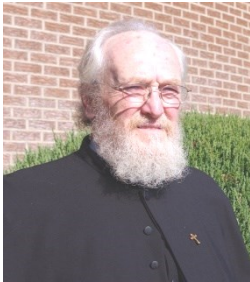


THE TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN NEWS

DECEMBER 15, 2021

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Fr. Robert's Remarks



FR. ROBERT MANSFIELD, SSC
VICAR GENERAL

Merry Christmas!

Greetings! The Lord be with you!

As I write this it is December 15th, the Octave day of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Ember Wednesday in Advent, and the day before we start the Advent Novena—highlighted in the Calendar of our Prayer Book as “O Sapientia: an ancient Advent anthem.” In the December 2015 issue of this newsletter there was some discussion about the Advent Novena. It is still in the online archive. The prayerful reflection on the titles of Jesus followed by the address to Mary at the end of the sequence of antiphons on the Magnificat is worthwhile.

I find the address to Mary interesting.

O Virgin of Virgins, how shall this be? For neither before thee was any like thee, nor shall there be after. Daughters of Jerusalem, why marvel ye at me? The thing which ye behold is a divine mystery.

It is clearly a divine mystery that the whole of the Old Testament history with all its ups and downs brought

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Fr. David Marriott, SSC: A Sermon for Advent III



FR. DAVID MARRIOTT, SSC

In these pandemic times, and as we approach the end of the Advent season, and look forward to the Nativity of Our Lord, we are called upon once more to consider the state of the society in which we live, and to reflect on those signs and symbols which we have seen and experienced, as well as all of those which have occurred around this world, and to think seriously of the meaning of these, and what it might portend for the survival of all the peoples of earth, entire populations and peoples, all around the earth.

Of course, it would be simple to do as so many have done, and make some exact prediction, only to see the date come and go, with no change in the life of man, and, for that matter, all other life in earth. Look on the internet, type in ‘The end of the world is nigh’, and you can see listings of all of these dates, some past some yet to come, but all with one common feature: that they have depended on a human interpretation of God’s will, of the signs that people have thought to have come from God, but where in fact, they

Fr. David Marriott, SSC: A Sermon for Advent III

may have been generated by the Prince of darkness, that fallen angel Lucifer, who strives to create mayhem and disorder all over the world.

And we can understand the confusion: it was generated from the earliest times, as we have just heard, St. Paul writes to the Philippians, 'The Lord is at hand'. One may interpret this several ways: that Jesus was coming, now, or in a short while: or it may be seen to mean simply that the Lord is always at hand: he is always just alongside you and me: He has the power to allow us the Grace of the Holy Spirit, the third part of the divine Trinity, to be with us, to accompany us, as we have need: the Grace of God is enough for all, as each one has his or her portion of this glorious gift, accessible freely, but with the one requirement, that the one calling on the help of the Holy Spirit is able to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, that He is the Son of God the Father, that He has been since the beginning of time, that He is the very Word of God of which we read in the Old Testament, that He knows the prophets, that He has been their guide, and that He came to earth as our Saviour from our sins, that He took our nature upon Him and was born of the Virgin Mary in that stable in Bethlehem.

'FOR THIS WE SAY
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WORD OF THE LORD,
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CHRIST SHALL RISE
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LORD.'

In the Epistle to the Thessalonians, St. Paul writes: 'For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.' (1 Thess. 4.15-17) St. Paul's words created a state of panic among the peoples: they saw this as an imminent happening: but they were not aware of the meaning of any prophecy is dependent on basic premises which had not been fulfilled: the most fundamental; of these being that all this would happen in God's time: and none of us to this day understand how God measures time and or space: it is not that we do not understand, in fact, so much as that we are quite unable to understand the mystery of time and space, the meaning of life, and the grand plan which has been laid out for us by God in His infinite wisdom.

Remember that Jesus Christ Himself has given some guidance in this matter: in the Gospel of Mark, we read: 'And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: For false Christ's and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in

Fr. David Marriott, SSC: A Sermon for Advent III

heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost' (Mark 13.21-27)

So, when we find ourselves living in a 'pandemic world', when we hear of the natural disasters as we have this past year, of all road and rail access to our province of British Columbia being severed by flood and landslides, when we hear of wars and conflict, as we have this past year, when we hear of social unrest and despair, anxiety about price inflation and the risk of higher interest rates in future months: can we then understand that the signs and portents are there, are telling us to be prepared?

In one way, the answer has to be no: there have been great conflicts over the ages, some in our lifetimes: there have been major catastrophes, there have been economic collapses and depression before, and the world has kept on moving ahead. But, one might argue, that the answer has to be yes, as we do not understand the scale that is held by God, in His hand, determining the times and the seasons: we do not comprehend His design for the universe: so then the prophecies and the predictions are that we should at all times be prepared, as we know not when the time will come: we have been prepared, we have been warned and taught what to look for, and many of us have seen signs and portents which might be taken to indicate that the time is fast approaching, that indeed we are living in end times, but that perhaps we must also understand that these 'end times' started with the Nativity of Jesus Christ, that His coming to redeem our sins and transgressions might have been the one sign that we can take for sure, that we can understand as it was to bring the very Godhead into human scale, and that all might be fulfilled according to God's will for us.

Jesus tells us to 'Fear not': it is because we have been given the greatest gift of all: in our finding of the truth of the words of Jesus and His teaching, by our following His word in our lives, we have been allowed to glimpse the future prepared for all who so believe, and we are challenged to take His words and spread them all around the world: that all might have the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour, to be baptised and cleansed from sin, and to participate in the most holy feast of the Eucharist, where we pray, 'Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, So to eat the Flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, And to drink His Blood, That our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body, And our souls washed through His most precious Blood, And that we may evermore dwell in Him, And He in us. Amen.'

DRM+

"JESUS TELLS
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Bonnie's Reflections: THE MAN WHO LISTENED TO ANGELS



BONNIE IVEY (& LAD)

"I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions."

Joel 2: 28

Many homes and churches have manger scenes displayed on a table at Christmas.

*"I WILL POUR OUT MY
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There is a little building, rustic in appearance. Inside there may be a cow, some sheep and a donkey. Front and center we find a manger with the infant Jesus in it, and Mary sitting close beside him. Shepherds might be kneeling to adore the child. Wise Men, even their camels, might be placed outside the stable. The little figure of Joseph is easy to overlook, placed somewhere in the background of the scene. The real Joseph, however, was vital to our salvation because of his obedience and courage.

St. Luke knew the Virgin Mary personally. Her description of the events that we call "the Christmas Story" was told to Luke, who preserved it for us in his gospel. We learn that Mary was "espoused" to Joseph. The Jewish custom of the time was to have two events: the espousal, or official engagement, and the actual wedding which might take place months or even years later. But before this wedding ceremony, before Joseph took Mary home as his wife, her pregnancy was revealed. He was not the father.

Joseph did not want to subject Mary, a very young woman, to public disgrace and scandal. Betrothal was as binding as marriage, and adultery was not just a scandal but a crime, even punishable by death. And then there was the life of the child...

He made the decision to divorce Mary discreetly, out of the public eye. But that night he experienced a startling dream. An angel of the Lord appeared and told him that he need not be afraid to marry. This baby, a boy, was conceived by the Holy Spirit. He must be named Jesus ("The Lord Saves") because he would save his people from their sins. Although some might dismiss such an event, saying "It was only a strange dream," Joseph obeyed. The marriage took place.

The next disruption in Joseph's life was a summons to go to Bethlehem, the city of his origin, to be registered officially for tax purposes. The Roman government controlled the land of Israel, indeed much of Europe, Asia and Africa.

Bonnie's Reflections: THE MAN WHO LISTENED TO ANGELS

One did not argue with Roman officials no matter how inconvenient the order was. They left for Bethlehem even though the journey would be difficult and dangerous for a woman within weeks of her child's birth. The roads were full of travellers and when the first signs of labor came, they were forced to shelter in a stable due to lack of accommodation. When the child was born, shepherds arrived to see him. They told of having been sent by angels to seek "the Saviour, who is Christ, the Lord."

Joseph, Mary and Jesus remained in Bethlehem. His trade as a TEKTON, a building contractor, gave Joseph the ability to find work anywhere. They moved into a house. The boy was now a "little child". Life was becoming settled. But new visitors arrived. They were foreigners, educated men who studied the stars. According to their science, a new king of the Jews had been born and they had come to do him honour. One great star had led them all this way, enabling them to find the right place. They unpacked gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Their quest had led them through Jerusalem, where they had visited King Herod in their search for the new king. Herod Antipas was a ruthless man who would destroy even his own family members out of jealousy and fear for his crown. He was determined to prevent any "new king of the Jews" from usurping his throne. This led to the next disruption in the life of Joseph and his family.

There was a second dream. Joseph saw an angel who warned him of the threat to Jesus' life. The family must flee to Egypt where they would be out of Herod's reach, and stay there until told it was safe to go home. Joseph obeyed. The gold given by the wise men may have financed their new start in Egypt.

After several years another dream came to Joseph. An angel told him that those who sought Jesus to kill him were now dead. Joseph was to bring his family home. During the journey Joseph experienced a fourth and final dream. The angel warned him not to settle in the area around Jerusalem but to move northward. Joseph chose Nazareth as their new home; a town close to the Sea of Galilee. This was a safe environment where Jesus grew to manhood.

Joseph obeyed God even in strange and upsetting circumstances, because he trusted that God had a plan, and was in control of events even in the midst of losses and uncertainty. Thanks be to God who sends his Spirit to guide us also.

"JOSEPH OBEYED
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Fr. Arthur Stanton: Joy & Sorrow A Sermon for Epiphany I



“Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.”—S.
 Luke ii. 48.

OUR Blessed Lady is called, you know, in ecclesiastical language, the *Mater Gaudiosa*, or the “Mother full of Joy”; so we are accustomed to think of her at Christmas, as she holds the Child in her arms.

“He’s hers, He’s all the world’s, yet still He’s hers,
 That Christ-Child smiling on His mother’s knee;
 ‘Mid the world’s worship, still her heart avers,
 That Child Divine belongeth unto me.” (Phillips
 Brooks)

But we are also accustomed to think of our
 Blessed Lady as the *Mater Dolorosa*, the “Mother of Sor-

rows.”

“By the Cross, sad vigil keeping,
 Stood the Mother doleful weeping,
 Where her Son extended hung.”

And so should she be, for is He not the Man of Sorrows? And should not the Mother of the Man of Sorrows be the Mother of Sorrows too?

And so, dear brethren, we find it always is the case that high privileges entail high suffering. It always must be so. The painter is pained when he sees a daub; the musician mad at a false note, the Latin scholar distressed at the false quantity whilst others applaud. The highest strung natures shed the most tears. “A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also” (S. Luke ii. 35). The Blessed Mother of the Divine Son!

Now this is very noticeable when our Blessed Lord and Master came into the world. The advent of the Son of God was surrounded with sorrow. First, it entailed suffering personally. The Blessed Virgin her-self comes before us with the pressure of the eternal election, and her heart is pierced at once, as the message comes to her, pierced in the very most vital point: Craving no renown she accepts God’s election, and she must bear the agony of misconception. Must she be put away privily! Could she not be spared that? Could not an Angel from Heaven roll up a white cloud, and let her sit upon it? No, she must suffer in the way she could suffer most. And Joseph, who was really what we should call a negative character, he comes into the story, we do not quite exactly know why. But what was he doing? He is perplexed and in great distress. He has dreams; he has got to leave his country as an outcast; he has got to be up and away like a thief in the night, and travel hundreds of miles with his blessed charge, Mary and the Child.

But the trouble is not only personal, it is imperial. There is Herod, who is vexed and perplexed. Another King is born into his territory, and his throne, which seemed so secure, seems to be about to totter. What can he do? He is a man

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Fr. Arthur Stanton: Joy & Sorrow A Sermon for Epiphany I

of the world. He understands the position of things. What can he do to support his throne? It must be supported, and his dignity must be kept. There must be no rival king. What can he do? He can think of nothing else but massacre; and the infants must be slain. And this is not the first time thrones have had to be kept up by the massacre of innocents.

And not only is it personal, imperial, but domestic. There arises a cry in Rama—mothers will not be comforted, because their children are not. And it seems that about the very cradle of the Prince of Peace there must be war, and slaughter, and blood and trouble!

And what do we think, again, of the very Gospel of to-day, “Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing”? For twelve years, Mary and the Child—the Divine Child—had been together in a companionship of which there has never been the like; in an intimacy supreme, divine, in a home which was the home of God! And this is the first taste that the Blessed Virgin has of that separation which was to culminate in Calvary. Amid all the confusion of the feast, and the multitude and the caravans, and the bustle, He is missed. True enough, she finds Him doing His Father’s business. But they sought Him sorrowing. And, my brethren, our Blessed Lady tastes of that sorrow which is in the heart of every parent—known to every parent—father and mother of the child that they love—when the first separation takes place. It may be the first going to school. It may be an agony, though the tears are restrained. It may be when son and daughter leave the home and hearth of their parents, not only in fact, but in ideas, to take up the new political adventures, which the family never knew, and could never understand. Could not the mother keep the soul of her child? No! Could not the father keep the soul of his son? No! Bless you! No! It belonged to God. And the sense of separation is always there. The first time the Saviour had been missed by His Blessed Mother! Can you understand the sorrow? There is scarcely a home, or parent, that does not know what it means, the first time when the beloved child goes away, in any sense.

Now I do not want, my brethren, to keep you long this morning—the day of the procession and long service. But there is this fact: no beneficence can enter into the world, no beneficence can be born into the world, without suffering. It is the law of nature; it is the law of grace. Be it political, be it social, be it personal, it is always the same. As you say, “Well, of course somebody must suffer.” There is no legislation which has ever proved to be of any use, but many suffer; no new discovery brought into our streets without some must suffer. The horse has to go out, and machinery comes in, and many have to suffer. It is always the same! The uprooting of old ideas; the turning over of old prejudices! For the thousands who are benefited, hundreds have to suffer. It is always the same. The world is a suffering world, and Christ was born for the suffering. And with any good, beneficent action-legislation in politics, or social, or domestic—you must expect suffering to follow it. It is a troublesome world, and “Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward” (Job v. 7). It is the woof and warp of our experience. We were born to cry, and long to die. Don’t let us faint.

“CAN YOU UNDER-
STAND THE SOR-
ROW?”

Fr. Arthur Stanton: Joy & Sorrow A Sermon for Epiphany I

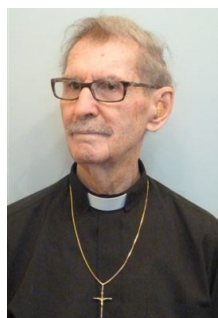
And if it is true concerning any beneficence born into the world, so, dear brethren, is it true when the Blessed Saviour comes into your heart. It is the same thing. There must be suffering. You tell me, you love Him, you know Him; and when you tell it me, tears form in your eyes. But why? Because you are so happy. Yes, then why the tears? I do not know why it is, but somehow it is so, and it must be. Supposing this year is a year of grace to you, and the Saviour is yours and you are His, and you know it, and this year becomes instead of a year of the world a year of grace, very well, Don't you expect that it will have its suffering? Oh, you have not forgotten the old Gospel, have you? "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, (Ah!) and follow *Me*." *There* is crucifixion of the soul to begin with. And you hear the Epistle for to-day: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God (that is pretty strong, isn't it?), that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (Rom. xii. 1). Yes—accept the Saviour, and have Him; but, mind you, He says, "I crucify all those that come to Me." And when you wake up after His likeness, you shall be satisfied with it (see Ps. xvii. 16).

"AND DO YOU
 THINK YOU CAN
 KEEP HIM?"

And do you think you can keep Him? Do you always feel you can have the Saviour with you? Have you not read in the Gospel, The children of the bridechamber will mourn, for the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast (see S. Luke vi. 35). Oh, it will be a real fast then—not an ecclesiastical one—one step, the Saviour will be taken away! And you will miss Him. And it will be a real fast, a fast of the soul. "Then shall they fast in those days." There is the difficulty. We have got the long year before us. Shall we keep the Master with us all through the year? You loved Him at Christmas. You have been to the Manger, and worshipped Him. You have said, "He is my Saviour, my own dear Saviour—He was born for me." Well, will you keep Him all the year, do you think? The time of desolation will come, and you will have missed Him. Then seek Him again, and when you find Him, you say with our Blessed Lady: "I have sought Thee sorrowing. For when Thou art away from me, I am lost: I have sought Thee sorrowing."



From the Parishes



Please give thanks with and for **Fr. Graham Stiff** of Hamilton, ON, who celebrated his 30th anniversary of his ordination to the Holy Priesthood on December 15, 1991

From the Parishes

Fr. Frank Moore: R.I.P. (Oct. 27, 1936—Nov. 15, 2021)

It is with great sadness we announce the peaceful passing of Reverend Frank Frederick Moore on November 15th, 2021 at the age of 85.

Frank was born in Chapleau, ON to parents Canon Frank and Aletta Moore on October 27, 1936.

Frank worked at Jefferys Garage and Domtar Forest Products in Red Rock for many years later moving to Thunder Bay working at St. Joe's Hospital as a Electrician until his retirement.

Frank spent many hours tending to his vegetable and flower gardens both at home and at the church always accompanied by his granddaughter Jennifer as his helper.

Frank enjoyed playing hockey, curling, bowling and cross country skiing throughout the years.

Dad loved the Blue Jays and shared it with grandson Rodney travelling to Toronto and the US for games. He enjoyed when his niece Patty and Fran's grandson Thomas and his mother could accompany him.

Dad enjoyed his grandchildren and was blessed with two great grandchildren. He was so proud to marry his granddaughter Jennifer and baptize his great grandson Thomas.

Frank had a very close relationship with his sister Gail, looking forward to her baking, outings and visits with a smile....then some teasing.

Frank was a lay reader for his father Rev. Canon T. Frank Moore at The Holy Trinity & St. Jude Anglican Catholic Church. In 2007 Frank was indoctrinated and remained the Rector of the church until 2018.

Frank is survived by his wife Francis, sisters Betty Gauley, and Gail (Allan) Hanula, daughter Kathy, son Ricky (Jennifer), grandchildren Rodney Black, Jennifer (Travis) Viscount, Kate (Mitchell) Clark, Nikki Moore and Madison Moore. Great grandchildren Delilah James Clark and Thomas Cecil Douglas Viscount.

Frank leaves behind his loving church family and many nieces and nephews each having a special relationship with their Uncle Bucky.

Predeceased by his parents Thomas and Aletta Moore, son Thomas Moore, brother William (Bill) Moore, sister-in-law Doris Moore, brothers-in-law Charles Schooler and Lloyd Gauley.

Funeral services will take place on November 27, 2021 at 2pm in The Holy Trinity & St. Jude Anglican Catholic Church (830 Spring St.)

Cremation has taken place and a private family interment will take place at a later date. Arrangements have been entrusted to Simpler Times Cremation Centre, 332 North May Street, Thunder Bay.

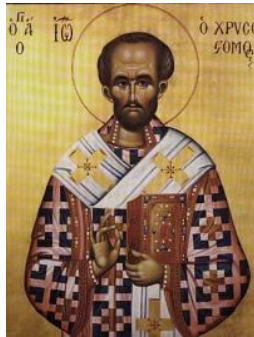
"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord"



FR. FRANK MOORE

Obituary from the Thunder Bay Chronicle Journal
<https://www.legacy.com/ca/obituaries/chroniclejournal/name/frank-moore-obituary?pid=200673882>

Saint John Chrysostom: On the Star of Bethlehem



ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

For if you can learn what the star (of Bethlehem) was, and of what kind, and whether it were one of the common stars, or new and unlike the rest, and whether it was a star by nature or a star in appearance only, we shall easily know the other things also. Whence then will these points be manifest?

From the very things that are written. Thus, that this star was not of the common sort, or rather not a star at all, as it seems at least to me, but some invisible power transformed into this appearance, is in the first place evident from its very course. For there is not, there is not any star that moves by this way, but whether it be the sun you mention, or the moon, or all the other stars, we see them going from east to west; but this was wafted from north to south; for so is Palestine situated with respect to Persia.

In the second place, one may see this from the time also. For it appears not in the night, but in midday, while the sun is shining; and this is not within the power of a star, nay not of the moon; for the moon that so much surpasses all, when the beams of the sun appear, straightway hides herself, and vanishes away. But this by the excess of its own splendor overcame even the beams of the sun, appearing brighter than they, and in so much light shining out more illustriously.

In the third place, from its appearing, and hiding itself again. For on their way as far as Palestine it appeared leading them, but after they set foot within Jerusalem, it hid itself: then again, when they had left Herod, having told him on what account they came, and were on the point of departing, it shows itself; all which is not like the motion of a star, but of some power highly endued with reason. For it had not even any course at all of its own, but when they were to move, it moved; when to stand, it stood, dispensing all as need required: in the same kind of way as the pillar of the cloud, now halting and now rousing up the camp of the Jews, when it was needful.

In the fourth place, one may perceive this clearly, from its mode of pointing Him out. For it did not, remaining on high, point out the place; it not being possible for them so to ascertain it, but it came down and performed this office. For you know that a spot of such small dimensions, being only as much as a shed would occupy, or rather as much as the body of a little infant would take up, could not possibly be marked out by a star. For by reason of its immense height, it could not sufficiently distinguish so confined a spot, and reveal it to those who were desiring to see it. And this anyone may see by the moon, which being so far superior to the stars, seems to all that dwell in the world to be near to each and every one of them. How then, tell me, did the star point out a spot so confined, just the space of a manger and shed, unless it left that height and came down, and stood over the very head of the young child? And at this the evangelist was hinting when he said, "Lo, the star went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was."

Do you see by what store of proofs this star is shown not to be one of the many, nor to have shown itself according to the order of the outward creation? And for what intent did it appear? To reprove the lawless people for their insensibility, and to cut off from them all occasion of excuse for their willful ignorance. For, since He who came was to put an end to the ancient polity, and to call the world to the worship of Himself, and to be worshipped in all land and sea, straightway, from the beginning, He opens the door to the Gentiles, willing through strangers to admonish His own people.

Saint John Chrysostom: On the Star of Bethlehem

Thus, because the prophets were continually heard speaking of His advent, and they gave no great heed, He made even barbarians come from a far country, to seek after the king that was among them. And they learn from a Persian tongue first of all, what they would not submit to learn from the prophets; that, if on the one hand they were disposed to be candid, they might have the strongest motive for obedience; if, on the other hand, they were contentious, they might henceforth be deprived of all excuse. For what could they have to say, who did not receive Christ after so many prophets, when they saw that wise men, at the sight of a single star, had received this same, and had worshipped Him who was made manifest.

-The Gospel of St. Matthew, Homily VI. 3, 4, pp. 37-38



Fr. Robert's Remarks

us finally to Mary who would have been free to say “No.” to the angel’s message. Had she said “No” it would seem that the whole history would have had to be rewritten; she did not, but said rather, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. Instantly, following her acceptance, “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us” —and the rest is history and still a mystery.

One of the Christmas Carols that I have always appreciated has been the Huron Carol (#745 the old Blue Hymn Book — *Book of Common Praise* Canada 1938/64)—“’Twas in the moon of wintertime”. It was written in the Huron language by St. Jean de Brébeuf in the mid-17th century. The familiar music is an arrangement by Healey Willan. The words describe an enculturation of the Nativity in the indigenous Huron context. I think that is the chorus that has always attracted and held me.

“Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, In excelsis gloria.”

The last verse of the hymn:

O children of the forest free,
O sons of Manitou,
The Holy Child of earth and heaven
Is born to-day for you.
Come kneel before the radiant Boy,
Who brings you beauty, peace, and joy.
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born,
In excelsis gloria

Till next month; God Bless! And may you have feast of the Holy Nativity of Our Lord filled with beauty, peace, and joy!

R+



“JESUS YOUR KING IS
BORN,
JESUS IS BORN,
IN EXCELSIS GLO-
RIA.”

The Church Mouse: The Christmas Wreath

Mice are very good at nibbling. You might have noticed that if you have mice at your house. I was mousing around inside Fr. Palmer's desk, nibbling the cookies he keeps in the bottom drawer, when suddenly the drawer was pulled open.

"EEEK!" cried Mrs. Bee, the new church secretary.

"Eeek!" I squeaked. I hate being startled during a quiet meal.

"Sorry, Mouse," said Mrs. Bee. "I didn't know you were there. I was just looking for the big scissors." She reached past me to lift them out. (We are getting along much better now that we are used to each other.) "The children need them because they are making a big Christmas wreath to hang on the church door." She bustled off down the hall and I followed, wondering "What is a wreath?"



On the table in the children's classroom was a large round shape made of wires. It was bigger than the wheel of a car. There was a long cardboard box, and a roll of very wide ribbon. Jesse, Amanda, Maisie, Mona and Kevin were gathered around. The three girls were making a huge bow out of the ribbon, bright red and beautiful. They thanked Mrs. Bee for the scissors and cut the bow's ends neatly. The boys were opening the box and taking out stems covered with very shiny, prickly, dark green leaves.

"So this is real holly," said Kevin. "I've never seen it before. Look at the red berries on it. They look like drops of blood."

"The leaves are so shiny!" said Jesse. "They look like they have been polished." He reached out and picked up a spray of leaves. "OW!" he cried. "These are really sharp and prickly! Like big thorns!"

Fr. Palmer and Mrs. Bee showed the children how to weave the holly twigs into the round wire frame. Soon they had covered the whole shape with solid greenery. Amanda, Maisie and Mona very carefully tied the big bow onto the bottom of the wreath, which looked like a big letter "O", all shiny and crisp and green, with the red ribbon bright against the green leaves.



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“Beautiful!” said everyone.

“Yes, a beautiful symbol of our Christian faith,” said Fr. Palmer.

“What is a symbol?” asked Amanda.

Fr. Palmer replied, “A symbol is a picture or an object that stands for something else. Here is an example. If you found a bottle of something labelled with a skull and crossbones, would you drink it?” Everyone laughed and shook their heads.

“No way!” cried Mona. “That stands for POISON! Everyone knows that. But what does the wreath stand for?”

“It stands for *eternal life*,” answered Fr. Palmer. Can you find the beginning or the end of this circle shape? No? That’s why the circle stands for eternity. And we always use evergreen branches for Christmas wreaths. They might be holly, like these ones, or we could use pine or spruce branches. Evergreens are trees that keep their leaves alive all the year round. Green stands for *new life*! You know how, when the spring first comes, everything looks messy and grey and dead? Then suddenly one day you find a little dandelion or blades of grass peeking up through the old bits of snow and bare mud. How wonderful that bit of green looks to us!”

“Does the red bow stand for something too? Or is it just to look pretty?” asked Kevin.

“It does stand for something, Kevin. It stands for blood, just as the holly berries reminded you of drops of blood. Have you ever noticed that we celebrate Christmas by decorating with, or even wearing, things that are red and green? Think of wrapping paper and Christmas cards, and people wearing bright sweaters with those colours. Jesus bled, and he died, to bring us a new and everlasting life. But first he had to be born into this world as a little baby. When we remember his coming into the world, we also know that Jesus died on the cross, and that he rose again, and that he promised us everlasting life with him in Heaven. Let’s go now and hang up our symbol.”

“BUT WHAT DOES
THE WREATH
STAND FOR?”

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The Church Mouse

Everyone trooped to the front door of the church. There was a shiny new hook on it, ready for hanging the wreath. They stood on the step to watch Fr. Palmer set the wreath in place. Its colours glowed against the door and looked very cheerful and welcoming. Then they all went back inside the church to practice their Christmas hymns.

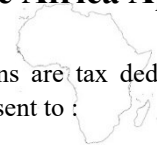


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