

a Savior  
has been born  
for you

***“Today in the city of David,  
a savior has been born for you  
who is Messiah and Lord.”***

*Luke 2:11*

A miracle has taken place! God has come down from heaven to be with His people. He has come to save us. Our hearts are filled with joy as we experience the peace that He came to bring, as we know the love of our God for us.



101 years ago on this very night a Christmas miracle of another sort happened. Two armies were entrenched against each other in the war to end all wars. Each were singing many of the same carols, each in their own tongue, as they longed to be far away. It came about in different ways up and down the line. In one area, a German held up a sign that said “You no fight. We no fight.” The reply came back from the English lines: “Merry Christmas.” In another place, the German’s lifted a small Christmas Tree up onto the parapet, decorated with lit candles. Astonishingly, soldiers emerged as well, and picked up their tree, and began to walk into No Man’s Land. Unsure at first what was happening, the Englishman and Frenchman soon too left their trenches. Over 100,000 soldiers participated in the Christmas Truce. The first concern was burying the recently killed. Sometimes even joint Masses or services were held to do so. Once that was complete, they sang carols, exchanged Christmas gifts and packages and buttons and the like, and even played soccer games. In some places the truce lasted for days, even after the New Year.

Pope Benedict XV had called for such a Christmas truce, hoping it would give way to lasting ceasefire, but his pleas were rejected by the generals of both sides, and his hopes never materialized. And yet a miracle had taken place.

In the midst of war, in the midst of killing and hatred, God was present. In spite of the hardness of hearts, His peace was able to break through. Men who had been shooting at each other days before now laughed together, played together, sang together and even prayed together. The lights which illumined the Christmas tree banished the darkness not only of No Man’s Land and the trenches which bordered it, but also the darkness of their hearts. If only for a little while, and they saw each other as brothers—men like themselves with families back home, with hopes and dreams. God’s love had broken through, and they shared that love with one another.

“Today in the city of David, a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.”



*From The Illustrated London News of January 9, 1915: “British and German Soldiers Arm-in-Arm Exchanging Headgear: A Christmas Truce between Opposing Trenches.”*

God who is Love sent His Only Begotten Son. Jesus Christ has descended from Heaven to Earth. He is Love Incarnate in our very midst. In this bulletin you will find some different offerings that will hopefully help you draw nearer to the Christ who has come to earth and visited His people. It is not hard to see Him present and at work in our world as we see the miracles around us, the ways in which His love breaks through. He has come most of the way—and it is up to us to run to greet Him, to adore and to love Him.

May you have a blessed Christmas. May you truly know the love of God for you this day. And may you generously share that love with everyone you meet, your brothers and sisters one and all.

# Different Ways to Pray



## How to Pray with the Bible for Beginners

There are probably as many ways to pray with the Bible as there are people who are reading it.

Here is a simple process you might use or adapt.

- Ask God to open your ear and heart.
- Open the Bible to the reading you want to reflect on.
- Read the reading through, perhaps even speaking it out loud.
- Go back and read it a second time, more slowly, and stop when you get to a phrase that moves your heart. Dwell on that phrase.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to better understand the meaning of the phrase.
- Imagine what it means for your life right now. Stay in that moment for as long as you feel comfortable.
- Read the entire passage again, perhaps speaking it out loud.
- Conclude by praying the Lord's Prayer.

## Guidelines for Lectio Divina (Divine Reading)

### **Moment One: (Lectio)**

**Read** the Scripture passage for the first time. Listen with the "ear of your heart." What phrase, sentence or even one word stands out to you? Begin to repeat that phrase, sentence or one word over and over, allowing it to settle deeply in your heart. Simply return to the repetition of the phrase, sentence or one word, savoring it in your heart.

### **Moment Two: (Meditation)**

**Reflect**, relish the words. Let them resound in your heart. Let an attitude of quiet receptiveness permeate the prayer time. Be attentive to what speaks to your heart.

### **Moment Three: (Oratio)**

**Respond** spontaneously as you continue to listen to a phrase, sentence or word. A prayer of praise, thanksgiving or petition may arise. Offer that prayer, and then return to repeating the word in your heart.

### **Moment Four: (Contemplatio)**

**Rest** in God. Simply "be with" God's Presence as you open yourself to a deeper hearing of the Word of God. If you feel drawn back to the scriptures, follow the lead of the Spirit.

*(Taken from Contemplative Outreach, Ltd.)*

## The Examen process: "Sleeping with Bread"

Put yourself in a quiet space where you can breathe deeply and feel safe. Ask God or Jesus to bring to your heart the moment today for which you are most grateful. When were you most able to give and receive love today?

Ask yourself what it was about that moment that was so special, so God-filled. Breathe in the gratitude you felt and receive life again from that experience.

Now ask God to bring to your heart the moment today for which you are least grateful. When were you least able to give and receive love? Ask yourself what was said and done in that moment that made it so difficult. Be aware of your feelings without trying to change or fix it in any way. Pray words of reconciliation and resolve. Take a few deep breaths and let God's love fill you just as you are.

Give thanks for whatever you have experienced.

Other ways to ask the examen:

- When did I feel most alive today?
- When did I feel least alive today?
- When did I feel closest to God?
- When did I feel furthest from God?

## Did You Know?



In the thirteenth century, St. Francis of Assisi popularized the use of figurines to depict the Christmas message. But as early as the fourth century, representations of the nativity of the Lord were painted as wall decorations depicting not only the infancy narrative accounts of Christ's birth, but also the words of the prophets Isaiah and Habakkuk, that the Messiah would be born in the midst of animals in a manger.

*(See Book of Blessings, 1541, for more background information and the blessing prayers over the manger scene.)*

### **How to decorate your own Nativity Scene**

Personalize the nativity scene in your home just as you do the Christmas tree and outdoor holiday lights. The nativity scene tells the Christmas story with figurines of key Biblical characters, including the baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph and the three wise men. Once you position the manger and the figurines, you can add a few creative touches to the nativity for an even more beautiful and inviting scene.

Select a spot in your home for the nativity scene, such as on a table or below your Christmas tree. If your nativity set has multiple buildings, place the manger in the center and the other buildings around it.

Place a thin layer of craft straw on the floor of the manger. The straw makes the manger look more like a real barn.

Hang angel, animal and star-shaped ornaments above the nativity scene if you've set it up below your Christmas tree. Use ornaments that are an appropriate size for your nativity. If you have a small nativity, for example, avoid hanging large or flashy ornaments above it.

Finally, on Christmas morning, place the baby Jesus in the manger.

## A few suggestions for this year or next:

For each good deed a child does during Advent, they can put a piece of straw or grass into the crèche for Jesus—their acts of love welcoming the newborn King.

Wait until Christmas to put Jesus in the crèche. Have Advent be a time of waiting and expectation. The emptiness of the manger helps us appreciate Him all the more when He comes.

The shepherds came to adore the Christ child upon hearing the message of the angel on that first Christmas night. Keep the shepherds in the nearby fields watching over their flocks until Jesus' birth. And while yes, they come and adore, they also return to their flocks. Jesus does not call most of us to live in a monastery and spend most of our days in adoration in His presence. He calls us to be holy right where we are. Seeing the shepherds watching over their flocks is a good reminder of this.

The wise men journeyed from afar. Have your wise men journey throughout the house on book shelves and window sills and tables until January 3, 2016, the Feast of Epiphany.

The Christmas Season ends with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord on January 9, 2017. Leave your Christmas decorations up until then. Advent is a season of preparation. Having prepared well, be sure you celebrate well!

## Blessing of the Tree

More and more frequently families are blessing their Christmas trees.

It is good to remind children that the tree relates to many aspects of our faith. For example, we are reminded that our first parents were not allowed to eat from one tree, and that Christ paid the great price for our redemption by hanging on a tree (cf. Acts 5:29-32).



There are many different stories which attempt to explain why we use a tree at Christmas. For instance, St. Boniface in the eighth century gave the balsam fir tree to the Druids in place of the oak tree, the symbol of their idol. He said, The fir tree is the wood of peace, the sign of an endless life with its evergreen branches. It points to heaven. It will never shelter deeds of blood, but rather be filled with loving gifts and rites of kindness.

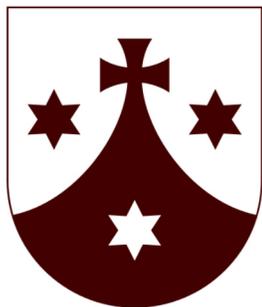
## How Do I Become Closer to God as a Catholic?

Learn your faith. Learn the Scripture and the Catechism. It's hard to love someone you don't know! When you learn to know what God has done, you will learn to love him.

Do small things with love. People think that love requires a lot of monumental self-sacrifice. In fact, the spiritual masters say that it is necessary to learn to do everyday things with a smile, and to suppress the irritable self.

Pray. St. James writes "draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." Praying is not just talking to God. It's also being attentive to what your heart and mind speaks to you about Scripture.

Frequent the sacraments. Confession restores friendship with God, in cases of mortal sin, and confers sacramental grace in every instance. The Eucharist confers sacramental grace that helps strengthen our resolve in the face of temptation.



### Secular Order Disalced Carmelites

Secular Order Disalced Carmelites are men and women in the Catholic Church who are called to a

deeper spiritual life. Under the protection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and inspired by St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux, members make a commitment to the Disalced Carmelite Order to seek God for the Church and the world.

Secular Order Disalced Carmelites are married or single, men or women, from all walks of life, from every level of education, and from every type of work.

Holy Rosary has a group that meets once a month on the third Sunday of the month from Noon to 4:30pm. If you are interested in finding out more please contact JoAnn Tobin (jtobin@holyrosaryseattle.org).

## The Meaning of the Christmas Wreath



Wreaths have been used as a decorative sign of Christmas for hundreds and hundreds of years. Christmas wreaths can adorn any part of your home, inside or out. In many homes, this symbol of growth and everlasting life can be found both inside and out. It is common to find a number of wreaths on doors, over the mantle, or hung in windows.

The wreath is made of evergreens, most often pine branches or holly. They can be real or artificial. But, an artificial one just doesn't smell the same as a real wreath. It is decorated with a variety of items including pine cones, holly berries, fruits, and just about anything you can imagine.

The wreath has significant meaning for the season. Its circular shape represents eternity, for it has no beginning and no end. From a Christian religious perspective, it represents an unending circle of life. The evergreen, most frequently used in making wreaths, symbolizes growth and everlasting life. Holly branches have thorns. When used in a wreath it represents the thorn on Jesus' crown when he was crucified. Bright red holly berries symbolize Jesus' blood that was shed for us.

Today, it is sometimes hard to remember the real meaning of Christmas. The wreath brings a warmth to our hearts as we stop to reflect upon the true meaning of this very special day.

### Regular Mass Schedule

#### Sundays

Saturday Vigil 5pm  
Sunday Morning 8:30am  
Sunday Morning 10:30am

#### Daily Mass

Tuesday-Friday 7:45am  
Saturday 8:30am

#### Confessions

Tuesday 5:30-6:30pm  
Saturday 3:30-4:30pm

### **UP NEXT:**

#### **December**

26-30 Parish Office Closed

#### **January**

2 Parish Office Closed (School Open)  
8 Festa Tri Kralja Epiphany Celebration (10:30am  
Mass followed by a reception in Lanigan)

# How To Make Christmas About Christmas

*By Bernadette Bonanno*

I wish I could say these were my ideas but I can't. Although I don't remember where I read them, I vividly recall how one brief article transformed the Christmas season in our home.

About 23 years ago, our oldest was six and we were expecting our fourth son. The holidays were approaching and I was thinking back to the previous four Christmases, when Santa and Jesus got just about "equal billing" in our home. As young parents, we were establishing family traditions and Christmas definitely needed improvement.

Previously, as soon as Thanksgiving was over, I'd decorate our home and start drumming up excitement about the upcoming arrival of Santa. When the Christmas catalogues arrived with oodles of toys, I'd share them with the boys. It would keep them entertained for hours!

I wanted this year to be different and to bring the celebration of Jesus's birth and the joy of giving to the forefront of our Christmas season. So, I did what I always do when I need help. I prayed and read.

That's when I found the article. It was a gift with perfect timing and it said this: "As soon as the Christmas catalogues are delivered to your house put them away so they are not accessible to the kids. (Good-bye free babysitter!) Don't focus on Santa and the fact that he is going to bring presents. Santa will be relentlessly drilled into your kids. They'll see and hear about him everywhere. Consider it all good and part of the season. Don't criticize it. Just don't feed it."

That was it! I realized the kids were taking my lead and I was determined to change course. One day a few weeks before Christmas, I told the boys to write Santa their letter. They wrote it, mailed it and that was it. (In the past, we actually sent Santa revised editions!)

When the subject of Santa came up, we talked about him, but without me fueling the "Santa Fervor" the boys did not focus on what they were going to "get" for Christmas.

The article suggested we play Christmas music in our home and go caroling with the neighborhood kids. We did and our neighbors loved it. It suggested we invite our pastor over for dinner. We did and the kids wound up playing charades with him.

The most unique advice was to emphasize Joseph's devotion to Mary and Jesus. This was especially lovely as it was likely we were raising four future husbands and fathers.

The article said to encourage generosity by giving the kids a dollar to place into the Salvation Army kettle. And when you bake, have the kids run a plate over to a neighbor. It said to help the kids identify and bring in a gift for a person, other than a teacher, who worked at their school.

The last recommendation was to "adopt a family" at school or church and go shopping with the kids as they picked out the specific gifts. (This idea continued all through high school. I loved watching our teenagers meticulously pick out gifts for people they would never meet.)

We tried every idea and the effect was immediate and quietly humbling. I've blundered through many areas of parenting while raising our four sons but since reading that article 23 years ago, Christmas has mostly been about Christmas.



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**Marriage:** Contact Sherry Smith six months in advance of your requested wedding date.

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