

Christmas 2015

St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Church

December 25, 26 & 27, 2015

Fr. Michael A. Carroll, Pastor

Fr. Roland Ramirez, Parochial Vicar

Deacon Ed Morgado





Twas the night before Christmas, he lived all alone, in a one bedroom house made of plaster and stone. I had come down the chimney with presents to give, and to see just who in this home did live. I looked all about, a strange sight I did see, no tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.

No stocking by mantle, just boots filled with sand,
and on the wall pictures of far distant lands
with medals and badges, awards of all kinds,
a sobering thought came to my mind.
For this house was different, so dark and so dreary,
the home of a soldier, now I could see clearly.

The soldier lay sleeping, silent, alone,
curled up on the floor in this one bedroom home.
The face was so gentle, the room in such disorder,
not how I pictured a United States soldier.
Was this the hero of whom I'd just read?
Curled up on a poncho the floor for a bed?

I realized the families that I saw this night,
owed their lives to these soldiers who were willing to fight.
Soon round the world, the children would play,
and grownups would celebrate a bright Christmas day.
They all enjoyed freedom each month of the year,
because of the soldiers, like the one lying here.

I couldn't help wonder how many lay alone,
on a cold Christmas eve in a land far from home.
The very thought brought a tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees and started to cry.
The soldier awakened and I heard a rough voice,
"Santa don't cry, this life is my choice;

I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more,
my life is my God, my country, my corps."
The soldier rolled over and soon drifted to sleep,
I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.
I kept watch for hours, so silent and still,
and we both shivered from the cold evening's chill.

I didn't want to leave on that cold, dark, night,
this guardian of honor so willing to fight.
Then the soldier rolled over, with a voice soft and pure,
whispered, "Carry on Santa, it's Christmas day, all is secure."
One look at my watch, and I knew he was right.
"Merry Christmas my friend, and to all a good night."



A FAMILY RITUAL AND PRAYER AT CHRISTMAS

On Christmas Day, light a special candle in your home to welcome Jesus, the Light of the World. Offer your own prayers or use the following:

*We thank you, heavenly Father,
for bringing us together this Holy Day.
We thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ,
to be our light and hope.*

*Bless us as we gather here,
and bless this Christmas candle.
Let it remind us of Christ, the Light of the World,
as it shines in our home.*

*Let us remember the poor and homeless
and let our hearts be open to all in need.
Bless all who are in any trouble this season,
and let them know your care
through the prayers of the Holy Family.
Bless our absent relatives and friends (name them)
give eternal rest and peace to the dead,
and let the perpetual light shine on them and especially on (name them).*

*(A member of the family now lights the candle)
Blessing (said by Mom or Dad)*

*May the kindness and Love of God, Our Savior,
be upon us and all we Love.
In the name of the Father, Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen*





FIRST CHRISTMAS IN HEAVEN

I see the countless Christmas trees around the world below, with tiny lights, like heaven's stars, reflecting on the snow. The sight is so spectacular, please wipe away that tear, for I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear, but the sounds of music can't compare with the Christmas choir up here. I have no words to tell you the joy their voices bring, for it is beyond description to hear the angels sing.

I know how much you miss me—I see the pain inside your heart, but I am not so far away, we really aren't apart. So be happy for me, dear ones, you know I hold you dear, and be glad I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I send each a special gift from my heavenly home above. I send you each a memory of my undying love. After all, "Love" is the gift more precious than pure gold. It was always most important in the stories Jesus told.

Please love and keep each other as Jesus said to do, for I can't count the Blessings or Love He has in store for you. So have a Merry Christmas and wipe away that tear. Remember, I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

MOST MEMORABLE CHRISTMAS (by Michelle Devincenz)

When I was young, Christmas was a magical time for me, from the wonder of the nativity story, to the celebrations with my entire family and it always included extra friends. The Christmas traditions of the advent wreath, gathering with family for Christmas Mass, sharing meal together, caroling in the neighborhood and then exchanging gifts was such a joy-filled time. When Don and I married and had a family of our own the traditions carried on, only in our home rather than Mom and Dad's, so our children could be at home. My most memorable Christmas occurred when Don and I were expecting our 3rd child. As I was preparing for family to arrive I started feeling little pangs of pain but tried to ignore them. As the evening progressed they became more persistent and it was quite evident that my little baby wanted to share the birth of the infant Jesus. I went to bed praying for the contractions to stop so I could spend Christmas morning with my little daughters as they marveled in the magic of Santa Claus, but that was not God's plan. Since my family was spending the night we woke them at 4:00am and told them we were on our way to the hospital and to take care of the girls. When we left we encountered one of the worst foggy nights I can recall. We could hardly see five feet in front of us. "Baby" was coming fast and Daddy was beginning to panic. Fortunately, we made it just in time. Our most wonderful Christmas present ever was delivered, a beautiful baby girl. She is still entire family's favorite gift, a gentle, loving, caring woman who is now a mother herself. Every Christmas we are thankful for all of our family and friends and for the special gift we received one foggy night many years ago.



CHRIST CHILD

It was the day after Christmas at a downtown church in San Francisco. The pastor was out in front looking over the manger scene set up on the front lawn, when he noticed the Christ Child figure was missing.

Right on cue, he turned to see a little boy with a red wagon coming down the street and in the wagon was the figure of the infant Jesus. So the pastor walked up to the boy and asked, "Well, young man, where did you pick up your passenger?"

The boy said, "I got Him here, from the church."

The priest said, "And why did you take Him?"

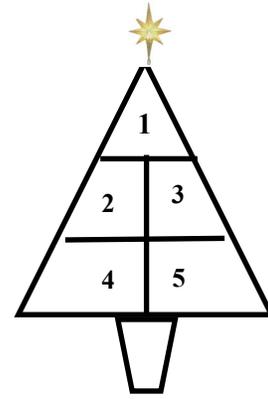
The little boy replied, "Well, about a week before Christmas I prayed to the little Lord Jesus, and I told Him if He would bring me a red wagon for Christmas, I would give Him a ride around the block in it.



Christmas 2015 at St. Teresa of Avila Parish

We received nearly 900 gifts from the parish Christmas Giving Tree.

- (1). 320 to Auburn Convalescent Homes
- (2). 200 to babies and children.
- (3). 160 to the homeless.
- (4). 100 Parish & Community families.
- (5). 90 young mothers.



Stories From The Giving Tree (Barbara Freuler)

All acts of giving are so very meaningful especially during the holidays. At St. Teresa's everyone is anxious to take tags from the tree to brighten Christmas Day for those who are in need, or for the elderly who do not drive and are confined to convalescent homes. Over the years some of the requests from the sick & elderly have absolutely touched our hearts.

A young man had suffered a stroke that made him immobile and unable to speak. He was placed in a convalescent home for care. All he could do was sit in a wheelchair throughout the day and watch movies. He was in a facility that could only provide a DVD player that all residents shared. He was subject to watch movies that he didn't care for. One Christmas he asked for his own personal DVD player. At the time we had never had a Giving Tree request for something like that, why not give it a try. Well, someone in their goodness came through and we were told by the staff that he was so very happy to be able to receive his very own DVD player. He was able to watch his favorite movies in the comfort of his own room.

A gentleman who is suffering with Alzheimer's had but one wish for our Giving Tree. He wanted candy from his native country of Hungary. Upon seeing this request everyone thought Oh dear! But we put it on the tree. Someone ordered that candy for Nic. The story gets better. St. Teresa's Carolers sang at the convalescent home where Nic lives and upon leaving, a heavy Hungarian accent was heard and you guessed it, it was Nic! Oh what a delightful surprise to meet one of the recipients of the Giving Tree. What a grand surprise awaits his Christmas morning. God Bless the family who took that tag from the tree.

TANGMALANGALOO (By John O'Brien)

The bishop sat in lordly state and purple cap sublime,
 And galvanized the old bush church at Confirmation time.
 And all the kids were mustered up from fifty miles around,
 With Sunday clothes, and staring eyes, and ignorance profound.
 Now was it fate, or was it grace, whereby they yarded too
 An overgrown two-storey lad from Tangmalangaloo?

A hefty son of virgin soil, where nature has her fling.
 And grows the trefoil three feet high and mats it in the spring;
 Where mighty hills uplift their heads to pierce the welkin's rim,
 And trees sprout up a hundred feet before they shoot a limb;
 There everything is big and grand, and men are giants too -
 But Christian knowledge wilts, alas, at Tangmalangaloo.

The bishop summed the youngsters up, as bishops only can;
 He cast a searching glance around, then fixed upon his man.
 But glum and dumb and undismayed through every bout he sat;
 He seemed to think that he was there, but wasn't sure of that.
 The bishop gave a scornful look, as bishops sometimes do,
 And glared right through the pagan in from Tangmalangaloo...

"Come tell me, boy," his lordship said in crushing tones severe,
 "Come, tell me why is Christmas Day the greatest of the year?
 "How is it that around the world we celebrate that day
 "And send a name upon a card to those who're far away?
 "Why is it wandering ones return with smiles and greetings, too?"
 Squall of knowledge hit the lad from Tangmalangaloo.

He gave a lurch which set-a-shake-the vases on the shelf,
 He knocked the benches all askew, up-ending of himself.
 And oh, how pleased his lordship was, and how he smiled to say,
 "That's good, my boy. Come, tell me now; and what is Christmas Day?"
 The ready answer bared a fact no bishop every knew -
 "It's the day before the races out at Tangmalangaloo."

Dear Fellow Parishioners & Visitors:

A Blessed Christmas to all, and may the peace of Christ find a home with you and your families.

Last Christmas something beautiful happened in our parish. We opened our parish hall and our hearts to the homeless. Our guests showed great respect for St. Teresa's and to the Volunteers of America, who oversaw our efforts to be a welcoming community.

The Right Hand of Auburn started here in the parish. But, we would not have been as Blessed if we did not reach out to our fellow ministers and churches. Our County Supervisors have opened a shelter for the homeless at the Dewitt Center. Churches, politicians, county workers, law enforcement, the medical profession, good hearted people are lighting a candle rather than cursing the darkness. On the night of December 15th, this year, there were 97 souls in the shelter. Thank God and thank you. If you want to volunteer to cook and serve our guests, please call (530-906-6793) or (530) 305-5815.

I am offering a special prayer for Jo Anne Drummond for helping me put this Christmas bulletin together. May the Grace, Mercy, and Peace from God our Father, Jesus Christ our Lord, and The Holy Spirit, be with all of you for Christmas and throughout the new year.

God Bless, Fr. Mike