



Upcoming Events

Mini Retreats

Saturday, December 19, 2009
Saturday, January 16, 2010
Saturday, February 20, 2010
10:00 am
Visitor Center

Christmas Mass

Friday, December 25, 2009
12:00 noon
Visitor Center

Mass of Mary, Mother of God

Friday, January 1, 2010
12:00 noon
Visitor Center



**MERRY
CHRISTMAS!**

National Shrine of North American Martyrs
Birthplace of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha

Our Mission

The Shrine of Our Lady of Martyrs is a place of natural beauty and spiritual renewal. We are dedicated to the memory of the martyred Jesuits and Blessed Indian maiden who sanctified this hallowed place. Through the example of the missionaries' courageous faith, which provides the bedrock of our devotions here, we strive to strengthen the faith of all who visit us. We will always be guided by our loving Father, so that these historic grounds may be a place of peace, love, prayer, and reconciliation, where each and every pilgrim may be welcomed with joy, and may leave here with a soul refreshed and renewed.

Just One More Day A Letter To Santa Claus

Dear Santa:

What do I ask this year? I have perused each ad in my mailbox, pored over the colorful ads in the newspaper. So many lovely things, and yet I need nothing.

I realize this as I walk up the hill on my strong legs. I can hear the air fill my lungs. I feel the cold on my cheeks. I smell the smoke of the fire that warms my home. I see the snow-capped mountains and the slate gray river peppered with fat geese.

I need nothing: there are people who love me. There are people who forgive my sometimes wretched temper and who touch me with loving hands. There are neighbors who smile in the store. There are shopkeepers who are tolerant when I don't have enough money. There are kind faces in public places.

There is a fat pregnant cat who sneaks into my garage. Dogs and other cats share my hearth; I love to feel their fur with my feet. There are hawks that teach their young of flight, right there behind my house. There are deer that tiptoe into my yard and savor the fat apples in the snow.

Rows of glassed vegetables; green beans, tomatoes, peas and carrots color my pantry. And a rusty bucket of hand tools and neatly dried seeds promises next year's riches.

I need nothing! Christmas promises already fulfilled redeem my foolish life, and occasionally I glimpse the feast that awaits me when this earthly one is done.

Today I discovered a hole in my jeans. I felt the December air slither down my leg. How mighty is the hand that sweeps the wind along the mountains. Santa, dear old soul, just give me another day like this one in my life.

a letter found in the 'Letters To Santa' at the Post Office in Thompson Falls, Montana

2010 Shrine
125th Anniversary
Calendar
STILL AVAILABLE!

Find it in the Gift Shop
at the Visitor Center

Christmas
Novena

Friday, December 25-
Sunday, January 10

Intention envelopes are available
in all the Shrine buildings.

Visit our Website
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at the Shrine

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Advent Reflection

Advent is a season of longing. We all long for the Saviour, and we know, intellectually at least, that Jesus came once in history and has promised to come again "to judge the living and the dead." The problem is what do we do in the present, in the messy *here and now*? Advent reminds us that at certain times in our lives, every year in fact, we need to think about "starting over." That is why resolutions are good to make provided we strive boldly to keep them. Perhaps, we should make our New Year's resolutions now, during Advent. In Advent, we will gain special grace to stick to our resolutions if they contain a deep desire to put Christ first. And indeed, we can rest easy knowing that God is only too happy to help us as we await the celebration of the birth of His Son -- a Son who came to give witness, to stoop down from heaven to redeem a sinful world. **Fr. Peter Murray, S.J.**

December Mini Retreat

Join Fr. Bob McGuire and his **Reflections for Advent 2009** at the next Mini Retreat on Saturday, December 19 from 10:00 am to 2:30 pm in the Visitor Center. The day also includes faith sharing, fellowship, pot luck lunch and Mass. Please call Father McGuire at 853-3033 ext. 233 for more information.

2010 Mini Retreats

Note the following topics and dates for the Mini Retreats starting off the 2010 Anniversary Season. On Saturday, January 16th, Theresa Schweigert presents a talk on John Vianney, the Cure d'Ars, in honor of the Year of the Priest. On Saturday, February 20th, Fr. Peter Murray, Director of the Shrine, will speak about St. Ignatius of Loyola and his view of the priesthood. The retreats will follow the usual format and begin at 10:00 am in the Visitor Center. Make a new year's resolution to attend both of these days and enrich your spiritual life in 2010!

Shrine 125th Anniversary Calendar

You can still purchase this keepsake remembrance of the 125th Anniversary of the Shrine in 2010. Available for \$10 in the Shrine Gift Shop, this full color, 12 month commemorative calendar features:

- 55 beautiful pictures of Shrine venues
- important dates, including special novenas
- brief bios of the 3 sainted Auriesville martyrs
- brief info on Blessed Kateri who was born here
- historical & spiritual significance of the Shrine
- inspirational quotes



The History of Advent

Advent, as we know it today, is a creation of the Western churches that looked to Rome as their leader. There were two main streams flowing into it. The first came out of France, during the fourth century AD, probably from Celtic monks. A period of about six weeks before Christ's Mass was used as a penitential and devotional period, a lesser Lent. The second stream came from Rome, where there was a practice of having a three-to-six week fast during which they had to come to church regularly. This was a fast before the feast of Christmas time.

The current form of Advent crystallized under Pope Gregory I, who set the current four-week length, and wrote liturgical materials for use in Advent. By the 10th century, the Celtic 'get ready' prayers and practices had been fully brought into the Roman form. Later on, the church adopted a system of liturgical colors, and Advent received a purple color not unlike Lent's. The 20th century brought a rediscovery of joy in Advent preparations. This was signaled among Protestants by using the color blue (with or without a touch of red in it). Some highly-Catholic areas (for example, in parts of the Philippines) hold special services on the nine days before Christmas (starting 16 December), as a worship novena.

The Eastern Orthodox have a preparation for Christmas, too, called the Nativity Fast. It starts the day after 14 November, St. Philip the Apostle's Feast, and goes 40 days until 24 December. It's much more like Western-Church Lent than Advent, though it is not as strict as the Orthodox's Great Lent. Like in Lent, the Nativity Fast's purpose is to prepare through repentance, and it is a somber period. It is not so somber on the Forefeast of the Nativity (20-23 December), when Nativity hymns are sung every day, and when the Russian Orthodox put up happy hangings and symbols in their churches. (This is when the Orthodox holy season feels most like the Catholic or Protestant Advent.) The strictest day is 24 December, the Nativity Paramony, when no solid food is eaten until after the Vespers service that evening.



A Season of Thanks

As the 2009 Shrine season draws to a close, the Shrine staff wishes all pilgrims who visited and supported us this year a most blessed holy Christmas and joyous New Year! We look forward to an exciting 2010!



Advent has fallen on hard times. For most people, it's become a time to get ready for whatever you're doing with family and friends on Christmas, and not a time to get ready for the Christ Child. The bigger Christmas became, the more it swallowed up Advent. In fact, whatever Christmas-y thing we think of as being done before Christmas Day is actually done in Advent. In the US, everything after Thanksgiving is now seen as a part of Christmas. The main problem is not that Christmas intrudes on Advent. The real problem is that people no longer keep their Christmas focus on Christ, and then the Christless Christmas saps Christ from Advent.

Practicing Advent as a religious season may help recover Christmas, but it can't do it by itself. If you don't look to Jesus every day in every season, you'll lose Advent, Christmas, Lent, and even Easter. It'll be a tiring rush, not a loving celebration, and it'll be about family or money or image and not our loving Maker. There are even some who openly advocate letting the world have its Christmas, and then Christians can do their own separate thing on Epiphany. (That would bring them nearly in synch with the old-calendar Orthodox.) But that, of course, chucks Advent as well as Christmas.

Christmas is a day of joy, and much of what the non-Christian culture brings to the mix is also full of joy and thus fits well into a Christian context. If you've been to Rockefeller Center in New York City, you know how great the decorations can be -- the Christmas tree, the lights on the buildings, the large herald angels with their trumpets, all big enough to seem to an adult like the big world seems to a child. But as you think on that, remember that each Christian has as much right as anyone else to put their stamp on the public culture -- that's an important matter of freedom, and it needs to be exercised or it too will be lost.

Spirithome.com



Christmas Eve

The great cellist Pablo Casals, in his life story entitled *Joys and Sorrows*, revisits his first memory of attending church on Christmas Eve when he was five. He walked to the church in a small village in Spain hand-in-hand with his father, who was the church organist. As he walked, he shivered, not because the night was cold, but because the atmosphere was so mysterious.

"I felt that something wonderful was about to happen. High overhead, the heavens were full of stars, and as we walked in silence I held my father's hand In the dark, narrow streets, there were moving figures, shadowy and spectral and silent, too, moving into the church, silently My father played the organ, and when I sang, it was my heart that was singing, and I poured out everything that was in me."

Albert E. Kahn

Burlap, Boys, and Christmas

Angels are clean. Angels are beautiful. They seem almost otherworldly, since girl angels always seem to know their parts better than do boy shepherds. The angelic satin stuff goes pretty well in most Christmas pageants. The problems come with the burlap part.

Do you know what real-life shepherds were like? Townspeople looked down on them. "Herdsmen!" they'd huff derisively. Shepherds would work with sheep all day, sleep outside with the animals at night and then come into town dirty, sweaty and smelly. Like boys. Tradesmen in the marketplace would be polite enough. Shopkeepers would wait on them, but everybody was happy when they moved along. Burlap fits the part. It really does.

Angels get clouds and the Hallelujah Chorus for props. Shepherds get a stable. Maybe cattle lowing has a bit of romance. But conjure up the smells and the filth. No stainless steel dairy palace this, but a crude barn, with good reason for straw on the floor. Not exactly the setting you'd choose for a birth if you had the luxury of planning ahead. ...

Angels seem appropriate to the birth of God's son. But straw and sweat and burlap do not. Why, I ask, would the Son of God Most High enter life amidst the rubble of human existence, at the lowest rung of society, in obscurity and at the stable-edge of rejection even before he is born?

And as hard as I think about it, I come back to one truth. God wanted to make it explicitly clear that He came to save each of us. He comes to the slimy, dark corners of our existence, the desperateness, the loneliness, the rejection, the pain. He comes to unswept barns and cold nights of despair. He comes because he understands them. He knows them intimately and came for the very purpose of delivering us from those raw stables to real Life.

Ralph F. Wilson



Child Draws a Picture of Christmas

A little girl came home from Sunday school waving a paper for her mother to see. "Look Mommy," she exclaimed, "Teacher says I drew the most unusual Christmas picture she ever saw!"

Her mother took one look and had to agree with the teacher. Hoping her daughter could explain her creation, the mother asked, "Why are all these people riding in the back of an airplane?" "Well, Mommy, that's the flight into Egypt."

Accepting that, mother asked another question: "Who is this mean-looking man in the front?" Her daughter answered quickly and knowingly: "That's Pontius, the Pilot." Looking at the picture even more closely, the mother said, "I see you have Mary and Joseph and the baby. But who is this large man sitting behind Mary?" "Can't you tell?" the little girl asked, beginning to shake her head in disappointment.

"That's Round John Virgin."

John Beukema

Christ's Humble Birth

In his best-selling book, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, Philip Yancey contrasts the humility that characterized Jesus' royal visit to planet earth with the prestigious image associated with world rulers today. "In London, looking toward the auditorium's royal box where the queen and her family sat, I caught glimpses of the...way rulers stride through the world: with bodyguards, and a trumpet fanfare and a flourish of bright clothes and flashing jewelry."

Queen Elizabeth II had recently visited the United States, and reporters delighted in spelling out the logistics involved: her four thousand pounds of luggage included two outfits for every occasion, a mourning outfit in case someone died, forty pints of plasma, and white kid-leather toilet seat covers. She brought along her own hairdresser, two valets, and a host of other attendants. A brief visit of royalty to a foreign country can easily cost twenty million dollars.

In meek contrast, God's visit to earth took place in an animal shelter with no attendants present and nowhere to lay the newborn king but a feed trough. Indeed, the event that divided history, and even our calendars, into two parts may have had more animal than human witnesses. A mule could have stepped on him.

Charles Schultz & a Christmas Story

The animated story *A Charlie Brown Christmas* airs on one of the major television networks seasonally. The two producers who worked with Charlie Brown creator Charles Schultz remembered their desperate efforts to convince a network to show the special originally. All the major networks were hesitant. Finally, one agreed, and the great cartoonist got to work.

A memorable and moving part of *A Charlie Brown Christmas* occurs when the cartoon character Linus strolls to center stage and reads the biblical account of the meaning of Christmas. The two producers working with Schultz cautioned him about putting something like that in the special, because they were convinced it wouldn't go over well. Charles Schultz faced both of the producers and said, "If not us, then who's going to do it?"

Greg Huffer

Reserve a Room for Jesus In Your Heart

Christmas asks us a tough question. Do we close the doors of our hearts to Jesus looking for a place to be reborn in our lives? There is no point in being sentimental about the doors slammed by the folk in Bethlehem, when there is no room in our own hearts for the same Jesus coming in the form of the needy. We need to reverence each human life, and to treat others respectfully as the living residences of the incarnate God. To neglect the old, to be contemptuous of the poor and to have no thought for the unemployed and the lonely, is to ignore those individuals with whom Christ has so closely identified Himself. Hence, we all need to examine ourselves daily on the doors we close to Jesus.

Fr. Anthony Kadavil

Some Children See Him

Some children see Him lily white
the infant Jesus born this night
Some children see Him lily white
with tresses soft and fair

Some children see Him bronzed and brown
the Lord of heav'n to earth come down
Some children see Him bronzed and brown
with dark and heavy hair

Some children see Him almond-eyed
This Saviour whom we kneel beside
Some children see Him almond-eyed
With skin of yellow hue!

Some children see Him dark as they
Sweet Mary's Son to whom we pray
Some children see Him dark as they
And, ah! they love Him so!

The children in each different place
Will see the Baby Jesus' face
Like theirs but bright with heav'nly grace
And filled with holy light!

O lay aside each earthly thing
and with thy heart as offering
Come worship now the infant King
'tis love that's born tonight!

'tis love that's born tonight!

Alfred Burt



Jesous Ahatonhia

America's first Christmas carol *Jesous Ahatonhia* was composed in the Huron language by Father Jean de Brebeuf, the towering Jesuit missionary from Normandy who ministered to the Native Americans of the Saint Lawrence Valley and Great Lakes Region from 1626 until his martyrdom at the hands of the Iroquois in 1649. The future martyr set his lyrics to the tune of a popular sixteenth-century French folk song about a young maiden, *Une Jeune Pucelle*.

Of interest to all pilgrims to Auriesville is the close association of the Apostle of the Mohawks, Father Isaac Jogues, with Jean de Brebeuf. The latter was mission superior when Jogues first came to the Huron country in 1636. The two took several missionary journeys together and then worked side by side in constructing Forte Sainte Marie, near Midland, Ontario, where Canada's Shrine to the Martyrs now stands. Jogues spent his last Christmas among the Hurons at Forte Sainte Marie in 1641. Before another year had passed, Jogues would be a prisoner of the Mohawks at Auriesville.

Long after their lands were ravaged and their villa ages destroyed in the late 1640's, the remnant of Hurons who resettled near Quebec preserved the carol their apostle had written for them among their tribal traditions. Later the Catholic Mohawks, baptized by the Jesuit missionaries who followed in Jogues' footsteps, learned the hymn from captive Hurons whom they eventually adopted into their tribe. Long forgotten by the rest of the Christian world, the carol was found among the papers of another apostle to the Hurons, Father Etienne de Villeneuve, after his death in 1794. A French translation was made by Paul Picard, from which the present English version was subsequently prepared by Justine Devlin.

The arrangement in modal notation is the work of the Music Department of Catholic Sisters College, Washington, D. C. The design is by Ashburton Tripp of Alexandria, VA, whose widow graciously gave permission to use the copyright and reproduce the carol in this form.

The Indians have a particular devotion for the night that was enlightened by the birth of the Son of God. There was not one who refused to fast on the day that preceded it. They built a small chapel of cedar and fir branches in honor of the manger of the infant Jesus. They wished to perform some penance to prepare themselves for better receiving Him into their hearts on the holy day, and even those who were at a distance of more than two days' journey met at a given place to sing hymns in honor of the new-born Child.

St. John de Brebeuf, S.J., *Jesuit Relations*, 1642

JESOUS AHATONHIA

JESUS IS BORN

America's First
Christmas Carol 1641

FATHER JEAN DE BREBEUF

Cwas in the moon of win-ter time when
all the birds had fled, Chat (Migh-ty Git - ebi
Man - i - tou sent An - gel Choirs in - stead: Be -
fore their light the stars grew dim and wandring hunters
heard the hymn Jesus your King is born.
Jesus is born. in Excelsis Glo - ri - a!

2.

Within a lodge of broken bark
The tender Babe was found.
A ragged robe of rabbit skin
Enwrapped His beauty round.
And as the hunter braves drew
near,
The angel song rang loud and
clear.

REFAIN: Jesus, your King, etc.

3.

The earliest Moon of Winter
Time
Is not so round and fair
As was the Ring of Glory
On the helpless infant there,
While chiefs from far before Him
knelt
With gifts of of fox and beaver
pelt.

REFAIN: Jesus, your King, etc.

4.

O Children of the Forest free,
O Sons of Manitou,
The Holy Child of earth and heav'n
Is born today for you.
Come kneel before the radiant Boy,
Who brings you beauty, peace, and joy.

REFAIN

Jesus, your King, is born.
Jesus is born; in excelsis gloria!

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.
Alfred, Lord Tennyson



A Morning Wish

The sun is just rising on the morning of another day, the first day of the new year. What can I wish that this day, that this year, may bring to me?

Nothing that shall make the world of others poorer, nothing at the expense of others; but just those few things which in their coming do not stop with me but touch me rather, as they pass and gather strength:

- A few friends who understand me, and yet remain my friends.
- A work to do which has real value without which the world would feel the poorer.
- A return for such work small enough not to tax unduly anyone who pays.
- A mind unafraid to travel, even though the trail be not blazed.
- An understanding heart.
- A sight of the eternal hills and unbelting sea, and of something beautiful the individual hand has made.
- A sense of humor and the power to laugh.
- A little leisure with nothing to do.
- A few moments of quiet, silent meditation. The sense of the presence of God.
- And the patience to wait for the coming of these things, with the wisdom to know them when they come.

W.R. Hunt

Recipe for a Happy New Year

Take twelve fine, full-grown months; see that these are thoroughly free from old memories of bitterness, rancor and hate, cleanse them completely from every clinging spite; pick off all specks of pettiness and littleness; in short, see that these months are freed from all the past—have them fresh and clean as when they first came from the great storehouse of Time. Cut these months into thirty or thirty-one equal parts. Do not attempt to make up the whole batch at one time (so many persons spoil the entire lot this way) but prepare one day at a time.

Into each day put equal parts of faith, patience, courage, work (some people omit this ingredient and so spoil the flavor of the rest), hope, fidelity, liberality, kindness, rest (leaving this out is like leaving the oil out of the salad dressing— don't do it), prayer, meditation, and one well-selected resolution. Put in about one teaspoonful of good spirits, a dash of fun, a pinch of folly, a sprinkling of play, and a heaping cupful of good humor.

Anonymous

Another fresh new year is here . . .
Another year to live!
To banish worry, doubt, and fear,
To love and laugh and give!

This bright new year is given me
To live each day with zest . . .
To daily grow and try to be
My highest and my best!

I have the opportunity
Once more to right some wrongs,
To pray for peace, to plant a tree,
And sing more joyful songs!

William Arthur Ward

I Am the New Year

I am the new year. I am an
unspoiled page in your book of
time.

I am your next chance at the art
of living. I am your opportunity
to practice what you have learned
about life during the last twelve
months.

All that you sought and didn't
find is hidden in me, waiting for
you to search it but with more
determination.

All the good that you tried for and
didn't achieve is mine to grant
when you have fewer conflicting
desires.

All that you dreamed but didn't
dare to do, all that you hoped but
did not will, all the faith that you
claimed but did not have—these
slumber lightly, waiting to be
awakened by the touch of a strong
purpose.

I am your opportunity to renew
your allegiance to Him who said,
"Behold, I make all things new."

Bible Illustrator

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