



From The Heart

Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Oberlin, Ohio

Advent Christmas 2017

Advent – A Look Backward and Forward

With the coming of Advent the Church's liturgical year begins. The four weeks before Christmas are not only a part of the liturgical calendar in the Catholic Church but in the Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches as well. During this holy season we are encouraged to prepare ourselves to celebrate the anniversary of the Lord's coming into our world. The liturgy takes us in spirit back to the time before the Incarnation of the Son of God, as though it was yet to take place. Thus Advent is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas.

However, for Catholics, Advent anticipates the coming of Christ from two different perspectives. It offers the opportunity to share in the ancient longing for the coming of the Messiah (the first advent) and the call to be alert for his final coming (the second advent). Thus, the holy season is far more than simply marking an historical event of 2,000 years ago. It is celebrating the fundamental truth of our faith, the revelation of God in his Son, Jesus of Nazareth, through whom all creation might be reconciled to the Creator. This is a process in which we now participate and the consummation of which we all anticipate. The Scripture readings throughout the season will reflect this emphasis on both these comings of Christ and will include themes of accountability for our faithfulness as well as judgment on sin and the hope of eternal life.

In this double focus on past and future, Advent also symbolizes the spiritual journey we are on, both as individuals and as a community as we affirm that Christ has come, that Christ is present in the world today, and that Christ will return in power and in judgment. This reality provides the basis for Kingdom ethics; that is, holy living arising from a profound sense that we live "between the times" of his first coming and his final coming and we are called to be faithful stewards of what is entrusted to us as God's people.

So, as the Church celebrates the Incarnation and anticipates a future consummation to that history for which "all creation is groaning as it awaits its redemption," it also confesses its own responsibility as a people commissioned to "love the Lord your God with all your heart" and to "love your neighbor as yourself."

Fr. Cole

"I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year." (Charles Dickens)

On Partnership With St. Patrick's Church

You may remember from my State of the Parish talk last September that we are in discussion with St. Patrick's in Wellington to coordinate our Confirmation preparation programs so we will be able to offer the sacrament annually rather than every other year. In order to do this we have had to postpone the celebration of Confirmation for this coming year. This collaborative effort will involve some adjustments in both parishes and we are currently working on these details. As has been understood for several years, when I retire I am to be the last resident pastor assigned to Sacred Heart. As we move forward in planning for this reality, we'll be looking for other opportunities for us to partner with St. Patrick's and further acquaint both parish communities with each other. I will keep you informed as these opportunities present themselves.

"Christmas, my child, is love in action." (Dale Evans)

SACRED HEART PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION



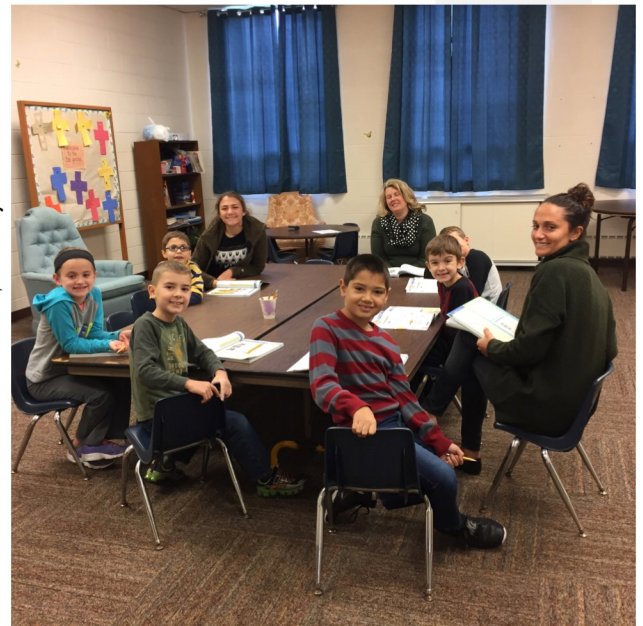
Sacred Heart's Parish School of Religion, also known as PSR, is a religious formation program for parish children who are enrolled in public school or who are homeschooled. PSR is offered for children in first through ninth grades. Classes are offered September through May on Sundays from 8:45 a.m. until 9:50 a.m. Students are released from PSR class to attend Mass with their families.

Religious education is more technically referenced in Church teaching as catechesis. Catechesis is the act of handing on the Word of God intended to inform the faith community about the teachings of Christ, transmitted by the Apostles to the Church. Faith formation is a matter of nurturing the growth of the seeds of faith sown by the Holy Spirit at the time of baptism. The fundamental tasks of Sacred Heart's PSR are promoting knowledge of our Catholic faith -- liturgical education: the Mass and Sacraments; moral formation: the

Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule; and how to pray. While faith formation begins with the family (the domestic church), and parents are the foremost educators of their children, Sacred Heart's PSR assists by providing a formal faith formation curriculum. The family is actively engaged by our PSR curriculum lessons that the children take home for family sharing and a periodic newsletter from PSR staff. The curriculum emphasizes the Gospels, Sacramental Celebrations, Liturgical Celebrations, Saints, Prayers and the Church Family. Sacramental preparation through the religious education program includes Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation. In grades 1 – 2 children are prepared for Reconciliation and First Holy Communion as they begin to comprehend basic Catholic teaching (doctrine) and prayers. First Holy Communion is celebrated in the second grade. Grades 3 – 8 may be characterized as pre-Confirmation preparation. These are important years as students move toward a more thoughtful and mature spirituality. At Sacred Heart parish, Confirmation is celebrated for students in the ninth grade.

The success of Sacred Heart's PSR depends on the combined efforts of parents, catechists (teachers), students, and the parish community. The PSR is led by Ms. Anne Linden, PSR Coordinator. Sacred Heart's PSR is staffed with six teachers and seven aides. The volunteer catechists share their faith with our parish's children, leading by example, challenging them and demonstrating what reasonable and caring people of Christ do to serve others. Anne says we want our children to know that God loves them unconditionally, to come closer to Him through the sacraments, and to know Him personally through prayer.

Anne has been Sacred Heart PSR coordinator since 2009. She is also PSR coordinator for grades 1-6 at St. Patrick's in Wellington, a position she has held since 1997. Anne and her husband, Charles, are celebrating 34 years of marriage. They have two children, Cassandra (husband Derrick) and Cory, and an active two-year-old granddaughter, Isabella. Anne has been active in PSR with her family as well, starting as a cookie mom when her children were young. Anne, Charles and family are lifelong residents of the Oberlin area, residing in Wellington. In May, Anne and three other women took a 10-day spiritual pilgrimage to Rome. A highlight of the pilgrimage was receiving a papal blessing from Pope Francis. If you have questions regarding any aspect of Sacred Heart's religious education program, please contact Anne at (440) 647-2912, annepsr@yahoo.com or the parish office (440) 774-6791, sacredheart@oberlin.net.



Brian Barbuto

"It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you." (Mother Teresa)

Lost and Found: the Angels of Sacred Heart

The original Sacred Heart church was built in 1890 and sat on the corner of Groveland and South Pleasant. By the early 1950s the number of parishioners had outgrown the seating capacity of the 60-year-old building. The decision was made to relocate out here to our present location on West Lorain Street. When the move was made, a few items were brought over from the old church. The most

prominent is the statue of the Sacred Heart that graces the back wall over the votive lights. Another was a metal baptismal font, the cover of which is now on our current font and the base of which is used for lighting the new fire at the Easter Vigil Mass on Holy Saturday night. A third item is a 4-foot angel statue that we have included in the manger scene we set up every Christmas. However, when looking at pictures of the early church we can see that there were two such statues, one on each side of the old sanctuary. What happened to the other angel has been a mystery, and we thought it had been lost. However, this past spring a parishioner told me that her brother had saved the other angel when the old church was being razed, and he wanted to see that it came home. When it was brought in, it was in some disrepair from its many years of storage in an unheated building. Upon closer examination of the angel we already had, we could see that its original color had faded significantly and it was in need of refurbishing.

As a result, we took them both to Mazzolini Artcraft, a major church statuary company in Cleveland that does work throughout a good part of the eastern United States. Both angels are now being refinished and repainted and (hopefully) will be reunited this coming Christmas.

Fr. Cole

How will YOU make a joyful noise this coming Christmas season?

In a one-question (and certainly unscientific) survey, parishioners, friends, and family were asked to name one or two of their favorite Christmas carols/songs. Seventy-three people responded, and, in total, 48 songs were mentioned. Among those were 10 titles I didn't know. That surprised me because, Folks, I'm *old*, and I've been singing carols and secular Christmas songs since I was a very little girl.

Here's a brief rundown on the results of the survey. Receiving the most votes was *Silent Night* (31), followed by *O Holy Night* (19) and *Mary, Did You Know?* (13). Others garnering 3 or more votes: *Hark, The Herald Angels Sing ... Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming ... O Little Town of Bethlehem ... Little Drummer Boy ... Away in a Manger ...* and *White Christmas*.

From various clergy came *Silent Night, O Holy Night, Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming, O Come All Ye Faithful, The Huron Carol, In the Bleak Midwinter, Away in a Manger, In Dulci Jubilo, Puer Natus in Bethlehem*.

In case you're curious, these are the rest of the songs that were mentioned: *All I Want For Christmas Is You ... Angels We Have Heard on High ... Away in a Manger ... Baby, It's Cold Outside ... Blue Christmas ... Christmas, Don't Be Late ... Feliz Navidad ... Gabriel's Message ... God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen ... Good King Wenceslas ... Grandma Got Run Over By A Reindeer ... Hallelujah* (with the Christmas lyrics, I'm hoping!) *... Hallelujah Chorus ... Happy Xmas (War Is Over) ... Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas ... I'll Be Home for Christmas ... It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas ... Jingle Bells ... Jingle Bell Rock ... Joy to the World ... Last Christmas ... Let It Be Christmas ... O Come, All Ye Faithful ... Let Us Adore Him ... Of The Father's Love Begotten ... Once in Royal David's City ... Open My Eyes, Lord ... Silver Bells ... Sleigh Ride ... The Christmas Song ... The Gift ... Today Jesus Is Born ... Winter Wonderland ... It Came Upon the Midnight Clear ...* and *The Friendly Beasts*. Do you know them all?

However you make a joyful noise to the Lord in the upcoming Christmas season ... whatever songs you sing ... remember that the incarnation of our great, loving, and merciful God is, indeed, the reason for the season.

Carrol Wilhelm

More on the Abdi Family

As fall fades and winter settles in, we pause to think about the Abdi family, which has, as of December, been in the United States for nine months. Much has happened during those months. We've had successes. We've made mistakes. We often ask ourselves: are we doing enough? Are we doing too much? What might we change, were we to do it again? But there is no manual for helping to resettle a refugee family, because every situation is different.

And Hamdi's situation in Somali was a precarious one: she was eleven when she took over raising her one-year-old brother. As the only survivors, it was up to Hamdi to get the two to a refugee camp. The journey took two years.

At camp, the Abdi house, two rooms with no windows, was made of sheet metal with a UN tarp roof. The floor was sand, covered with plastic carpet. The girls slept in one room on three-inch foam mattresses that were rolled away during the day. With Hamdi's husband and brother, the four boys (two died in camp) slept in the other room, which by day doubled as a homework room. During the day, the children attended school from seven to noon and returned again at two.

While it is not known how Hamdi's husband made a living, at the camp, Hamdi was a produce vendor. Another way she and her children made money was to take the place of those who had no time to wait in line for water or UN supplies. For a fee, Hamdi and her children would wait for hours.

When the family came to the United States in March, Hamdi's brother was forbidden to accompany the family. Now, with the new definition of family unit, it is our sincere hope that he will be able to join them in the new year.

The Refugee Group

Did you ever wonder if ...

Mary had anyone other than Joseph to help deliver Baby Jesus? If any of the shepherds who came that first night ended up being disciples of Jesus? What happened to the gold, myrrh, and frankincense? How old the baby was by the time the gifts were delivered? If there were actually *three* magi – since the New Testament only mentions three *gifts* and not how many people brought them? How old Jesus was by the time Mary and Joseph got back home to Nazareth after their stay in Egypt? If Jesus and John (the Baptist) ever played together when they were little boys?

.....
Don't forget! St. Nicholas Day is December 6th.

Recommended Reading for Adults and Children (with Amazon.com prices noted)

Lord, Renew Your Wonders: Spiritual Gifts for Today, by Damian Stayne (Word Among Us Press, 2017), explains the gifts (faith, prophecy, healing, miracles, etc.) then describes, from first-hand experience, the new and compelling things God is doing today to empower the spread of the gospel around the world. This is truly an amazing book. Available in paperback for \$13.95.

Healing: Bringing the Gift of God's Mercy to the World, by Mary Healy (*Our Sunday Visitor*, 2015). This powerful book by a faculty member at Sacred Heart Seminary (Detroit) explains that Jesus is truly alive today – miraculously healing people just as He did 2,000 years ago. Through scripture, Catholic tradition and amazing witness accounts of individuals who've been healed, the author encourages us to “live our faith boldly...serve the Lord with gladness, and expect his mercy and miracles to surround and sustain us.” Available in paperback for \$13.

Why Christmas Trees Aren't Perfect, by Richard Schneider; illustrated by Elizabeth Miles (Abingdon Press, 1988). A tale about what makes potential Christmas trees – or potential saints – perfect. Excellent illustrations. \$22.08

We Three Kings, illustrated by Gennady Spirin (Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2007). Spectacularly illustrates the traditional Christmas carol. \$17.95

Angela and the Baby Jesus, by Frank McCourt (Simon & Schuster, 2007). A story about McCourt's mother who, at age 6, “rescued” the baby Jesus from her parish's nativity scene because she thought He was cold. Very nice illustrations by Raul Colon. Used from \$.10

The Story of Christmas, by Patricia Pingry (Candy Cane Press, 2010). A board book telling the Nativity story in words simple enough for a toddler to understand. \$6.03

Father and Son: A Nativity Story, by Gerladine McCaughrean (Hyperion Books for Children, 2006). Focuses beautifully on the questions Joseph must have been asking after Jesus' birth. Wonderful and

DID YOU KNOW?

The words to *Silent Night* were written by Fr. Josef Mohr; the music, by Franz Gruber. Their parish: St. Nicholas.

The English translation of *O Come, All Ye Faithful* was written by Fr. Frederick Oakely.

Angels We Have Heard on High was written by the Catholic bishop of Hexham and Newcastle in England.

Carol of the Bells, Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence, and Do You Hear What I Hear? were all written by Catholics.

And did you also know the following composers were Catholic?

Ludwig von Beethoven ... Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart ... Joseph Haydn ... Franz Liszt (member of Franciscan orders minor) ... Antonin Dvorak ... Antonin Vivaldi (priest) ... Edward Elgar ... Gustav Mahler (converted from Judaism) ... Franz Schubert ... Josef Gelineau (Jesuit)

... St. Jean de Brebeuf (Jesuit martyr) ... Frederick Faber (convert who wrote “Faith of Our Fathers”) ... Hildegard Bingen (O.S.B. and one of the earliest known woman composers) ... Giovanni da Palestrina ... Johann Christian Bach (convert) ... Anton Bruckner ... Gioachino Rossini ... Antonio Salieri ... among others.

Ministry Spotlight: Spiritual Life Commission

The Spiritual Life Commission has been focused on helping Father Cole and Deacon Tom identify, plan, and implement programs that nurture the spiritual growth of our parishioners as well as offering opportunities for fellowship.

In 2005, we sponsored the 10-week Alpha program. This attracted 80 people, many of whom found the fellowship and spiritual content very attractive. From the seeds of this first Alpha program a broad array of both organized, regular spiritual opportunities as well as special activities have been provided for the parish, focused on scripture study, personal devotion, community spiritual growth, and spiritual outreach. Some (not all) of our programs that have been held in the last 12 years are cited below.

Our regular activities include Eucharistic Adoration, held once a month; two scripture studies, each meeting once a week; a charismatic prayer meeting, held once a month; healing prayer, offered the first Sunday of each month; and the parish Lenten mission. These 3-day missions have been regularly held since 2010 and are led by a recognized spiritual leader/team in the Church. In addition, we offer the men's and women's renewals (for our cluster, hosted by St. Joseph's in Amherst). The men's renewal is held in the spring and the women's in the fall. Deacon Tom is the spiritual director for both. These renewals were preceded by the 2010 Journey program for men and women.

Special opportunities for spiritual growth have been an additional Alpha program (2007); several Life in the Spirit charismatic retreats; healing care ministry; formational prayer led by Ruth Steinacker; a 2008 Marian retreat led by Sr. Mary Ann Flannery (from the Jesuit Retreat House) and a discussion group to share stories of conversion/re-version (homecoming) to Catholicism led by Carrol Wilhelm.

Spiritual adult education opportunities have included relationship-building discussions led by William Boomer, the diocesan lead for Marriage and Family Spiritual Needs. These included the "Five Languages of Love" and "Seasons of Marriage." We have also distributed two Matthew Kelly books (*Rediscovering Catholicism* and *Resisting Happiness*) for discussion and renewal.

Our parish mission statement is "As baptized Catholics, we accept our call from Jesus Christ to nurture a personal relationship with Him and be His presence in the world by reaching the lost, inspiring the faithful and making the Church essential in the lives of our people." We are committed, through prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to provide spiritual opportunities to the members of Sacred Heart to support this mission.

Larry Wald

"And you, Mary our mother, who lavished your maternal attention on your divine Child, protect the children of the world from all evil and sow in their hearts the seeds of faith, hope and goodness." (Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem)

For Him We Will Wait

Each family, I think, has its own tradition that brings the Christmas season to the foreground. For some, it may be as simple as listening to holiday music. For others, it might be more traditional -- the act of setting up an Advent wreath, hanging an Advent calendar, or unpacking the nativity set.

But for some, the leap from ordinary time to Advent must be grand. In years past, it has taken more effort than the lighting of a candle or the humming of a carol for my family to get caught up in the anticipation of the season. For us, it involves the choosing of a Christmas tree.

Early in our marriage, John and I started the tradition of choosing a live tree. This was significant for me, because as far as my mind could reach back, all I could remember from my childhood was our perfectly-shaped Christmas tree that smelled more of basement than balsam.

After John and I married, our first tree came from a Christmas tree lot just south of Route 113. When we brought it home, strung the lights, and sat back to enjoy its presence, my husband was disappointed to find that it had been spray-painted a shade more festive than its own natural green.

To me, it didn't matter. It was beautiful.

More beautiful, perhaps, was the gift that came just a week and a handful of days prior to Christmas that year. Our beautiful daughter. She eventually became the impetus for us to push our official holiday start date to the 15th of December. Her birthday, for those years, coupled with finding our holiday tree.

While it was a tradition that worked well for us, it did cause us to neglect at least two, if not three, of the Sundays of Advent. For us, the slow build-up and preparation the coming of Christ became more of a "wait . . . wait . . . now, hurry up!" For us, the Advent wreath was less of a reminder for us to look for the light shining in the darkness than it was for the incitement of arguments between the younger kids as to whose turn it was to light the candles or blow them out.

The tradition of the tree continues today, though this year, that once baby girl is now 22 and is developing traditions of her own. This may be the Spirit's way of suggesting this is the year we seek Jesus in places we haven't yet looked.

Perhaps this is the year we prepare for a season with subtler preparation.

I imagine there is a beauty in the nuances of waiting.

Those who walk in darkness, will see a great light . . . for unto us a child is born. He will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

And for Him, we will wait.

By Marla Thompson

"And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth." (Jn 1:14)

WORD SEARCH answers can be up/down/diagonal/across/backward.

ROWS	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1	P	R	I	N	C	E	O	F	P	E	A	C	E	O	F
2	L	E	N	T	J	U	D	E	A	A	X	L	E	O	N
3	E	C	C	E	P	L	M	A	N	G	E	R	K	P	H
3	M	D	A	E	R	Y	A	N	K	L	C	K	Q	S	R
4	M	Y	R	R	N	O	G	G	F	E	A	I	U	S	R
5	A	N	N	E	O	S	I	E	W	L	R	N	I	T	Y
5	N	M	A	R	Y	L	U	L	U	B	L	G	B	A	M
6	U	R	T	C	H	E	S	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D
7	E	W	I	E	I	L	L	I	W	D	C	E	T	H	S
8	L	J	O	S	E	P	H	B	L	U	A	R	H	T	D
9	B	E	N	N	I	D	I	V	A	D	R	O	L	E	O
10	T	W	I	S	E	M	E	N	F	T	L	D	E	R	N
11	K	I	N	G	O	F	K	I	N	G	S	S	H	A	K
12	C	S	U	S	A	N	U	R	L	O	T	W	E	Z	E
13	C	H	O	I	R	Y	L	S	G	L	B	W	M	A	Y
16	F	R	C	O	L	E	S	W	A	D	D	L	I	N	G

CHRISTMAS + PARISH STAFF

INCARNATION	JOSEPH	STABLE	MARY	CENSUS	ANGEL
SHEPHERD	DONKEY	STAR	MANGER	NAZARETH	JEWISH
BETHLEHEM	DAVID	CHOIR	EMMANUEL	JUDEA	EGYPT
KING OF KINGS	MAGI	MYRRH	HEROD	LUKE	INN
CAROL	NOEL	FR COLE	DAW	SUSAN	ED
WILLIE	CARL	ANNE	WISEMEN	SWADDLING	
PRINCE OF PEACE					

As you prepare to send out your Christmas greetings, maybe you could send out 1 or 2 or 3 cards to folks who aren't on your address list. Maybe you could look in the church directory and find names of people you haven't seen at Mass for a while. Let them know you're thinking of them.

Christmas in Nazareth

Many years ago, my son called to tell me about a nice Catholic girl he'd met in college. "Her parents are from Nazareth," he said. "Nazareth, Pennsylvania?" I asked. "No, Mom. Nazareth *Nazareth* – like Jesus." Twenty-odd years later (this weekend), it occurred to me to ask my son's mother-in-law, Jeanette, what Christmas was like in Nazareth.

She said it's a lot different now than when she was a girl. Back then, Christmas was much more focused on Jesus and on family. As for herself, she had a little Christmas tree in her bedroom, and she could decorate it any way she liked. She also had a nativity set of her own. She'd start growing lentils, wheat, and chickpeas in water weeks or months in advance. These would sprout into tall, green plants which she'd use around the tree and manger scene to enhance the scene.

On Christmas Eve, the family would decorate its Christmas tree. Jeanette, along with her sisters and other students from their all-girls Catholic school, sang carols in English, French, and Arabic for the midnight Mass at the neighboring Church of the Nazarene parish for the benefit of the tourists who'd come for the holy day celebrations.

On Christmas morning, everyone got up early and had breakfast, then the children would put on their new Christmas clothes – new clothes were the main gift items at that time – and go to Mass with their family at their own parish, the Church of the Annunciation. Immediately afterward, and for 2 to 3 days following, everyone visited relatives' homes. Each family had liqueurs, wine, candy, and other treats to offer parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. The custom was to spend 10 to 15 minutes at each home, then walk to the next, then to the next, and so on. Jeanette laughed at this point, saying that, as families were large, there were many homes to visit, and it wasn't unheard of for some of the relatives to get tipsy during the festivities.

I was a little surprised to learn there aren't cultural conflicts in that area around Christmas. In the United States, with its Christian origins and freedom of (not from) religion, people complain about public religious displays, but there in Nazareth, nativity sets go up, outdoor trees are decorated, Christmas lights are lit all around the city, and everyone is fine with it. There are even Muslims who put up Christmas trees.

The week of Christmas, there's a huge festival near "Mary's Well" with food booths, gift items, and concerts, and those attending are as likely to be Jewish, Arab, or Muslim as Christian.

When Jeanette lived in Nazareth, it was a mid-sized city of about 35,000, but now that number is closer to 85,000. Houses are built on top of houses which are built on houses which are built on houses. There is, on average, one car per person, and practically no space in which to park them. At one time, the city was mainly Christian, but now many Jews also live there (in "Upper Nazareth"). Christmas has become as commercialized there as it is here, and Santas (i.e., Papa Noels) are everywhere.

C. Wilhelm

Emmanuel “God is with us”

The question why the [Messiah](#) was called Emmanuel, or "God with us," has a double answer: the name is a pledge of Divine help and also a description of the nature of the Messiah.

Some years ago Bishop Lennon, in his Christmas Message, reminded us that “The Good News that Jesus Christ brings is not a report of something, but a revelation of someone, Emmanuel, God with us.” As a result of the birth of Christ, “no longer must the human family only hear about God, but now we hear from God.”

St. John’s Gospel says “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” St. John uses poetic language similar to the opening lines of the Book of Genesis. He is drawing on the Old Testament references to the “Word/Wisdom of God” and uses this to focus on the identity of Jesus. For John this identity is the divine word totally united to full humanity and thus revealing **God IN the world**.

The Gospel of Matthew contains the “full genealogy of Jesus.” This is not a family tree in the manner of “ancestry.com” but rather a literary form meant to show significant elements of Christ’s origins. Matthew uses the Greek word, *genesis*, which recalls the creation account in Genesis. Matthew is illustrating how God intervened in our world in a special way. God called Abraham to his service and Abraham responded in faith. God became the personal God of the patriarchs and over time there was a gradual revelation of God’s plan, through a gradual revelation of his person to the people of Israel. Sometimes the revelation of his plan was painful, as in the destruction of the first temple and the exile to Babylon; other times it was joyful, as in the story of Joseph and his brothers or in the singing and psalms of King David.

The Gospel of Matthew is preeminently the Gospel of the kingdom. In Matthew’s theology, the kingdom of heaven is the divine perfection of the ancient kingdom of David. Jesus fulfills the hope of the prophets; he reigns not as a King in some temporal city but high above “at the right hand of the Power” where he wields “all power in heaven and on earth.”

The covenant established through Jesus Christ is a fulfillment of the covenant of kingship from the time of King David, but now its rule is from earth to heaven, **Christ, the Church, and the Christian vocation..**

Gerry Findlan

“The Religious Meaning of Christmas”

I believe that Boy Child, born some two thousand years ago, was the Child of the Divine Mystery, and he came into the world for love of us all. I believe he came to bring healing, forgiveness, reconciliation, freedom, and peace. I believe he also came to invite everyone to forget themselves and remember the needs of others.

For me, the religious meaning of Christmas is a source of deep joy. I know that apart from this meaning Christmas would never be what it is today.

Christmas was born among people who believed it to be a celebration of healing, forgiveness, reconciliation, freedom, and peace. Christmas was born among people who believed it to be an invitation to forget themselves and remember the needs of others. Much of this same spirit survives today ... but this would not be so had it not been for the birth of that Boy Child in Bethlehem so very long ago.

From *The Truth About Christmas* (Santa Claus, Crossroad Publishing, 1997)

Falling in Love is Like Owning a Dog by Taylor Mali

On cold winter nights, love is warm.
 It lies between you and lives and breathes
 and makes funny noises.
 Love can wake you up all hours of the night with its needs.
 Love can give you a sense of security:
 When you're walking down the street late at night
 and you have a leash on love,
 ain't no one gonna mess with you.
 Love needs to be fed so it will grow and stay healthy.
 Love does not like being left alone for long.
 But come home and love is always happy to see you.
 Love may break a few things accidentally in its passion for
 life,
 but you can never be mad at love for long.
 Love leaves you little surprises here and there.
 Love makes messes.
 Sometimes you just want to get love fixed.
 Sometimes you want to roll up a piece of newspaper
 and swat love on the nose,
 But then love gives you big kisses,
 And you laugh at the little things.
 Sometimes love just wants to play.
 Running you around the block, leaving you panting.
 It pulls you in several different directions at once,
 or winds around and around you,
 until you're all wound up and can't move.
 And love brings you together.
 People who have nothing in common but love
 stop and talk and greet each other on the street.
 Most importantly, love needs love, and lots of it.
 And in return, love loves you and loves you and never stops.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.” (Jn 3:16)



Fr. **Cole on vacation in the Alps**
 in his Sacred Heart t-shirt.

**Sacred Heart Parish
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Please let us know if you have comments or suggestions! We would really appreciate feedback of any kind and would like to know if people are reading this newsletter.

You can send your comments to EDITOR at:

sacredheart1newsletter@gmail.com

Feel free to submit your comments, suggestions for future items or an article of general interest to our parishioners. This newsletter goes to all registered parishioners and is a way to reach out to the entire Sacred Heart community and hopefully beyond.

Thank you, we would love to hear from you.