

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS

(Here is a story I first heard told by Paul Harvey on his radio show in 1960. It warms my heart to this day. It is my pleasure to share it with you and anyone with which you share it.)

Many years ago, a man turned his back on Christmas. He was no Grinch — Indeed not. He was a compassionate, caring husband and father but deep inside him he could not understand how God the Creator of the Universe could become a little infant in a manger in Bethlehem. Not so much “**how**” but more “**why**”? What is the point of God becoming human? The opening words of Saint John’s Gospel made no sense to this skeptical man “The word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Why Christmas? Why God becoming human— the becoming flesh, this incarnation?

Well, one wintry Christmas eve, his wife and three children left for Mass. The man as always stayed home from Mass. All this religious talk confused him, anyway. He had more “important” things to do. He found himself staring out the front window of the house he and his wife owned in the countryside. Lovely trees, a small pond — a noble old barn. Suddenly he saw a flock of geese forced to land because of high winds and sleet. The man threw on his coat, running to the barn. He flung the big doors waving his arms for the birds to enter the barn where they could be dry and safe from the icy rain and gusty winds.

But, of course, the birds could not understand his gestures or words. The wind and sleet continued to pound them. He tried to lead them to the barn with pieces of bread. The good man sensed the birds were afraid of him. He said aloud to himself, “If only I were a goose — then I could lead them to safety.” At that moment, the church bells began to ring, grace moved his heart, and he understood why God had to become human. He understood the love of God who sent his only Son to be one of us to save us from sin, selfishness and death and lead us into the safety of God’s house.

God was born so long ago and grew in age and grace to turn to us a human face, And to speak words of comfort and reconciliation, peace, hope, joy and love. Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) asked, “What good is it that Christ was born years ago if he is not born now in your heart?” On this Christmas Eve and Day let Who and what we celebrate make a difference in our lives.

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Parish website <https://www.blessedsacramentwv.org>
Faith in West Virginia <https://faithinwv.org/latest-bulletin/>
This Sunday’s Readings <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/122423.cfm>
Christmas Readings <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/122523-Night.cfm>
Wednesday Bible Handout no session this coming Wednesday
This Sunday’s Bulletin <https://blessedsacramentwv.org/en/download/december-24-2023/?wpdmdl=1543&refresh=6585e7f59431b1703274485>

CHRISTMAS SEASON SCHEDULE

Saturday 12/23	4pm	Fourth Sunday of Advent	
Sunday 12/24	10am	Fourth Sunday of Advent	(NOTE TIME CHANGE)
Sunday 12/24	4pm	Christmas Vigil Mass	
	7pm	Christmas Mass	
	Midnight	Christmas Mass	
Monday 12/25	10am	Christmas Day Mass	
Saturday 12/30	4pm	Holy Family Feast	
Sunday 12/31	9am	Holy Family Feast	
	11:30	Holy Family Feast	
Monday 1/1	10am	New Year's Mass	(NOTE TIME CHANGE)
		<i>Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i>	



SOMETHING OLD IN THE NEW YEAR • At the recommendation of the Liturgy Committee and the approval of the Pastoral Council, we will be closing the wall doors separating the Church from the Gathering Space sometime in January. This will enable both areas to better serve our needs. In years past, the wall was moved aside to allow for overflow crowds to be able to see during Christmas and Easter celebrations. But with COVID 19 the wall was open to allow more room. We were going to do this in September but then talk about an uptick in the number of new cases was beginning to happen.

MYSTIC MORSEL

Christ Became a Humble Child

He was a baby and a child, so that you may be a perfect human.
 He was wrapped in swaddling clothes,
 so that you might be freed from the snares of death.
 He was in a manger, that you may come to the altar.
 He was on earth that you may be in the stars.
 He had no other place in the end,
 so may have many mansions in the heavens.
 He, being rich, became poor for your sakes,
 that through his poverty you might be rich.
 Therefore his poverty is our inheritance,
 and the lords weakness is our virtue.
 He chose to lack for himself,
 but he may be alive for all.



— Saint Ambrose of Milan

CARBONATED GRACE ***

A group of fourth graders in Freeport, IL, played the parts in a Christmas story. As act 2 began and the curtain opened, Jesus, Mary and Joseph were in the stable. The innkeeper made his entrance, strode to the crib, and said in a loud voice, "What is it? A boy or a girl?"

There was a boy who for whatever reasons was always being made fun of and picked on by the boys and girls in his class at the parish school. He was so sad because his role in the Christmas Play was the innkeeper. He couldn't bear the thought of sending Mary and Joseph away. So, when his big moment came and Joseph and Mary came to the door and knocked. He opened the door and shouted, "Come in, I've been expecting you!" That is the spirit of Christmas.

*** Anne Lamott calls laughter *carbonated grace*

