



Many Hands. One Faith.

Christmas Day

December 25, 2009

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 Tue	8:15 am.....	1 Sm 1:24-28	.....	Luke 1:46-56	.....	Joseph W. Allen
12/23 Wed	8:15 am.....	Mal 3:1-4, 23-24	.....	Luke 1:57-66	.....	Peggy Flood
12/24 Thr	8:15 am	2 Sm 7:1-16	.....	Luke 1:67-79	.....	Bill Pontrich
	5:30 pm	Is 62:1-5	.....	Acts 13:16-17,22-25	.....	Matt 1:1-25.....
12/25 Fri	12:00 am.....	Is 9:1-6	.....	Titus 2:11-14	.....	Luke 2:1-14.....
	8:30 am	Is 52:7-10	.....	Hebrews 1:1-6	.....	John 1:1-18.....
	10:30 am	Is 52:7-10	.....	Hebrews 1:1-6	.....	John 1:1-18.....
12/26 Sat	8:15 am	Acts 6:8-10;7:54-59	.....	Matt 10:17-22	.....	All Living & Deceased of STM & OLMC
Sun Vigil	4:00 pm	1 Samuel 1:20-28	.....	1 John 3:1-2, 21-24	.....	Luke 2:41-52
Sun Vigil	5:30 pm	1 Samuel 1:20-28	.....	1 John 3:1-2, 21-24	.....	Luke 2:41-52
12/27 Sun	8:30 am	1 Samuel 1:20-28	.....	1 John 3:1-2, 21-24	.....	Luke 2:41-52
	10:30 am	1 Samuel 1:20-28	.....	1 John 3:1-2, 21-24	.....	Luke 2:41-52
	12:30 pm	1 Samuel 1:20-28	.....	1 John 3:1-2, 21-24	.....	Luke 2:41-52
					
					
12/28 Mon	8:15 am	1 John 1:5 -2:2	.....	Matt 2:13-18	.....	All Of Our Parishioners

Intentions

Coming Together in Faith

“Wishing You And Yours A Blessed Christmas”

The Crèche Is A School of Life

VATICAN CITY, DEC. 13, 2009 (Zenit.org).-

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

We have now arrived at the third week of Advent. In the liturgy today there echoes the invitation of the Apostle Paul: "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice ... the Lord is near!"

(Phil 4:4-5). Mother Church, while she accompanies us toward the holy season of Christmas, helps us to rediscover the sense and the taste of Christian joy, so different from the world's joy.

It is a beautiful tradition that on this Sunday the children of Rome come to have the Pope bless little statues of Baby Jesus, which they will place in their crèches. And, indeed, I see many children and young people, together with their parents, teachers and catechists here in St. Peter's Square. Dear friends, I greet all of you with great affection and I thank all of you for having come. It is a cause of joy for me to know that in your families you continue the custom of making the crèche. But it is not enough to repeat a traditional gesture, however important. It is necessary to try to live every day what the crèche represents, that is, Christ's love, his humility, his poverty. That is what St. Francis did at Greccio: He represented the scene of the Nativity to try to contemplate and adore it, but above all to know better how to put into practice the message of the Son of God, who left everything behind and became a little child out of love for us.

The blessing of the "babies" -- as one says in Rome -- reminds us that the crèche is a school of life, where we can learn the secret of true joy. This does not consist in having a lot of things, but in feeling loved by the Lord, in making oneself a gift for others, in loving. We look at the crèche: The Madonna and St. Joseph do not seem to be a very fortunate family; they had their first child in the midst of great hardships; and yet they are full of deep joy, because they love each other, they help each other and above all they are certain that God is at work in their history, God who made himself present in the little Jesus. And the shepherds? What reason would they have to rejoice? That newborn certainly would not change the facts of poverty and marginalization in their lives. But faith helps them to recognize in the "child wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" the "sign" of the accomplishment of God's promises for all men, "whom he loves" (Luke 2:12, 14), even them!

Behold, dear friends, what true joy consists in: It is feeling that our personal and communal existence is visited and filled by a great mystery, the mystery of God's love. To be joyful we do not just have need of things, but love and truth: We need a God who is near, who warms our heart, and responds to our profound desires. This God is manifested in Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary. This is why that Baby, whom we place in the stable or the cave, is the center of everything, the heart of the world. Let us pray that every person, like the Virgin Mary, may welcome into the center of their lives the God who became a Child, font of true joy.

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
 Troy Manning
 Helen Greenwell
 Ann Marie Crook
 Ernest Freidhof
 Evelyn Freidhof
 Peggy Hourigan
 Tom Clements
 Barbara Houchins
 Robert Bennett
 The Staab Family
 The Woerner Family
 Bill Mattingly
 Thad Mudd
 Daly Edlin
 Colton Raymond Herberger
 Elaine Schulten
 Max Schulten
 Jim Carlin
 Mary Ann Wilkinson
 Kay Vowels
 Pete Vowels
 Ann Marie Sanderfer
 Neil Meredith
 Jenny Casper
 Marty O'Brien
 Marcella & Gabe Kaelin
 Fr. Walter Kaelin, OP
 Extended Kaelin & Young Family
 Helen Cecil
 Dorothy Meyer
 Margaret Skaggs
 Cyril (Buddy) Meyer, Jr.
 Joseph Hash
 Wilson, Ketterer & Henry Families
 Lynn Marie Peak
 Kyle Haywood
 Agnes Thieneman
 Kristi Pipes
 Lorena Fehriback
 Dolores Wilson
 Browning & Buckler Families
 Jerry Massey
 Bobby Massey
 Al Kampschaefer

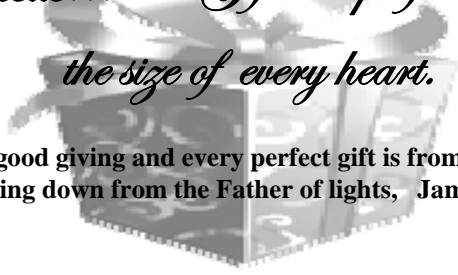
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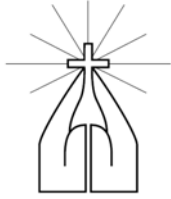
Becky & Terry Highbaugh
 Becky & Terry Highbaugh
 Becky & Terry Highbaugh
 Becky & Terry Highbaugh
 Bonnie & Mike Tolbert
 Diane & Ralph Hawkins
 Diane & Ralph Hawkins
 John & Marie Hourigan
 Mary Ellen Clements
 The Crask Family
 Martha Bennett
 Aileen Woerner
 Freda Woerner
 Kate Mattingly
 Kate Mattingly
 Mary M. Edlin
 The Schultens
 The Schultens
 The Schultens
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 The Schultens
 The Schultens
 Terri O'Brien
 Nancy Kaelin
 Nancy Kaelin
 Nancy Kaelin
 Kathy & Tim
 Denise Paris
 Denise Paris
 Denise Paris
 Debbie Fox
 Mary Jo Henry
 Bill & Judy Peak
 Clifford Thieneman
 Clifford Thieneman
 Jim & Marleen Pipes
 Bill & Gladys Weaver
 Jesse & Anna McNear
 John Henry Browning
 Ella & Weldon Williams
 Ella & Weldon Williams
 Ella & Weldon Williams



*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.*

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

Penance (confession)

Saturday, 4:45 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

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