

Christmas Blessings



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The Saint Raphael Link

Some Periodic Ramblings of the Prior

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Dear Members

“Once upon a time there was a man who looked upon Christmas as a lot of humbug. He wasn’t a Scrooge. He was a kind and decent person, generous to his family, upright in all his dealings with other men. But he didn’t believe all that stuff about Incarnation which churches proclaim at Christmas. And he was too honest to pretend that he did. “I am truly sorry to distress you,” he told his wife, who was a faithful churchgoer. “But I simply cannot understand this claim that God becomes man. It doesn’t make any sense to me.”

On Christmas Eve his wife and children went to church for the Midnight Mass. He declined to accompany them. “I’d feel like a hypocrite,” he explained. “I’d rather stay at home. But I’ll wait up for you.”

Shortly after his family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window and watched the flurries getting heavier and heavier. “If we must have Christmas,” he thought, “it’s nice to have a white one.” He went back to his chair by the fireside and began to read his newspaper. A few minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound. It was quickly followed by another, then another.

He thought that someone must be throwing snowballs at his sitting room window. When he went to the front door to investigate, he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the storm. They had been caught in the storm and in a desperate search for shelter had tried to fly through his window. “I can’t let these poor creatures lie there and freeze,” he thought. “But how can I help them?” Then he remembered

the barn where the children’s pony was stabled. It would provide a warm shelter.

He put on his coat and galoshes and tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the door wide and turned on a light. But the birds didn’t come in. “Food will lure them in,” he thought. So he hurried back to the house for bread crumbs, which he sprinkled on the snow to make a trail into the barn. To his dismay, the birds ignored the bread crumbs and continued to flop around helplessly in the snow. He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around and waving his arms. They scattered in every direction - except into the warm lighted barn.

“They find me a strange and terrifying creature,” he said to himself, “and I can’t seem to think of any way to let them know they can trust me. If only I could be a bird myself for a few minutes, perhaps I could lead them to safety...” Just at that moment the church bells began to ring. He stood silent for a while, listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas. Then he sank to his knees in the snow. “Now I do understand,” he whispered. “Now I see why You had to do it.

+*Geoffrey* – GRAND PRIOR



“May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit.”



SICK: Beryl Anderton / Paul Shaw / Sheila Hogarth / Ruth Barr / Kathleen Roberts / Lesley Fudge / Thelma Thompson / Marlene Addy / Tania Walker / Lidia Flemming / Paul Sheridan / Roy Howard / Albert Jones / (Baby) Charlotte Park / Nicole Vendettuoli / Ivor MacFarlane / Shaun Humphries / Lucy Riding / Veronica Hawcroft / Amelia Radomski / Mary Flannigan / John & Mary Howard / Ida Simpson / Clarice Shaw / Julie Stelling / Diane Beresford / Tony Kirby / Delia Serman / Sally Hayes / Nick Brooks / Bishop Gerard & Pam Crane / Ruth Moody & family / Brigitte & Brian Duffett / Norman Dutton, archbishop / Keith & Joan Warren / Jean & Alan Rothwell / Maureen Bohanna / Eileen Duffy / Amanda Bannister / Antonia / Carole Armistead / Charlotte Collins / John Langham / Anne-Marie Solley / Marjorie Hooley / Yvonne Doyle / Pamela Masih (pronounced -Massey) Fiona Parkinson / Harry Shaw / Ray Pope / Martin Mollit / John Beddows / Derrick Hawkins Doreen Morgan / Ian Weatheral Ann Trust / Ann Harrison / Fr Glyn Shipton.

The Recently Departed

Doreen Stewart 22. Xi .17 / Allen Kerr 23.xi.17
 Dame Patti Ansell / Chevalier Peter Robins

May they Rest in Peace

ANSWER TO PRAYER



The real Santa lived a long time ago in a place called Asia Minor. It is now the country of Turkey. His name was Nicholas.

Nicholas' parents died when he was just a teenager. His parents left him a lot of money which made him a rich young man. He went to live with his uncle who was a priest.

Nicholas heard about a man who had lost all his money. He had three daughters who were old

enough to get married. But in those days young women had to have money in order to get married. This money was a "dowry" and it was used to help the new family get started. If you didn't have dowry money, you didn't get married.

This family was so poor they had nothing left to eat. The daughters were going to be sold as slaves because they couldn't live at home any longer. They were very sad. They wouldn't be able to have families of their own. And they would have to be slaves—no longer able to decide where they would live or what they would do.

The night before the oldest daughter was to be sold, she washed her stockings and put them in front of the fire to dry. Then all of them went to sleep—the father and the three daughters. In the morning the daughter saw a lump in her stocking. Reaching in, she found a small, heavy bag. It had gold inside! Enough to provide food for the family and money for her dowry. Oh, how happy they were!

The next morning, another bag with gold was found. Imagine! Two of the daughters would now be saved. Such joy!

And the next night, the father planned to stay awake to find out who was helping his daughters. He dozed off, but heard a small "clink" as another bag landed in the room.

Quickly he jumped up and ran out of the door. Who did he catch ducking around the corner? Nicholas, the young man who lived with his uncle. "Nicholas, it is you! Thank you for helping us—he hardly knew what to say!"

Nicholas said, "Please, do not thank me—thank God that your prayers have been answered. Do not tell others about me."

In some churches, the statue of St Nicholas sows him with children grouped around him



*Guess the Locations:
 1. Ripon / 2. Portsmouth*

Cook's Corner:

Caramelized Onion Tarts with Apples



Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 medium onions, sliced
- 2 red apples (such as Braeburn or Gala), cut into small pieces
- kosher salt and black pepper
- 2 sheets frozen puff pastry (from a 17.3-ounce package), thawed
- 1/2 cup creme fraiche or sour cream

How to Make It

Step 1

Heat oven to 400° F. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and golden brown, 12 to 15 minutes. Stir in the apples, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper and cook until just tender, 2 minutes.

Step 2

Place each sheet of pastry on a parchment-lined baking sheet and prick all over with a fork. Spread with the crème fraîche, leaving a 1/2-inch border. Top with the onion mixture and bake until the pastry is crisp and browned, 30 to 35 minutes. Cut into pieces before serving.

GUESS THE LOCATIONS:



1.



2.

Christ's Nativity

by Henry Vaughan



Awake, glad heart! get up and sing!
It is the birth-day of thy King.

Awake! awake!

The Sun doth shake

Light from his locks, and all the way
Breathing perfumes, doth spice the day.

Awake, awake! hark how th' wood rings;
Winds whisper, and the busy springs

A concert make;

Awake! awake!

Man is their high-priest, and should rise
To offer up the sacrifice.

I would I were some bird, or star,
Flutt'ring in woods, or lifted far

Above this inn

And road of sin!

Then either star or bird should be
Shining or singing still to thee.

I would I had in my best part
Fit rooms for thee! or that my heart

Were so clean as

Thy manger was!

But I am all filth, and obscene;
Yet, if thou wilt, thou canst make clean.

Sweet Jesu! will then. Let no more
This leper haunt and soil thy door!

Cure him, ease him,

O release him!

And let once more, by mystic birth,
The Lord of life be born in earth.



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