Dolores Caldo Bautista
Jean Sanfilippo
Julia Gowen

The word "carol" derives from a Greek dance called a choraulein, which was accompanied by flute music. The dance later spread throughout Europe and became particularly popular by the French, who replaced the flute music with singing. Originally, people performed carols on many occasions during the year. By the 1600s, carols involved singing only and Christmas had become the chief holiday for these songs. Counted among the most favored of non-religious carols are "Jingle Bells" and "White Christmas," both of which first appeared as popular songs in the United States.

Deciphering the Christmas "Code"

Many of the traditional images of Christmas are actually a kind of code language for Easter! This is because Christmas and Easter are meant to be connected in our religious imagination. When we learn to decipher this Christmas code, we see that the Nativity is not simply about Christ's birth and childhood. It is really about his life's mission to proclaim the kingdom of God, a mission that will lead to his passion, death, resurrection and ascension. The familiar elements of Christmas have a deeper meaning for all baptized Christians, who are called to see beyond the crèche to the cross. Here are some examples of the Christmas-Easter connection:

Holly Berries and Leaves: The red berries of the holly tree remind us of the blood of Christ's passion and the prickly edges of its leaves recall the crown of thorns.

Christmas Wreaths: The crown of thorns has become the victorious crown of eternal life represented by the evergreen leaves.

Christmas Tree: The wood of the Christmas tree on which hang ornaments and gifts becomes the wood of the cross on which hung Jesus, the Savior of the world, the best gift we could receive.

Christmas Lights: In the darkest time of the year, we light candles and put lights on our houses and trees. This reminds us of the paschal candle we will light at Easter. The candle is Christ our Light, who dispels the darkness.

Angels: Christmas angels tell the shepherds in the field, "Do not be afraid," as they announce the birth of Christ. At Easter we will hear the angel at the empty tomb tell the women "Do not be afraid," as he announces that Christ is risen.

Manger: A manger is a feeding trough for farm animals. At Christmas we place the baby Jesus into the manger because this body and blood, through his sacrifice and his resurrection, will become for us the Eucharist, eternal food and drink that nourishes and sustains us.

Christmas Mass Times:

CHRISTMAS EVE, SATURDAY, DEC 24

4:00 pm Church
 4:00 pm—Presentation High Gym
 4:00pm—Healy Hall
 6:00pm—Church
 9:00pm—Church
 Midnight—Church



CHRISTMAS DAY, SUNDAY, DEC 25

6:30am—Church
 8:00am—Church
 8:30am—KCourtyard Outdoor
 9:30am—Church
 9:30am—KCourtyard Outdoor
 10:30am—KCourtyard Outdoor
 11:00 am—Church
 12:30 pm—Church

Mass Times

Saturday-Sunday

Saturday Vigil: 4:30 p.m.

Sunday Masses:

6:30 am, 8:00 am, 9:30 am, 11:00 am, 12:30 pm, and 4:00 pm

Sunday Mass in Courtyard—

8:30 am 9:30 am and 10:30 am



Daily Mass: Mon-Fri—9:00 am

Monday-Thursday — 6:30 pm.



1st Saturday of the Month

9:00am Mass with the anointing of the sick



Holy Days

6:30 am 9:00 am 12:noon and 7:00 pm



Confessions

First Saturday 10:00am-11:00am

& by appointment

Infant Baptisms

Preparation can begin before or after the birth of your child.

Call 408-269-2226 for more info.

Weddings

Couples, please contact a priest at 408-269-2226 at least six months prior to the proposed date of wedding.

Restoring our Church.

Dear Parishioners,

Since the first dedication of St. Christopher's on June 2, 1957, many generations of families have gathered at Saint Christopher Church to proclaim their faith and praise God together. We are excited to share our plans to restore our sacred sanctuary and our entire sacred space to ensure that future generations will continue to worship here, at Saint Christopher Church.

Today, we find ourselves between a rich and revered past and a future of great possibilities. It is now our time to make an investment in the future. Our community has always been a caring community. We care about sharing the good news of Christ with the world. We care about passing the faith of Christ on to our children, teaching them to share the Eucharist, prayers, and confirmation.

Our sanctuary is where those needs are met and where people hear the gospel proclaimed. It is where generations have prayed and share, Eucharist together, married, baptized their children, and watched them grow to confirm their own faith, and said farewell to their loved ones.

While our current space has been well cared for over the last sixty five years, today we have an opportunity to enhance and improve our Sacred space in which we worship. After consulting with Diocesan Art and Environment and Art committee we envision:

Sanctuary remodel, floors and walls, new pews, paint the whole church, put a new tabernacle back in the center of the sanctuary.

Remove the wood from the wall at replace with sheetrock and install Hearing Assistance System.

We already have \$200,000 toward the project to help us achieve this goal, I ask each family to prayerfully consider the sacrificial gift they are able to make. If every registered family in our Parish donated \$500, we would come close to our goal. However, knowing that some in our community are on fixed incomes, I am hopeful that those who are financially able, will consider donating a larger amount, such as \$10,000 or even more to help us achieve our goal.

Thank you for your past and present support of St. Christopher Parish. Please join with me and pray for the success of restoring our Church.

Blessings,

Fr. Chris



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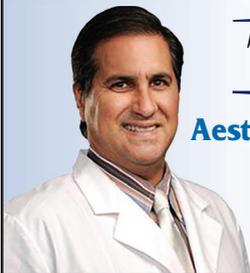
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