

MERRY CHRISTMAS 1959



The Story of the Nativity

(From the Gospel of St. Luke, Chapter II, 1-20)

1. And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.
2. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria).
3. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.
4. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David).
5. To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.
6. And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.
7. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.



8. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.
9. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were sore afraid.
10. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
11. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
12. And this shall be a sign unto you: "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."
13. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying:
14. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



15. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.
16. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.
17. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.
18. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.
19. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.
20. And the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen as it was told unto them.

Two Men Gave 'Silent Night' To the World

The words of that famous carol, "Silent Night, Holy Night," will ring this Christmas in many different corners of the earth. In the mountain town of Oberndorf, Austria, however, they will probably ring clearer and more distinctly. For it was here, some 141 years ago, that the carol was sung for the first time.

The background story of this famous song begins on a sad note, for that night of December 23, 1818, Father Joseph Mohr, the parish priest, and his friend Franz Xavier Gruber, schoolmaster and church organist, had made a depressing discovery: that mice had eaten away the bellows of the church organ, and there would be no music for Christmas services.

Storm Lifts

As the two men were making their way through the wind and snow-swept streets of the village, it is said, the storm suddenly lifted and suddenly all was serene. Father Mohr looked up to the snowy peaks and clear skies and muttered to himself, "Silent Night, Holy Night. All is calm, all is bright."

Immediately Gruber repeated the words, and both men were struck with the same idea—the beginning of a Christmas carol. The two hurried on to the schoolmaster's house and there, for the rest of the night, worked diligently on a melody and suitable verses. Remembering that there would be no organ music, they kept the melody simple, one that could be played easily on a guitar.

Holiday Music

There was music that Christmas in Oberndorf, after all, for Father Mohr and Franz Gruber led the villagers in the first public singing of what has become perhaps the best-loved of all Christmas Carols.

The organ that wouldn't play also figured in the popularization of the Oberndorf carol. The song became traditional in the Oberndorf region, but in the year 1830 when an organ builder came to fix the organ he heard the song, memorized it, and carried it across the mountains—and to the world. One year after the organ builder memorized the song and carried it with him from town to town and village to village, the carol was included in presentation of a musical festival in Leipzig, Germany.

Great orchestras and great singers "discovered" the song and in the ensuing years it has become a part of our Christmas heritage. Father Mohr never lived to see the greatness the song would achieve. He died in 1849 and his parishioners had to pay for the burial of the poor, but dedicated priest, Gruber, the schoolmaster, lived 15 years longer, but also died poor and obscure, perhaps—perhaps not—aware that the world would always be thankful for "Silent Night, Holy Night."

Hawaiian Holiday

Although many Hawaiians have seen ice only as frozen in mechanical refrigerators, the trees used by the islanders for Christmas decorations are painted white to simulate snow. Christmas dinner is usually a private feast for the family. Open-house hospitality is rather difficult at Christmas because Hawaiians are always ready for a party and if families didn't close their doors for the holiday the home would be invaded by happy hordes of hungry guests seeking food and drink.

New England Tots Had Toys in 1880's

Old Sturbridge Village, Mass., is known about the country for its annual "Muster Day," but this recreated New England town of 150 years ago also comes in for attention at Christmas because of a unique collection of early American toys.

In the early 1880's, Christmas was just another day—unless it happened to fall on a Sunday, as the austere Puritans did not observe the holiday. But children of the day were like children of every period and every country. They did have toys and playthings.

Most of the toys of the day, of course, were probably hand-made carefully and painstakingly by parents. Most of them were made of wood, although some were tin, probably made and sold by the local tinsmith.

The collection of toys at Old Sturbridge Village include miniature furniture pieces, doll beds, wooden rocking horses, and even a pair of ice skates.

Examination of the toys of these early American children indicates that, just as Christmas hasn't changed, neither has the children's preference in toys.

Holiday Stockings

We cannot be definitely sure how the custom of hanging stockings at Christmas began, but almost certainly it is associated with St. Nicholas.

According to one story, St. Nicholas dropped some money down the chimney of a poor but proud nobleman and the money fell into stockings that had been hung by the fire to dry.

Other writers credit the custom of hanging stockings to the fact that the Hollanders believed St. Nicholas rode a horse on his gift-giving trips and accordingly they would put out their wooden shoes filled with carrots or other treats for the horse.



DAY DREAMING . . . Christmas Eve finds veteran singer-actor Dennis Day asleep on the job of filling Yule stockings. Actually, Dennis, apparently never got any farther than putting up one or two stockings. Oh, well, may be the real Santa will wake him up when he slides down the chimney.

The Poinsettia

Here are some fingertip recommendations for proper care of the poinsettia, that popular house plant of the Christmas season:

1. Keep the plant in a sunny window, avoiding both drafts and heat. A temperature of 70 degrees is best.
2. Examine the soil frequently (at least twice a day) and keep it moist. When the soil begins to dry out, apply enough water to wet it to the bottom.

Christmas Is Time For Remembering

While it is not true, of course, that "Christmas is for children," no other season or holiday brings to both young and old such vivid memories of earlier, happier times.

Christmas is certainly a happy time for the young. There is a sparkle and sweetness to the Christmas season that time cannot dim within our heart.

When the snow falls and the winter winds blow cold against the frosted panes, there is warmth and contentment in the glow of a hearth fire, and it is a luxury for children of all ages to close the eyes and call back joyful, happy scenes that are so deeply treasured they can never be forgotten.

Wrapping the Gift Is Important Job

While half of the fun of giving gifts is in the wrapping, the giver should exercise care to be certain that the package does justice to the gift itself. Plan your wrapping program carefully. Here are some helpful suggestions:

1. Do your gift wrapping on a solid surface.
2. Measure wrapping paper before cutting.
3. Fold corners carefully and fasten them securely.
4. Make bow separately, then tie or attach to package with clear tape.
5. Be sure ribbon matches colors in wrapping paper.
6. Don't use dainty designs or pastel colors for a man's gift.
7. Don't use wrapping paper featuring big designs to wrap small packages.

Simple Rules Will Help Keep Your Tree 'Fresh'

Here are some things you should remember before relying too much on any "fireproofing" materials to protect your Christmas tree:

1. There is no substitute for a "fresh" tree.
2. Nothing protects and preserves a tree better than water.

So, for a safe Christmas, buy a "fresh" tree and see that it has enough water to keep it fresh.

Waiting until the last minute to purchase your tree doesn't assure that it will be fresh, as you have no way of knowing how long the tree has been cut and "drying out" on the sales lot. Shop early for your tree, be sure that it is still fresh and moist—then keep it in plenty of water while it is in use.

A Question: Why Do We Have Christmas?

It is now the season of Christmas, 1,959 years since the Prince of Peace was born in the Fulfillment of Prophecy, to reject a crown of gold and life of splendor for 33 dedicated years and a crown of thorns.

Because He came as a leader and teacher of men, there were those who devoted unceasing efforts to degrade and destroy Him. Yet, in quiet, God-like manner, He walked in the valley of men, teaching the fundamental principles of life and truth by both parable and example.

Because He lifted the eyes of mankind above the meaningless values of worldly power and earthly riches, He sinned against plunderers and tyrants, and for this He was crucified.

Because He called out in pain for the forgiveness of those who had tortured Him, and nailed His body to a cross between two thieves, He set the highest example of the Golden Rule.

Because He came, with Divine direction, to lead mankind unto salvation, He is with us, always.

Because of His example and sacrifice, the tyrants and plunderers who seek to conquer and enslave are eventually set aside and relegated to oblivion . . . while the lessons of His Divine teachings remain forever, showing the way toward peace on earth, good will to men.

Because He is always with us, it is fitting that we observe the Christmas, the anniversary of His birth, in the hope that on this new Christmas the hearts of men everywhere will open up to receive His most wondrous message.



The legend of Saint Nicholas is, of course, centuries old, and began in Europe. The story had its beginning in the semi-tropical city of Patara, Turkey, where St. Nicholas was born and where he lived and died. Until after his death, when his remains were taken by Italian sailors to Bari, Italy, St. Nicholas traveled little, never venturing more than a few miles from his native region.

It was the goodness and generosity of St. Nicholas which led him to become the patron saint of many countries, of all boys, and of sailors.

Many legends concerning St. Nicholas, with re-telling have become a bit vague and clouded, but some things are certain: he was a man of wealth; he was generous and kind; and he was at one time Bishop of Myra.

Three Dowries

What is generally believed to be St. Nicholas first and best-known act of kindness was the presentation of dowries to the three daughters of a poor nobleman. According to the story, St. Nicholas learned that the poor girls had decided among themselves that one of them would sell herself into slavery in order that the two others could marry in honor. On separate occasions, St. Nicholas tossed three bags of gold into each girl's window, so that all three were married with honor, and in the usual fashion, lived happily ever after.

St. Nicholas died in 342, after being imprisoned by the Roman Emperor Diocletian and released by the first Christian emperor, Constantine.

Fame Spreads

It was not until sometime in the 11th Century that his fame spread beyond the small province where he was born, lived and died. Seafarers picked up many of the legends and carried them with them to the "modern" world. Italian sailors took his bones from the chapel at Myra and carried them to Italy. Because the journey was over unusually calm seas, the sailors adopted St. Nicholas as their patron saint.

The legends of St. Nicholas were then carried to England and eventually to the New World.

How author Washington Irving, New York writer Clement Clark Moore, and cartoonist Thomas Nast created our present-day popular image of Santa Claus is quite another story.



GIFT FOR BOYS . . . Self-adjusting caps of the style shown above make ideal gift for boys. Caps come in age groups, from four years up and are styled for winter wear with ear muffs, stormband lapel and interlining. Because they are self-adjusting, they "grow" with the boy and can be worn season after season.

JIM KENNEDY'S CHRISTMAS

BY D.L. ALEXANDER

BEFORE the echoes of the prison siren had died away over the hills Jim Kennedy was well on his way toward a cherished freedom and his family. Where speed had been essential, extreme caution became imperative. He kept below the skyline, well away from the highway with its occasional cars and searching spotlights. Away from the farm houses with their barking dogs. Slogging along through the slush and snow with one thought uppermost in his mind: To spend Christmas at home with his wife Millie and their two children, Marian and Joe.

Back at the prison they would be certain he was headed for home. They might even be waiting for him when he arrived, but there was one thing in his favor: At this time of the year the road to his remote cabin was impossible for cars, and he might get there before they did.

He slogged on for two days and nights. He ate sparingly of the meager food he had fished from the prison tables. The weather was not too cold and he took fitful rests beneath jutting cliffs and abandoned shacks. But the overpowering desire to reach his home drove him onward, insensible to the discomforts of his travel.

His mind often returned to his prison life. Especially did he think of Lemaster, the guard over his company. He held a bitter, consuming hatred for the man. Always riding him about



Somehow he found the path down to the valley floor.

prison rules, making him too the mark, but ignoring similar infractions committed by others. Rules! Rules! The man didn't let him live for rehabilitation, but by rules. He hoped Lemaster would be dead by the time they took him back.

The morning Jim stood on the bluff overlooking the little valley would always remain a bright spot in his memory. The tears that gathered in the corners of his eyes were not the result of cold. The lump in his throat was caused by pent-up emotion, finally released when he realized he had won through.

The mists in the valley raised suddenly and the cabin stood out in startling relief. Smoke poured from the chimney and yellow light splashed from the windows onto the snow.

Somewhat blindly he found the path down to the valley floor. The delighted voices of the children came to him through the cloud of snow he kicked up as he rushed to the door. And then he had Millie in his arms.

Welcome Sight

There was an interval of silence, and then heart-felt expressions of joy and pleasure. When it had somewhat subsided Jim looked around. The honey-soundings were the same as when he left, excepting the Christmas tree in the corner. It was brilliantly lighted, and numerous packages and toys clustered around the base.

He took a step towards it, but Millie pushed in front of him and, reaching toward the tinsel star at the top, took down a long envelope.

"For you," she said, with a bright smile.

"What is it?" he asked, wondering.

"Open it and see."

"It means a Merry Christmas and a full pardon for you." It was the hated voice of Lemaster who had come up behind him. Jim whirled about. "You here?" he asked bitterly.

"I knew you wanted to come home long ago, Jim. I had to report on your behavior, and to make sure I could make a good report on you I made you live up to every rule strictly. You ranked as a number one, and when the pardons were handed out yours was the first."

Jim had slowly lifted his head as hope sprang anew in him. He gazed mistily into Lemaster's eyes. "I've had you all wrong, Cap. I thought you was riding me all the time for spite work."

"That's all right. Forget it. I'm going to have a Merry Christmas with you folks if you'll let me stay."