



Many Hands. One Faith.

Christmas Day

December 25, 2008

Christmas Gospel Reflection

By: Fr. Philip Erickson

While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her first-born son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn (Luke 2:6-7).



This short passage is rich in theology, connecting the birth of the Savior to his death and resurrection. Let us take a moment to reflect on a few aspects of it.

firstborn — Christ Jesus is not just Mary’s firstborn. He is also “the firstborn of all creation” (Col 1:15) and “the firstborn of the dead” (Rev 1:5).

wrapped ...and laid him — Jesus is not just “wrapped” and “laid” at his birth. He is also “wrapped... in a linen cloth and laid...in a rock-hewn tomb” (Luke 23: 53) at his death.

manger — Jesus is laid in a manger, a food trough, at his birth. He also lays himself before his disciples as food as he prepares for his death. “This is my body which is given for you” (Luke 21:19). He is food unto everlasting life, “the living bread come down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world” (Jn 6: 51).

in the inn — At his birth, there was no room in the inn. Near his death he asks, “Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples” (Luke 22:11). However, there does not seem to be any significant difference between the Greek word (*katalyma*) used in Luke 2:7 (and translated as “inn”) and Luke 22:11 (and translated as “guest room”).

Thus, even as we celebrate His birth, we are reminded of the child who is also destined to die for us. He is the one who is food for us still, and the “firstborn of the dead” who will raise us up to everlasting life with him at the end of time.

God’s love for us was so great that he joined his divine life to our lives. He wanted to share fully in what it means to be human — to have a family, to celebrate with friends, to mourn the death of loved ones, and even to suffer and die. Christ chooses to be human so that we can share in the divine life, so that we can live forever.

May this holy Christmas season deepen the awareness of how deeply loved you are. May it unite you more fully to Christ, who still offers himself in Word, in Sacrament and in the community of faith where two or three are gathered. May it free you to risk loving more.

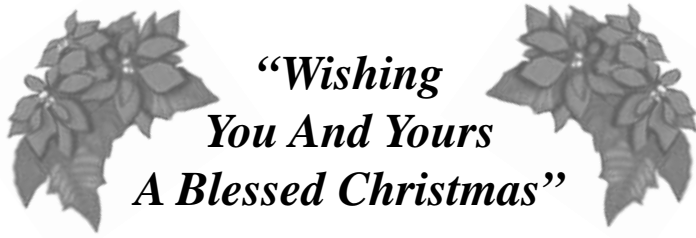
***I bring you tidings of great joy!
Merry Christmas!***

Daily Readings

12/22 Mon	8:15 am.....	1 Sm 1:24-28	.....	Luke 1:46-56	.....	Joseph W. Allen
12/23 Tue	8:15 am.....	Mal 3:1-4, 23-24	.....	Luke 1:57-66	.....	All Of Our Parishioners
12/24 Wed	8:15 am.....	2 Sm 7:1-16	.....	Luke 1:67-79	.....	Bill Pontrich, Chad Erickson
Vigil	5:30 pm.....	Is 62:1-5	.....	Acts 13:16-25	.....	Matt 1:1-25
12/25 Thr	12:00 am	.....	Is 9:1-6	.....	Titus 2:11-14	.....
	8:30 am	.....	Is 52:7-10	.....	Hebrews 1:1-6	.....
	10:30 am	.....	Is 52:7-10	.....	Hebrews 1:1-6	.....
12/26 Fri	8:15 am.....	Acts 6:8-10;7:54-59	.....	Matt 10:17-22	.....	Mary Ward
12/27 Sat	8:15 am	.....	1 Jn 1:1-4	.....	John 20:1a, 2-8	.....
Sun Vigil	5:30 pm.....	2 Samuel 7:1-16	.....	Romans 16:25-27	.....	Luke 1:26-38
						Mr. & Mrs. Pete Good, Angie Crabtree, All Of Our Parishioners
12/28 Sun	8:30 am	.....	2 Samuel 7:1-16	.....	Romans 16:25-27	.....
	10:30 am	.....	2 Samuel 7:1-16	.....	Romans 16:25-27	.....
						Luke 1:26-38
						Jean Ryan, All Of Our Parishioners Igantius Nguyen, Earl Hardy, Deanne Roeder
	12:30 pm	.....	2 Samuel 7:1-16	.....	Romans 16:25-27	.....
						Luke 1:26-38
						Augustus Cecil & Family, Doris Wilkins

Intentions

Coming Together in Faith



“Wishing You And Yours A Blessed Christmas”

The Annual Christmas Collection

Helps support the local services of Catholic Charities. With our economic crisis, the need is greater than ever. Donations fund many important social ministries of our archdiocese including emergency assistance, Sister Visitor, senior social services, pregnancy and adoption services, mother and infant care program, the migration and refugee program, and the respect life ministries. As we share with our families this holy season, let us renew our commitment to help and respect all of God’s people. Please give generously!

Benedict XVI Encourages Home Nativity Scenes

VATICAN CITY, DEC. 14, 2008 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).

In the midst of secular images of Christmas, Benedict XVI is encouraging the faithful to put a Nativity scene in their homes.



The Pope made this invitation today in St. Peter's Square, when he blessed images of the Child Jesus brought by children to the plaza for the papal blessing. The statues will later be placed in their manger scenes.

The Holy Father led the children in a prayer, which said: "We pray to you, that with your blessing these images of Jesus, who is about to come among us, be, in our houses, a sign of your presence and your love. [...]"

"Open our heart, so that we know how to receive Jesus with joy, do always what he asks and see him in all those who need our love."

He concluded by expressing the prayer that with the intercession of Mary, "Jesus, who in his birth brings God's benediction to men, [will] be welcomed with love in all the homes of Rome and the world.



Stories Of Christmas Traditions

Following you will find a collection of stories on how a few of our Christmas traditions were begun. Some of this information came from “The Catholic Source Book”, a vast collection of information about our faith by Rev. Peter Klein.

The Nativity Scene

From the early days of the Church, believers painted scenes of the birth of Christ beginning in the catacombs. These scenes became a staple of Christian life and carried on through the years. In the time of St. Francis of Assisi, the images had taken a new form: faithful Catholics would sit out mangers in front of their local church, but these mangers were often jeweled and made of gold to represent who they held. St. Francis marveled at this and felt that the people had forgotten the humble, poor birth of our Lord Jesus.



So in 1223, St. Francis created the first living Crèche in a small cave in Italy. On Christmas eve he gathered with others to act out the Nativity scene in all its impoverished glory. This re-enactment is credited as the first Crèche (which is French for "manger") and from that point forward the crèche was designed in a more realistic way by depicting a stable scene.

A crèche traditionally includes two animals: an ox and a donkey. These were the two animals participating in St. Francis' crèche because he wanted to allude to Isaiah 1:3 which states "The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people does not understand."

The Poinsettia, The Traditional Christmas Flower.

Although it is treasured in all parts of the world as a symbol of Christmas, it can be traced back to an old Mexican legend. A poor peasant girl going to her church to visit the manger scene on Christmas morning was broken-hearted because she had nothing of beauty or value to offer the Christ Child. On her way, she picked some weeds from the side of the road and, as her only possession in the world, laid them at the feet of the statue of the Virgin Mary. Miraculously, they were transformed into the scarlet brilliance of the poinsettia we know today. The poinsettias remind us of Joel Robert Poinsett, for whom the plant is named. He was born in Charleston in 1759 and was a planter, botanist, statesman and our country's first minister to Mexico from whence he first brought the plant to Charleston in 1829. Now it is used throughout the world at Christmastime. The bright, blood-red poinsettia has become the most popular of all Christmas flowers. The star of the leaf is said to represent the star that stood over the Christ Child. The red flower stands for the blood of the male infants that King Herod had slain. The red flower also represents the shed blood of Christ who came to be our Savior.



The Candy Cane

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord ~ Luke 2:8-11



Did you know that the candy cane was created to honor Jesus? If the candy is held upright, it is the shape of a shepherd's staff, which the shepherd uses as he watches over his sheep. Jesus is our Shepherd. If the candy is turned upside down, it becomes the letter J for Jesus.

The Bible tells us that by Jesus' stripes we are healed. Jesus was beaten and stripes were put on His back when He was crucified in payment for our sins. So the candy cane was made with red and white stripes to represent the blood of Jesus, which washed away our sins and makes us pure and white as snow. One bold stripe represents one God who is Father of us all. The three fine stripes represent the Trinity: one God, who has revealed Himself to us in three ways: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Christmas Tree

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season whose leaf does not wither. ~ Psalm 1: 1-3



Our Christmas trees are symbols of peace and eternal life. The lights represent Jesus, the light of the world.

In medieval mystery plays fir trees were used, decorated with apples to symbolize the Garden of Eden with its tree of life and forbidden fruit. Long after the mystery plays, the Germans remembered the tree. They modified its decorations by adding sacramental wafers along with the apples, to contrast the eating that brought death to the eating that brings life. In tiome the decorations became more elaborate, the symbolism of the fall and redemption faded. Apples were joined by oranges and brightly colored balls, while the wafers became cookies cut in the shapes of angels, stars, flowers and animals.

The Biblical Christmas Tree

The inspiration of the "Jesse Tree" comes from Isaiah's prophecy. "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of



Jesse" (Isaiah 11:1). Jesse is King David's father and so an ancestor of Jesus ("of the House of David"). Tradition has taken Isaiah's suggestion of Jesus' "family tree" and decorated it with ornaments or pictures to represent various ancestors (like Noah, Jacob, Moses, Ruth, Jesse himself, and David). Jesus' spiritual heritage is thus illustrated and celebrated.

Christmas Season Memorial Flowers

In Memory Of:

- Samuel Highbaugh
- JoAnn Manning
- Ann Marie Crook
- Peggy Hourigan
- Barbara Houchins
- Will, Mickey & Mike Feger
- Maureen Wettig Swift
- George Winn Wettig
- Murphy & Frawley Families
- Elaine Schulten
- Max Schulten
- Jim Carlin
- Mary Ann Wilkinson
- Kay Vowels
- Pete Vowels
- Ann Marie Sanderfer
- Neil Meredith
- Jenny Casper
- Fr. Walter Kaelin, OP
- Extended Kaelin & Young Family
- Catherine Evans
- Dorothy & Tony Frerman
- Pam Perkins
- Helen Cecil
- Mike Stokes
- Clyde Lee
- In Memory
- Mike Riley
- Dolores Wilson
- Jeramie Johnson
- John & Marie Sheehan
- Emmett (Sr.) & Ruth Miller
- Jerry Massey
- Mike Beavin
- Browning & Buckler Families

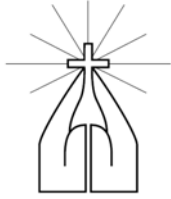
Requested By:

- Becky & Terry Highbaugh
- Becky & Terry Highbaugh
- Bonnie & Mike Tolbert
- John & Marie Hourigan
- James & Benida Crask
- Sharon Lovell
- Mary Wettig
- Mary Wettig
- Mary Wettig
- The Schultens
- The Schultens
- The Schultens
- The Schultens
- The Schultens
- The Schultens
- The Schultens
- The Schultens
- The Schultens
- The Schultens
- Nancy Kaelin
- Nancy Kaelin
- Valerie Evans
- Valerie Evans
- Rose Davis
- Mary Olds
- Family
- Bea Lee
- Unknown
- Joan Riley
- Anna McNear
- Billy & Susan Johnson
- Emmett & Mary Miller
- Emmett & Mary Miller
- Ella & Weldon Williams
- Mr. & Mrs. James Beavin
- Mr. & Mrs. Henry Browning



*Jesus...
The Gift
that perfectly fits
the size of every heart.*

**All good giving and every perfect gift is from above,
coming down from the Father of lights,
James 1:17**



*Many Hands.
One Faith.*

Our Lady of Mount Carmel
5505 New Cut Road
Louisville, KY 40214
502-366-5651
502-368-9972 FAX
www.OLMC-Louisville.com

St. Thomas More Parish
6105 South Third Street
Louisville, KY 40214
502-366-1463
FAX 502-366-1464

Bulletin Deadline: Tuesday, 3:00 p.m.

Contact Information

Life and Death Emergencies **502-435-4216**
Parish Life Center (STM) 502-363-3719 ext 28

PASTOR

Rev. Philip L. Erickson, JCL
(frplae@saint-thomas-more.org)

PASTOR EMERITUS (STM)

Rev. J. Wayne Murphy
(c/o bcrask@saint-thomas-more.org)

PERMANENT DEACONS

Deacon Mike Tolbert
(deaconmiketolbert@msn.com)
Deacon Terry Maguire
(tdr13@insightbb.com)

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

Ms. Pat Finck
(pfinck@insightbb.com)

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND FORMATION

Mr. Tom Morton
(southendcatholic@hotmail.com)

DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP

Mr. Chris Tolbert
(christolbert@insightbb.com)

BUSINESS MANAGER

Mr. Carl A. Draper
(c.draper@insightbb.com)

PARISH SECRETARIES

Ms. Benida Crask (STM)
(benidacrask@msn.com)
Cecilia May (OLMC)
(parishsecretary@insightbb.com)

BULLETIN COORDINATOR

Ms. Julie Robertson
(julierobertsonstm@hotmail.com)

“Merry Christmas”



Sacraments

Baptism (preparation required)

MONTHLY INFANT BAPTISM

1st Sunday of the month during Mass (Fr.)
2nd Sunday of the month after Mass (Deacon)

ANNUAL ADULT BAPTISM

Through RICA at the Easter Vigil

Confirmation (preparation required)

Annual celebration

Eucharist

Saturday Vigil	5:30 p.m.	OLMC
Sunday	8:30 a.m.	OLMC
	10:30 a.m.	STM
	12:30 p.m.	STM

Holy Days	8:15 a.m.	OLMC
	Noon	STM
	7:00 p.m.	STM

Weekday (Mon-Sat)	8:15 a.m.	OLMC
-------------------	-----------	------

Exposition & Benediction	4:00-5:00 p.m.	OLMC
1st Saturday of the Month		

Penance (confession)

Saturday, 4:30 p.m., or by appointment (OLMC)

Anointing of the Sick

Available twice a year or by request

Marriage

Minimum 6-month preparation with priest or deacon

Holy Orders

DIACONATE	Deacon Robert Hall 502-636-0296 diaconate@archlou.org
-----------	---

PRIESTHOOD	Rev. Bill Bowling 502-636-0296 vocation@archlou.org
------------	---

Fairdale Florist & Gift Shop

In the  of Fairdale

10700 W Manslick Rd.

367-8523

Let us help you find the
perfect gift for any occasion.

Now owned by OLMC Parishioner