



THE HOLY FAMILY



He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man. - Lk 2:51-52

MASSSES:
Wednesday 9:00 a.m.
Sunday 10:00 am

So What's the Hurry?

When it comes to not getting the spirit of the Christmas season right, you have to think that a guy I met a couple of decades ago had to take the championship.

The man I'm thinking of was, by conventional standards, quite successful as a young corporate mid-management professional. His tailored suits looked sharp; his house was upscale and impressive. He always drove the latest trendy model of automobile. He was, I do believe, a hard-working and conscientious fellow.

But his relationship to Christmas fascinated me. It was, if we are being objective, a relationship based entirely on the sights and sounds of the season with apparently no spiritual awareness whatsoever. His house and yard, and his seasonal behavior, provided the clues to that.

Every year, the man and his father would decorate the exterior of their house about the first of December with a superb new set of blazing, colorful lights and expensive lawn displays. I've always been a fan of lawn and house displays at Christmas, so I had no problem with his efforts in this regard. The man could decorate. Heaven only knows what he must have spent on these yearly displays, although surely not as much as some others one sees, complete with synchronized music and electronic figures of everyone from Santa to St. Joseph. You could probably see them from the International Space Station.

But here's the thing: Every year like clockwork, he and his father would celebrate Christmas together and then emerge with scissors and clippers to snip and shred it all to bits in a couple of hours. For them, Christmas was over; it was time to get on with the rest of life.

I'd seen something of that mindset years earlier with folks who tossed out their live Christmas trees the morning of Dec. 26, but it still astounds me. At the least, it seems sad to miss the merriment of the season for another week or two; at worst, it shows a lack of understanding of why Christians celebrate 12 days of Christmas through the Epiphany.

What's the hurry? Let's celebrate every moment of this wonderful season that commemorates the most extraordinary event in the history of humankind. There's plenty to savor and rich spiritual lessons to ponder each and every one of the 12 days. Enjoy them all. The snipping and shredding can wait.

—Lou Jacquet

Welcoming Dominic



Father Steve Agostino, administrator of St. Brendan's, baptizes Dominic Angelo Rosano during the 10 a.m. Mass Dec. 12 as the parish community welcomes Dominic to the Catholic Church. He is the son of Brian and Megan Rosano, residents of Pittsburgh. Photo by Rosie Marich



Sunday, Dec. 26

10:00 a.m. Fr. Bill Loveless by the Gatto family

Wednesday, Dec. 29

9:00 a.m. Judi Webber by Cindy & John Lickney

Sunday, Jan. 2

10:00 a.m. Jean McGonnell

by Lou & Geri Jacquet

Please Pray For Our Sick

Bob & Lois Slets, Fred Merlo, Catherine McCammon, Frank Modarelli, Jean Dascenzo, Christine Kalhoun, Lynn Osting, Blanche Ruggiero

Pray for the Faithful Departed, May They Rest from Their Labors

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

Christmas Carols: Two More From Varied Backgrounds

Even though Christians everywhere celebrated the birth of Christ at yesterday's Christmas liturgies, the Church actually celebrates the Christmas season through the Feast of the Epiphany in early January. So our review of some of the stories behind the season's favorite Christmas carols and hymns continues today with two more from quite different sources.

There may be no more beloved carol associated with Christmas than the one played and sung worldwide in churches last night: "Silent Night". It is truly fascinating that a work now so universally known could have emerged from the most



obscure of situations when it was created just over 200 years ago.

The man who wrote the words to "Stille Nacht" was Father Joseph Mohr (1792-1848), an Austrian Roman Catholic priest. His parents had never married and he was raised in poverty by his single mother, but he was fortunate that his education

was funded in Salzburg and he eventually studied at a Benedictine monastery. He entered the seminary in 1811, was ordained in 1815, and served as a simple parish priest.

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Sunday's Scriptures: Pondering the Parents of Jesus

There is a beautiful song with arresting lyrics that pulls listeners in to examine and question the relationship of Mary and Jesus. The song, "Mary Did You Know?" asks a series of questions to Mary concerning her mission as the mother of Jesus. Today on this feast of the Holy Family, let us take time to meditate on Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Every day, babies are conceived in our world. Some of these little ones are sadly unwanted, while others are very much longed for. Jesus is the only baby who was willed into existence.

His mother, Mary, is approached by an angel and asked if she would cooperate with the Will of God. Jesus, as Messiah, needed to be willed by the Holy Spirit and his human mother to be conceived as the God-Man. This plan for his life and death was foretold in many generations by prophecies. The Hebrew people longed for a Messiah, and wished his coming.

Joseph is likewise asked to play a very special part in raising a child who is the Savior and Son of God. His function as father, protector, and human role model for Jesus is a formidable undertaking.

Babies do not arrive with a set of instructions for their mothers and fathers. Mary and Joseph had no lengthy education to prepare them for their lives as parents of a baby who is God's only begotten Son, a child born to die selflessly for the sins of the world.

Did Mary, like many mothers before and after her, experience morning sickness and fatigue as her body changed to accept and nourish the new life in her womb? What were her thoughts and feelings as Jesus stretched and moved within her?

We all know the joy of holding a baby in our arms and the anxiety we experience when a child we love has a fever or illness. Mary and Joseph would have had the same joys and fears. On the other hand, what incredible wonders would be theirs when they, as the song says, "kissed their little baby and kissed the face of God."

The part Mary and Joseph played in the salvation of the world is eclipsed only by the role of Jesus. Mary and Joseph continue to play a part in our salvation even to this day. Jesus is the "first born of the new creation." He is our brother as well as our Lord and Savior. Mary, at the foot of the cross, became our Mother and the Mother of the Church. Joseph is our example and protector.

We are sons and daughters of these holy parents and adopted sons and daughters of the Most High God. How can we grow more intimately in relationship as members of the Holy Family?

— Geri Jacquet

Christmas Carols

Continued from Page 3

As the story goes, Father Mohr needed a carol for a midnight Mass on Christmas Eve in 1818. He took a poem he had written two years earlier to his friend Franz Gruber, a school teacher and organist/choirmaster. The long walk was profitable; Gruber is said to have composed the melody in just a few hours. The hymn was played and sung for the first time at that Midnight Mass with only a guitar and choir as accompaniment.

Father Mohr died in obscurity of respiratory disease at 55. But his simple, lyrical, and deeply moving words, with Gruber's timeless music, have touched hearts for two centuries.

At St. Brendan's, for many years "Silent Night" was sung at Christmas Eve Masses as the church lights were dimmed and only the lights on the Christmas trees were lit as small children were invited to come forward and gather around the manger scene.

A quite different but also beloved Christmas carol, "Go Tell It On the Mountain," was written by John W. Work Jr. (1872-1925) and published in "American Negro Songs and Spirituals" in 1940. Its cadences capture beautifully the joy which Christians everywhere feel at the astounding news that God has become human in the Christ Child to bring salvation to the world.

—Lou Jacquet

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Parish Secretary

Liz Shina Ext.10

Email: office@stbrendanyo.org

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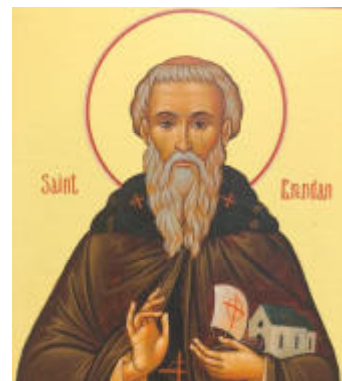
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