

**St. Mary, Mother of God Church
608 High Street—Freeport, PA 16229**



Merry Christmas! The Season is upon us in which we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. I would like to welcome all of our visitors to our parish at this time of year. Please know that you are always welcome! At this time of year, the Lord calls people to the Church who may have gone astray. Know that you, too, are welcome. The gift of faith is a precious one and, whether that faith is strong or weak, the Church is here to assist you in coming to know and love and serve our Lord Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate today. With the birth of Christ, the world changed forever!

As we celebrate Christmas today, let us pray that our Lord will light up our hearts with the light of virtue, fill our minds with the gladness He gives, make us proclaimers of the Gospel, fill us with the gift of His peace, and make us sharers with the Church in heaven.

As we enjoy and indulge in many wonderful traditions this Christmas Season, let us make sure to also engage the love that God has blessed us with. Let us recall why we celebrate the birth of the *Anointed One* and the measure of love He came to share with our troubled world. It would be from the very heart of this love that Jesus would find the strength to offer His life on the Cross for our salvation. May it also give us the grace and courage to face the many challenges that we will encounter as well as America will in the months and years ahead with confidence and hope.

At this time, I would like to say *thank you* to all the parishioners who support our parish monetarily throughout the year. It is because of your generosity that we are able to grow! I will always keep the beautiful memories in my heart and rest assured of my continued prayers and blessings for all of you!

As you all know, this will be my last Christmas with you as I will be leaving to go back to the Philippines on Thursday, January 4th. I wish all of you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year! May God bless you and all our parishioners during this special time of year! —Monsignor Gilbert

*Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year* A Merry Christmas To All! Deacon J.T. Tuskan and all of the Parish Staff here at St. Mary's would like to wish all of you and your families a very Blessed and Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy, and Peaceful New Year!

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord
Luke 2:11

We Have Prepared, And We Are Ready!

Jesus Christ is Born....in our hearts! Whether it was just a few moments of heartfelt prayer on this blessed day, or four weeks of Advent filled with quiet prayer and reflection, or sharing the joy and generosity of the season, or feeling the sadness of loss or difficult times, Jesus meets us wherever we are.

To everyone here today, whether visiting, seeking a place to live and grow your faith, new to the area, or our faithful members, may you be filled with the joy and peace and hope and abundant blessings of the Christmas Season!

The evergreen, or Christmas Tree, is a symbol of the bringing together of divine and earthly life with the evergreen that reaches down into the earth, and points heavenward.





A Christmas Blessing For The Home

Loving God,

As we gather at Christmas around the manger,
which reminds us of the birth of Your Son, we ask You to dwell in
our hearts and our home.

Bless every member of our family,
and strengthen the bond of love among us.

May we joyfully praise You like the Angel Choir that announced
the birth of Your Son to the Shepherds watching over their flocks.
May we show Your love to others with the same brightness of the
Star that guided the Wise men to offer gifts to the newborn King.

Make our family holy, just like Jesus, Mary, and Joseph,
so that we may always live in peace and love.

Amen

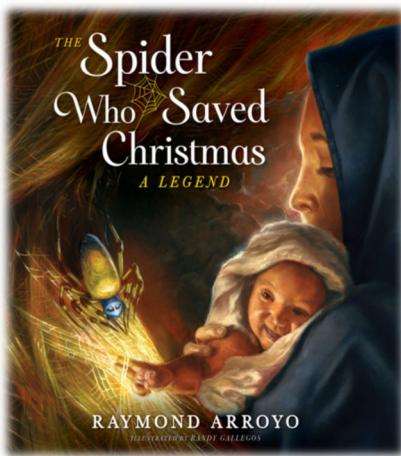
The Legend Of The Christmas Star

A diamond shines no brighter than that lovely Christmas Star.
It shines in all its' brilliance; it's seen from near and far.
A symbol of the Christ Child as He lay upon the hay.
It tells to all the wailing world a King was born that day.
Oh Bethlehem Star keep shining;
give us faith and hope and love.
Keep our thoughts forever turning to the Savior up above.
Give us strength and hope and courage to do our best by far,
And never falter in our faith as we watch that Christmas Star!



FOR LITTLE ONES

The Tale Of The Spider And Baby Jesus (A Legend)



Let's imagine that it is a cold dark night and the wind is really blowing; but you are not in a nice warm building, you are outside, and nowhere close to home. Now let me tell you the story about the spider who saved the Baby Jesus.

After Baby Jesus was born, the Holy Family had to run away from King Herod's soldiers because King Herod did not want Baby Jesus to grow up. One night, the Holy Family left Bethlehem. They were getting tired, so they went into a cave to try to get some rest. It was a cold, freezing night — so cold that the ground was carpeted with a white shiny frost. They were really tired. Mary and Joseph tried to make the cave as warm as they could for their newborn son, Jesus, but they just could not keep the cold wind out of the cave. Soon the baby began to cry and awoke a sleeping spider. The spider knew in his heart who this family was, and decided that somehow he must do something to help. So, he began to spin a web across the entrance of the cave to make a kind of curtain, which would shield the Holy Family from the strong cold winds. It was hard work, and the spider was just exhausted when it was finished. He had only just completed his web, when a group of Herod's soldiers approached the cave.

Remember, their mission was to kill Baby Jesus. The spider trembled with fear as he heard them stop outside the cave and prepare to burst in and search it. He looked at the now sleeping Jesus, and prayed with all his might for a miracle. He was not disappointed. The soldiers were just about to enter the cave, when the captain noticed the spider's web, now covered with white shiny frost, stretching over the entire entrance of the cave. The captain laughed at the soldiers, "Can't you see this spider's web is completely unbroken? There can't be anyone in the cave, otherwise they would have torn the web." And so the soldiers went on their way, and the Baby Jesus slept peacefully that night because the little spider had given up his night's sleep to spin his web.

Any gift given to Jesus is never forgotten. And as the story goes, that is why each year some people cover their Christmas Trees with tinsel—so that the shiny streamers will remind us of that unknown spider whose frost-covered web saved the life of Baby Jesus.

