

Catholic Standard

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May Christ's gifts of integrity, confidence, honesty grow in our hearts: Bishop's Christmas wish



The following is the full text of the Christmas message from His Lordship Bishop Francis Alleyne OSB:

"Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:11).

The story line in many books and films is about a saviour, a superhero, some one who will save the day, and restore order, security, peace and right relations where these have been compromised. In the time of Jesus, and before, the people of Israel expected the coming of a Messiah and some imagined that this Messiah would take on a military or regal or political role to liberate the people from oppression and misery.

In Guyana today there is much discussion and debate, at various levels in society, about a petroleum "saviour" that is due to appear in 2020. Many are looking towards this coming to be saved from financial difficulty, limited opportunity, unstable and threatening circumstances, not to mention the underlying hopes that some part of the abundant wealth will come their way.

In the discussion on oil revenue, a recommended approach to evaluate its "saving" capacity is to pay attention to the outcome in other countries which experienced a similar windfall. The evidence strongly suggests that revenues managed well ([please turn to page 2](#))

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Have a Blessed & Joyful Christmas



Christmas Blessings

Wishing you the Gift of Faith, the Blessing of Hope and the Peace of His Love this Christmas and always.

Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Next issue January 11th

This is our last publication for 2018. The Catholic Standard Office is now closed and reopens on **Monday January 7th 2019**. Our first issue of the New Year will be on Friday January 11th 2019.

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EDITORIAL

Reflecting on the old, readying for the new

There is some ancient human instinct that prompts looking back, examining closely, and reflecting heavily on what went before. The closing of this year (the old) hurries forward towards greeting the coming of the next (the new) and what it may hold, could bring. There is, at once, the weighing of where things are and what could have been; as well as that familiar stirring that the tomorrows of a New Year will realize dreams, through the many hopes fulfilled.

What can be said of 2018? What else is there left to say? The flares of incandescent politics streaked and left with the speed of lightning across the heaving Guyanese landscape. Those flashes are never fully gone; the occasional rumble of verbal thunder through loud sharp exchanges and with crackling power remind one and all of the environment inhabited uneasily. Unfortunately, it has become a necessary aspect of the accepted temperature and atmosphere in which lived. Consistently, the hardest, most searing local conversations have to do with the heavy stuff. This, too, is the volatile matter that surrounds the crude in the ground; under the water, to be exact. Throughout 2018, it became obvious that anything related to oil in Guyana has transformed into a volcano accompanying an earthquake as powered by a hurricane.

Daily it seems that the positioning, arguing, condemning, damning, insulting, and taunting multiplies and takes on lives of their own. Oil to Guyana now can be equated with manna from heaven; but it is one provoked by a more reckless irresistible kind of hunger and want. It is the severe want of an addiction, not the necessity of a need. Mammon, greed, and oil form an explosive mix. Individually each sloshes around tantalizingly in the hearts and visions of Guyanese, though not a single drop of the precious liquid has yet been extracted from its underwater home of endless millennia past. This is happening today, in 2018, nearly two full years before the scheduled commencement of production.

The question is this and it is simple: if this is now, then what about then, as in that believed bonanza-laden year of 2020? Here is a Guyanese environmental spill of enormous proportions already. It is a mental one, to be sure and fraught with the ills that come with the fabled oil opulence. Every day brings new news of another substantial discovery, and though not a solitary drop has been tasted, the clawing and fighting is already in full swing. Oil is king. Oil is god. Oil has become everything to everyone, well almost everyone. Citizens somehow managed to survive intact in the testing times posed by 2018.

Pastoral Letter on Diocesan Collections From Bishop Francis Alleyne OSB

This letter comes to you at the beginning of the Liturgical Year and with my good wishes in the spirit of the seasons of Advent and Christmas.

I wish to refer to the matter of collections and appeals that are presented to you each year and that are taken up for missions at the Diocesan level and for the Universal Church. All of these collections are important in the life of the church and I wish first to take this opportunity to thank you for your generous support.

Apart from the regular parish collections there are nine collections and the bishop's annual appeal each year. Six of these collections are for the needs of the Universal Church and are sent to various Dicasteries in Rome. The Diocese benefits from these collections far more than we contribute. In 2017, Guyana's collections sent to Rome amounted to just under US\$20,000. In 2018 we received US\$71,000 to support the mission in the Diocese. Your ongoing support to these collections will be of great help to the Diocese in its role, over and above the role of the parish, in advancing the mission of the local Church.

Three of the nine collections are for the local Church. One is taken on Good Friday for the orphanages; the second is taken on the 4th Sunday of Easter, Good Shepherd Sunday, for the promotion of Vocations and seminary formation, and the third for Diocesan Priests' Retirement usually taken in January.

After consulting with my Presbyteral Council I have moved the collection for the Diocesan Priests' Retirement to 31st December, or Old Year's night, beginning this year. All funds collected for the Diocesan Priests' retirement are overseen by a board tasked with building the fund and disbursing retirement benefits when Diocesan priests become eligible. Within the next five years two priests will reach retirement age. Over the last two years three Diocesan priests were ordained and two young men are in formation to be ordained, God willing, in the not too distant future. At the completion of their service to the Church they must be adequately cared and I ask you to support this venture.

Through Bishop's Annual Appeal over the past 6 years, a number of programs have benefited from your contributions, and I am extremely grateful for your generous participa-

tion. This year the bishop's appeal supported three main areas under the theme, "Vocations; building a Catholic Culture". They are seminarian/vocations support, poor parishes support & activities and programmes to nurture vocations and build Catholic culture. A preliminary report shows that G\$1,859,226.00 has gone towards Vocations/ seminarian formation, and G\$2,812,000.00 in support of parishes that cannot fully fund their mission.

My appeal has always had a dual focus; inviting you to give financial support and, more importantly, to be more engaged, to participate as fully as you can, in the mission of the Church. My firm belief is that members of the faithful who are engaged in the mission of the Church, live and celebrate their faith more fully.

As we look forward to 2019, I encourage you to support these appeals as they have a unique role in the mission of the church, locally or internationally.

Thank you, again, for your generosity, and for your continued support.

Be assured of my prayers and blessings for you and your loved ones especially at Christmas and into the new year. ❖

May Christ's gifts of integrity, confidence, honesty grow in our hearts (From Front Page)

through transparent initiatives in service of the people and for the common good worked best for all concerned. We hope that this will be the case for Guyana.

But the Saviour born to us is not in the image of the hero in the story line moving in on behalf of others to save the day. The Saviour born to us is seeking a place in our hearts to defibrillate, to arrest the arrhythmia brought on by the trends and influence of the world and restore the beat of integrity, peace, justice, love, in sync with his own.

There were many harsh challenges and none with easy answers: prices, cost of living, standard of living, quality of life, and making ends meet all tightened and pinched sharply. The less well-positioned and equipped were pierced and bear the financial scars from simply trying to get by. One continuing scourge was that of domestic violence, with no relief in sight; other similarly chronic blights include wayward traffic, thick congestion, and frightening crime. All were touched, most are troubled for these are not passing affairs, but representative of the layers of societal sicknesses that continue to intimidate and frustrate. And to top all of this, there was the visible and audible disappearance of basic courtesy and routine decency. It has been that kind of time.

On the first Sunday of Advent we read from the Prophet Jeremiah:

See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I am going to fulfil the promise I made to the House of Israel and the House of Judah:

'In those days and at that time, I will make a virtuous Branch grow for David, who shall practise honesty and integrity in the land.

In those days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell in confidence. And this is the name the city will be called:

The-Lord-our-integrity.' (Jer 33:14-16)

This is the Saviour born to us; not an external agent acting on our behalf but one seeking a place in our hearts so that we can act on his behalf, individually and together, many "virtuous branches" becoming a presence of Integrity, justice, love, peace inserted in the reality of this present world. In the days to come the real boon and treasure and saving grace that would bring prosperity to Guyana is a people living their integrity and honesty and dwelling in confidence. ❖

But that was in 2018, which is now poised to retreat quietly into history. Can citizens maintain sanity and the stability of sobriety in 2019? Can commonsense stick around in 2019 as the oil saga heats up with each passing day, each roiling simmering development? Apart from the ferociously committed and determined, spirituality and things sacred and godly were all forced to the distance of the backseat, with hints of mushrooming insignificance at the individual level. For the faithful, time will be found for church and prayer and humbling of self before the unseen.

For others, the seen and tangible is where the action is, and where interests and energies are focused and channeled. In 2019, there promises to be little left in terms of time,

space, attitude, and allowance for anything other than the material and the rewarding. The world hurtles forward with increasing acceleration; the Guyanese world rushes inward. Citizens watch and wait with bated breath and intensifying anticipation: elections, power, possibilities. And, of course, oil. Oil means money, subsidy, opportunity, modernity, and state generosity. God can wait. He wouldn't mind. And if he finds fault today, there is the likelihood that he will understand later. He is always there.

This is the here and now. Now has to be seized. Now is 2019: bring it on. Let it come. A word of warning: 2018 got overheated at times. Beware: 2019 could be scorching.

(Continued next Year!) ❖

Christmas Eve marks 200th anniversary of 'Silent Night'



The Silent Night Chapel, which is in the town of Oberndorf in the Austrian state of Salzburg, is a monument to the Christmas carol "Silent Night." The chapel stands on the site of the former St. Nicholas Church, where on Christmas Eve in 1818 the carol was performed for the first time. (CNS photo/courtesy www.stillenacht.com)

(CNS) -- Exactly 200 years ago this Christmas Eve -- Dec. 24, 1818 -- in a little church in what is now Austria, the world heard for the first time a poem set to music that eventually would be hailed as one of the most popular and beloved Christmas carols of all time.

"Silent Night" was sung for the first time that Christmas Eve at a midnight Mass at St. Nicholas Church in Oberndorf, a village in the Austrian Empire. The lyrics were written by a young Catholic priest, Father Joseph Mohr, and the music was composed by Francis Xavier Gruber, an organist and school master.

There is a popular legend that "Silent Night" was composed because the organ at Father Mohr's parish church, St. Nicholas, was broken.

According to the story, the priest wrote the lyrics to "Silent Night" -- "Stille Nacht" in the original German -- and asked Gruber to compose the tune for guitar so that there would be music at the midnight Mass.

This was all supposed to have transpired during the day of Christmas Eve of 1818, just hours before the carol was to be performed for the first time. ❖

Bishop's Engagements

Sunday December 23rd

08:00hrs – Advent Novena at SS Peter & Paul, Peter's Hall, EBD
11:00hrs – Mass at Kuru Kururu

Monday December 24th

22:00hrs – Mass at Cathedral of Immaculate Conception

Sunday December 30th

06:00hrs - Mass at Cathedral of Immaculate Conception
07:30hrs – Mass at Cathedral of Immaculate Conception
10:00hrs – Meet Confirmation Candidates of Our Lady of Fatima



✠ Francis Alleyne OSB

St Therese Sunday School classes herald Christmas

On Saturday December 12th, the children of the catechetical programme of St Therese parish heralded the celebration of Christmas 2018 with a pageant which was presented in song, dance, and drama. Their presentation was enjoyable and exciting from beginning to end. Those performing in the pageant ranged in age from four to fourteen. Introducing the presentation was a very confident and articulate member

of the class, who was the chairperson for the occasion.

In the opening scene there was notable creativity in the dances performed by some of the youngest members, which showed just a hint of Caribbean dance form.

The heralding of the birth of baby Jesus and the nativity scene were all beautifully presented, and special mention must be made of the young

soldiers whose tramps were decidedly military sounding. The older children did a fine job in their commentaries. But underpinning the entire performance were the beautiful costumes of the angels, Mary & Joseph and all the performers.

The teachers, parents, and musicians must all be congratulated for their roles in the most delightful presentation of that Christmas Pageant. ❖



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Where Experience is Always at Your Service

A Christian Perspective on Social Issues



Glory to God on High

By GHK Lall

Christmas. A gentle, serene thought. A soft, cocooning promise. A feeling that fills and surrounds and lifts up without memory, without compulsion, without effort. So much made possible by that Virgin birth of long ago, so much lived and experienced and shared by this Holy One that came; and that has been extended to us who reach to grasp the hope embedded, the bond created. So much believed today that the long stretch of some two thousand years disappears and places the believing and the fervently pious right in that stable; firmly and faithfully amidst the watchful beasts and the comforting straw. In this impoverishment of circumstances, stands the dazzling richness of God, with us as

eyewitnesses to that one glorious defining moment that ripples through eternity. This is the son of God. This is the One sent to redeem fallen sinners and extend the Father's hand in an offering of exhorted return and loving welcome. We answer; we bow down in total surrender. Receive us, O Lord. Receive and bless.

A newborn baby cries in Bethlehem on that shining morn from long ago. Bethlehem of all places: a backwater far from the crossroads of bustling human enterprise, a low watermark forgotten and dismissed. Angels sing from the heavens above: a new king is born today. A king of kings; a king for the Ages; a king for all eternity for the believing and submitting. Sweet faith, saturating belief first embrace tightly, and then soars in obedience to prostrate before heaven. The pealing choirs of earthly voices sparkle with an incomparable celestial gleam: Emmanuel, Emmanuel....

This is the lush, splendid peace that Christmas brings; only Christmas can bring. Jesus Christ is born. Halleluia! The waiting through endless time, the centuries of Ages, the millennia since that first early dawn of "Let there be light!" There was light. And it was

good. It gets infinitely better for those who give all, hold back nothing. The waiting and preparing and humbling of the weeks of the Advent Season giving way freely and easily through a seamless blending into the days of the Christmas Season. What a time: a sublime day, a pious season, those special personal joys here in Guyana, no matter the circumstances, no matter the hard forces of the moment that sometimes bend, but can never break. Not with you by the side, Lord Jesus. This is that moment, that time; and it is more than both taken together.

Jesus Christ is born. A Messiah has come. He will come again. The faithful wait. Patiently. Devotedly. Purposefully. Let it be. Let it be Lord that will and grace reaches for us, teaches us, holds us close in love and the mercies of redemption and salvation. We draw near, intrigued and enchanted; mesmerized and held captive by this great mystery that is no longer mystery but the embodiment of a greater spiritual reality. We come. We kneel. Oh, let us adore him, this special one; this child that glows with a heavenly light. This is the Savior of the world. Save us, Lord Jesus. From the lowli-

ness of that barren barn to the ascendant limitless heights of the indescribably, unimaginably divine of the holy heavens.

What child is this.... What a grand immaculate moment in the times of human history and human endeavors. We bring the simple gifts of the humble: love, obedience, belief, and surrender. Take our love, Lord. Purify our hearts, O redeemer. Heal our listless, wretched souls long lost, but now restored and reinvigorated with your divine love. Peace and goodwill to all men, all over. Jesus Christ is born. The world is a different place today; there is that extraordinary something that fills with solemnity and reverence, that reminds we are in the presence of the sacred. Those wondrous mountains so compellingly worded in Isaiah come into view, take form, and give inspiring life. Let us go the mountain of the Lord. His invitation is open to all, waiting for all. Let us go to adore, pay homage, and worship. Let us go through living our faith, by honoring and praising our Lord Jesus this Christmas and beyond. He is waiting; he is expecting; he is loving. ❖

50 years ago Rupununi ranchers revolted

On the morning of January 2nd, 1969, soon after the meat plane had taken off for the Coast, a lorry load of rebels drove into Lethem and opened fire on the police station. They killed five policemen and a government official and took the District Commissioner and a number of local inhabitants as hostages.

Airstrips at Lethem, Karasabai, Good Hope and Annai were blocked with oil drums and radio communications were silenced. So began an attempt by a handful of disgruntled ranchers to secede from Guyana and form an independent Rupununi.

Led by the Hart and Melville families the ranchers had been pressing for years to be given title to the savannah lands which their cattle had been grazing on for many decades.

They had been led to believe that Venezuela would support them and about forty of their ranch hands had received training in the neighbouring country and had been given some military equipment.

The expected help from Venezuela never came and the revolt fizzled out with most of the ranchers and a few Amerindians who had joined them fleeing across the borders into Venezuela and Brazil.

A radio message from one of the missionary groups had reached the city soon after the attack on the

police station and Fr McKenna had gone straight to Mr Burnham to report what he had heard on the Lethem airstrip just before embarking.

A contingent from the army was dispatched immediately and the villagers at one airstrip removed the drums and allowed the army to land. Pressing on to Lethem they encountered no resistance and proceeded to round up all those suspected of being implicated in the revolt. Most of these had already disappeared across the border.

The Burnham government were considerably shaken and let their anger out on the priests and the Amerindians.

They could not accept that the priests, all British Jesuits, had not known of the impending ranchers' revolt. They reasoned that the Jesuits had been ministering to the Amerindians in the region from the beginning of the century and were very close to them. It was therefore inconceivable that they did not know of the ranchers' plan to revolt, and the priests' silence indicated support for the uprising.

Because of this conviction and also to reduce the church's influence on the Amerindians, Fr McKenna was never allowed to return to the Rupununi. Fathers Manus Kene and Stanley

Maxwell were ordered out of the area and forbidden to return.

They were both very hurt by this decision and asked to return to the UK.

Even Fathers Brown and Gerrard Wilson-Browne who were stationed in the Pakaraimas, far removed from the scene were brought to the city, Fr Brown being escorted by armed guards and kept overnight at Eve Leary.

Meanwhile, 27 Amerindians were flown to the city to stand trial for murder and for complicity in the revolt and were kept in the Georgetown prison.

Unknown to Bishop Guilly in the city and Father Maxwell in the Rupununi who controlled the plane's movements, the pilot of the diocese's Cessna aircraft, Clement Tesarick had been in league with the ranchers and Venezuelans and had disappeared a few days before the revolt. The Bishop had reported the plane missing.

Just after the attack on the police station, Tesarick landed the aircraft at Lethem with a load of arms. However a gun went off in the aircraft damaging a fuel line and it was unable to take off again. He fled across the border to Venezuela.

Several delegations on different occasions comprising Bishop Guilly,

Fr Andrew Morrison, then Vicar General, Archbishop Alan Knight and other members of the Guyana Council of Churches called on Prime Minister Burnham and Dr Ptolomey Reid on behalf of the priests and Amerindians who were held in custody.

On one occasion a memorandum was presented to Mr Burnham in answer to all the false accusations he had been putting out about the involvement of the priests giving the facts that had been ascertained by the exhaustive questioning of all who were said to have been involved. Showing that none of them had done anything against the law, and that they had acted in all occasions most reasonably in all that they had done.

It was pointed out too that far from co-operating with the ranchers the priest had had occasion to defend the Amerindians from exploitation by the ranchers.

Mr Burnham showed himself impervious to all the arguments.

One year later the Amerindians were tried and cleared by the court of all the charges.

Nothing that was led in the court showed the slightest involvement of the priests in that notable episode 50 years ago in the history of the Guyana Republic.

(First carried in the Catholic Standard of 1993) ❖

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Multi-denominational Christmas concert at Lethem



By Matthias Thomas

The Catholic community of Lethem recently joined other Christian denominations in a Christmas Concert.

Our Christmas Concert was held in the township of Lethem in front of the famous Savannah Inn Supermarket.

Various Christian denominations came together to participate, namely: the Baptist church, Word of Faith, Full Gospel, Pentecostal, Assemblies of God, Seventh Day Adventist, New Seasons Ministries

and the Catholic Church.

It was a wonderful, spirit-filled and unifying experience to see the youths participating in all of the religious activities of the programme such as dances, songs, drama and skits.

The concert brought the Christmas spirit closer to each one present and also increased friendliness between brothers and sisters from other denominations.

This is an annual event for all churches. ❖

Parfait Harmonie completes first step to new church



The Catholic community at Parfaite Harmonie has made another important step towards having a permanent place of worship in that area. In December they moved from the top flat of a private home where parish events were held, to a new location - a small temporary chapel on the site of the new church.

Novena this year is at this new chapel. Christmas Day and New Years Day Masses will be at 8:00am. The usual Mass time is 4:00pm on Sundays.

Much of the preparatory groundwork which was needed to make this temporary chapel possible was also

necessary for the building of the church which is the next and of course a much bigger undertaking.

The community would like to thank everyone who made their contributions by way of monetary donations, their services, prayers or in any other way helped to make this first step possible. May God bless you and your families. May you have a joyous Christmas and a blessed 2019!

Anyone desirous of making a contribution in the form of monetary donations or building materials may contact us on the following numbers: Fr. Cris: 654-8787, Josephine: 678-4093; Roxanne: 642-8866 or Lisa: 626-8294. ❖

Wapichan Youth Conference 2018



“United we embrace our past: celebrating and preserving our cultural heritage” -- This was the theme of an Indigenous Youth Convention, which was held in Shulinab, Central Rupununi from December 15th – 19th 2018. This is the third year that youths have chosen to gather for a few days at the end of the term to reflect on their culture, the environment and spirituality. This year there are two youth conventions in the Rupununi – one mainly for Wapichan youth and one for Macushi youth which will be held in Karasabai, South Pakaraimas from December 19th – 22nd. Both conventions aim to affirm indigenous youth in their culture, identity and spirituality with the environment as a focal point. This year, the gathering was organised by the South Central People's Development Association (SCPDA) with support from the St. Ignatius Jesuit Community.

Around 130 young Catholics from 20 of the 21 villages in the Wapichan territory were present for the 4-day event. The activities at the convention were organized to help the

youth become more familiar with aspects of their culture such as the language, cultural sites, songs, stories, hammock making, fire burning, customary laws and core indigenous values. It also provided an opportunity for both the Church and SCPDA to listen to the concerns of the young people surrounding their future in the villages. Group work throughout the conference revealed that Wapichan youths are mainly concerned about substance abuse (drugs and alcohol), teenage pregnancy and mining (pollution of rivers and human trafficking).

A highlight of the four days was a cultural trip to Shiriri Mountain, Sawarab falls and the Rupununi River. It was the first time that many of those present were able to learn more about the history and significance of these sites. The handing-on of culture while planning for the future was also emphasised.

Presentations from Conservation International and from SCPDA focused on involving young people in village planning and management.

Cathedral's 50th Carol Concert



The Woodside Choir was among the more than 20 interdenominational choirs and individuals who participated in Brickdam Cathedral's 50th anniversary production of A Festival of Carols. The event was first staged by Father Patrick Connors in 1968 as a way helping people to experience the true meaning of Christmas. ❖

Other activities included daily Mass and Novena, a campfire showcasing cultural dances, songs, stories and poems, presentations by indigenous youths on following their passions in life and a march during which village banners were displayed.

Youth Conventions such as this help to affirm and emphasise that there is a rich cultural tradition in the Rupununi which deserves to be celebrated, preserved and handed on. ❖

Sunday Scripture

December 23rd - Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year C



RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 79

**Response: God of hosts, bring us back;
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.**

1. O shepherd of Israel, hear us,
shine forth from your cherubim throne.
O Lord, rouse up your might,
O Lord, come to our help. *Response*
2. God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
look down from heaven and see.
Visit this vine and protect it,
the vine your right hand has planted. *Response*
3. May your hand be on the man you have chosen,
the man you have given your strength.
And we shall never forsake you again:
give us life that we may call upon your name. *R/*

*'I am the handmaid of the Lord,'
'let what you have said be done to me.'
Alleluia!*

GOSPEL

Luke 1:39-44

*Why should I be honoured with a visit from the
mother of my Lord?*

Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, "Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made to her by the Lord would be fulfilled." ❖

FIRST READING

Micah 5:1-4

*Out of you will be born the one who is to rule over
Israel.*

The Lord says this:

You, (Bethlehem) Ephrathah,
the least of the clans of Judah,
out of you will be born for me
the one who is to rule over Israel;
his origin goes back to the distant past,
to the days of old.

The Lord is therefore going to abandon them
till the time when she who is to give birth gives
birth.

Then the remnants of his children will come back
to the children of Israel.

He will stand and feed his flock
with the power of the Lord,
with the majesty of the name of his God.
They will live secure, for from then on he will
extend his power to the ends of the land.
He himself will be peace.

SECOND READING

Hebrews 10:5-10

Here I am! I am coming to obey your will.

This is what Christ said, on coming into the world:
You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation,
prepare a body for me.

You took no pleasure in holocausts or sacrifices for
sin;
then I said,
just as I was commanded in the scroll of the book,
"God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will."
Notice that he says first: You did not want what the
Law lays down as the things to be offered, that is:
the sacrifices, the oblations, the holocausts and the
sacrifices for sin, and you took no pleasure in them;
and then he says: Here I am! I am coming to obey
your will. He is abolishing the first sort to replace it
with the second. And this will was for us to be made
holy by the offering of his body made once and for
all by Jesus Christ.

Gospel Acclamation Lk 1: 38
Alleluia, alleluia!



Gospel Reflection



By Fr. Michael Barrow SJ

THE MOTHER OF MY LORD

What does Our Lady mean to you? What did she mean to Elizabeth when she turned up at her house? Elizabeth could have thought: What a lovely girl! I've seen her grow up, always such a pretty child and now it's hard to believe that she's going to have a baby. But no! Elizabeth looked at that little girl standing in front of her and said, "Why should I be honoured with a visit from the Mother of my Lord?"

I expect we all have a different relationship with Our Lady. If you are a mother or a father, you may look to Our Lady as one who will understand and accompany you as she did Elizabeth. Or you may think of her as your mother, as Jesus did when he was little, going to her for a hug when you are hurt and knowing that she will be delighted with your successes. Alongside all these ideas of Mary is the realization that she is the "Mother of my Lord". That wonderful expression will always colour our thoughts of Our Lady. But although we celebrate Jesus' birth at Bethlehem, giving birth is only the beginning of being a mother. If anyone said to Jesus, "You must have had a wonderful mother," Jesus would agree with them, not because she had given him birth but thinking of the way she had brought him up and what a wonderful person she was in herself. The way the gospel expressed it was that a woman listening to Jesus said, "Happy the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!" Then Jesus described his mother, "Still happier those who hear the word of God and keep it." Her greatness was her faith. Her greatness was her love. Her greatness was her given word when she said Yes to the Lord. ❖

Christmas Scripture

The Nativity of the Lord

The Nativity of the Lord: Mass at Midnight

First Reading Isaiah 9:1-6
The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone.

You have made their gladness greater, you have made their joy increase; they rejoice in your presence as men rejoice at harvest time, as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils. For the yoke that was weighing on him, the bar across his shoulders, the rod of his oppressor, these you break as on the day of Midian. For all the footgear of battle, every cloak rolled in blood, is burnt, and consumed by fire. For there is a child born for us, a son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give him: Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace. Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end, for the throne of David and for his royal power, which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity. From this time onwards and for ever, the jealous love of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 95
Response: Today a saviour has been born to us; He is Christ the Lord

1. O sing a new song to the Lord
sing to the Lord all the earth.

O sing to the Lord, bless his name. R/

2. Proclaim his help day by day, tell among the nations his glory and his wonders among all the peoples R/

3. Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad, let the sea and all within it thunder praise, let the land and all it bears rejoice, all the trees of the wood shout for joy at the presence of the Lord for he comes, he comes to rule the earth. *Response*

4. With justice he will rule the world, he will judge the peoples with his truth. *Resp.*

Second Reading Titus 2:11-14
God's grace has been revealed to the whole human race.
God's grace has been revealed, and it



has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we

must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in his present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

Gospel Luke 2:1-14
Today a saviour has been born to you.
Now at this time Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census –

the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn. In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, "Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing:

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy his favour". ❖

The Nativity of the Lord: Mass During the Day

FIRST READING Isaiah 52: 7-10
All the end of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

How beautiful on the mountains, are the feet of one who brings good news, who heralds peace, brings happiness, proclaims salvation, and tells Zion, "Your God is king!" Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices, they shout for joy together, for they see the Lord face to face, as he returns to Zion. Break into shouts of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord is consoling his people, redeeming Jerusalem. The Lord bares his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 97
Response: All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

1. Sing a new song to the Lord for he has worked wonders. His right hand and his holy arm have brought salvation. *Response*
2. The Lord has made known his salvation; has shown his justice to the nations. He has remembered his truth and love for the house of Israel.
3. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout to the Lord all the earth, ring out your joy.
4. Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp, with the sound of music. With trumpets and the sound of the horn acclaim the King, the Lord.

SECOND READING Hebrews 1: 1-6
God has spoken to us through his Son.
At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son, the

Son that he has appointed to inherit everything and through whom he made everything there is. He is the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature, sustaining the universe by his powerful command; and now that he has destroyed the defilement of sin, he has gone to take his place in heaven at the right hand of divine Majesty. So he is now as far above the angels as the title which he has inherited is higher than their own name.

God has never said to any angels: You are my Son, today I have become your father; or: I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Again, when he brings the First-born into the world, he says: Let all the angels of God worship him.

GOSPEL John 1: 1-18
The Word was made flesh, and lived among us.

In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came to be

Not one thing had its being but through him.

All that came to be had life in him and that life was the light of men, a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower.

The Word was the true light that enlightens all men; and he was coming into the world. He was in the world that had its being through him, and the world did not know him. He came to his own domain and his own people did not accept him. But to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to all who believe in the name of him who was born not out of human stock or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God himself. The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father full of grace and truth. ❖

Dear Santa,

It is always my pleasure at this time of the year – Christmas, to write to you seeking gifts for the people of Guyana. I acknowledge with thanks your previous gifts which were beneficial and appreciated. With recognition of the many problems facing millions of people in our troubled world today, including hunger, poverty and suffering, I will limit this **Wish List** for Guyana and count our many blessings.

This is the Season of peace, joy and goodwill, so where necessary there should be changes.

ALPHABET

Instead of the current meanings of: -

A - arbitrary, alienation and arrogance;

B- bureaucracy, bigotry and blame;

C- confusion, corruption and confrontation;

Your gifts should create new meaning as follows: -

A- accommodation, affinity and appreciation;

B- benevolence, bonuses and blessings

C- Compromise, cohesion and civility;

LIE DETECTORS

Santa, last year, I asked you for gifts of Lie detectors. The need still exists. Such detectors should be placed in several areas including Parliament, City and Town Councils, Courts, police stations even in churches where people confess. Ho, Ho, Ho!

SECURITY CAMERAS

Santa, the need is great. Besides on main roads, the Police Stations should be given this gift especially for the interrogation rooms and holding cells. Also in places where persons are paid to provide service to the public. It will be revealing.

THE OPPOSITION

Santa, being in the opposition in parliament seems very unique and to be a stimulating position. Why? Only when in the opposition do they see need for changes, including the constitution. Whenever the table turns the demand for review dissipates.

COI

Over the past three years it has become fashionable for Commissions of Inquiry to be established to address wide ranging issues and to make recommendations on what positive approaches can be adopted. However, the lack of follow-up in some cases suggests that COI means "Collection of Information." Ho, ho, ho!

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

A Constitution shapes the legal, social, cultural landscape for citizens with their rights and privileges entrenched. It must ensure the happiness, well-being and protection of every citizen irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, political association, etc.

Santa, unfortunately purposeful unity in Guyana is sometimes compromised by divisionary forces especially by political parties.

The power of these political parties arise from an electoral system of "proportional representation" which makes political parties dominant. Santa, the time has come to revert to the "First Past the Post" system which encourages and empowers citizens to opt to represent their areas. They will behave in a manner knowing that they are accountable to their constituents.

NO CONFIDENCE MOTION

This has become a very popular political mechanism to put the Government of the day under the microscope. It provokes self-appraisal. It is good to remind the Government in any country that they can be removed if they fail to perform and comply with the laws of the land, abandon their manifesto or lose popular support.

In the Guyana scenario, some people are losing confidence in certain areas of activity including: -

Crime Control; Ethnic Relations; Parliament; City and Town Councils; Levels of Taxation; GPL; The frequency of "no bail"; The procurement system; Low Levels of Pension; Consolidated Fund Management; Controlling Noise Nuisance; and Judicial Penalties.

SECRECY VS. TRANSPARENCY

If there is acceptance of the rights of citizens to know of all matters which can impact on their lives, then decision makers should readily strive to keep citizens informed. Acts of secrecy often lead to suspicion and claims of irregularity.

Santa, your gift must be to make everything transparent. Let the people see everything, including the rising and the setting of the sun.

ACTING APPOINTMENTS

Santa, for many years we have had a peculiar situation regarding the appointments and confirmation of the Chancellor of the Judiciary and the Chief Justice. The past Chancellor and Chief Justice retired as **Actors** after several years. At present we have two ladies of good pedigree acting in those positions. Santa, let your gifts reflect fair play and justice for all persons who administer justice and the citizens who seek justice.

CONSULTATION

The meaning of consultation seems not clear. Santa, you can give to decision makers a gift of guidance towards its interpretation and the spirit of compromise, goodwill and mutual respect in discussions.

MISCONDUCT

Santa, the repeated jail breaks and discovery of weapons, narcotics and cell phones in the prisons, clearly indicate that some personnel within are betraying the trust placed on them by Administrators. For the **Fire department** it was indeed embarrassing to read of our courageous fire men while responding to checks and secure an aircraft which crash-landed, they ended up removing personal items from the pilot and passengers. They yielded to temptation.

A similar unusual situation emerged when a few members of the Police Force got playful and removed models of aircraft displayed at an exhibition. Such events tarnish Guyana's good image of hospitality. Could you bring them Toy Planes? They need something to play with. Ho, Ho, Ho!

Santa, the distinguished Jurist Lord Denning stated that it is known that crime is committed in the "dark." He observed that the time has come for us to look not only at those who

commit crime, but at those who create the "darkness".

EFFICIENCY?

Santa, it was amazing and amusing to read in a newspaper that an Auditor's Report stated that at a certain Town Council several things happened in **one day**. A contract was **signed** for millions of dollars to facilitate infrastruc-

ture work; On the said day, there was an issue of **certificate of completion**; and on the same day cheques were made out for the **full payment** of the contract price.

Santa, your gift should be to get this event in the Guinness Book of Records. Ho, Ho, Ho!

COST SAVING-PARLIAMENT

According to financial reports there has been significant increases in the various cost centers relating to Parliament.

Santa, in these days of robotics, artificial intelligence and information technology, you may wish to consider giving to the Parliament of Guyana a network system. Which nullifies the need to meet face to face at one place.

In that process Parliamentarians would not have to go to Parliament. In any case they do not debate; as when one side is speaking, the other side is absent. The discussions could take the form of a teleconference with all parliamentarians presenting their views in groups at several locations.

If this is done, besides the reduction in costs, commuters would be happy, as whenever Parliament meets, the roads around the Parliament are closed and confusion prevails around the Stabroek Market Square. The mini-bus operators will also rejoice if this is done.

OIL EXPLORATION

It seems necessary for psychologists and psychiatrists to explore the minds of the decision makers who negotiate conditions which govern the Oil Companies that will operate in Guyana. In a number of countries with oil there is harsh poverty plaguing the lives of people.

The Sovereign Fund should aim at eliminating several taxes, including **VAT**, thus giving citizens increased purchasing power and lowering the cost of living.

FIT & PROPER

The economic importance and the great potential which oil operations offer, should dictate that accumulated knowledge of the industry, specialized personnel – legal technical and administrative should be involved. They must be **fit** and **proper** persons. Ho, ho, ho!

THE EYES

Santa, a few years ago the Republic of Cuba funded and established an Ophthalmology Department at Port Mourant, Corentyne, Berbice. Although critically needed, it has been in -operational for years. The gift for you here is obvious – re-activation. **Ho, Ho, Ho!**

FEES

It baffles the mind that rentals for agricultural lands could be increased by over five hundred percent and that the management of the Berbice Harbour Bridge can think of increasing fees by over three hundred percent. Santa

please give to those decision makers common sense.

Santa, make sure that you say Ho, Ho, Ho and not Ha, Ha, Ha!

ILLEGAL ENTRY INTO GUYANA

Santa, when we remember a few decades ago how Guyanese were getting away to other countries because of shortages and a harsh economic environment, it should soften our hearts to those persons from neighbouring countries who are seeking sanctuary in Guyana and in some cases purchasing food items to take back to their homes. Although the laws of the land must be respected, those people deserve special consideration and humane approaches. Dragging them before the Court with hefty fines appears harsh, given their peculiar circumstances.

That is called tempering justice with mercy. I can think of many Guyanese who have extended their stay in other countries and through remittances are up-keeping their families here. Ho, Ho, Ho!

MINISTRIES

Notwithstanding the perception that Guyana has too many Ministries of Government. Santa, please consider the gift of a **Ministry of Labour**.

THE REAR MIRROR

Santa, please give a timely gift to decision makers and leaders in Guyana to dissuade them from looking back in anger and playing the blame game. They need to have vision and to optimise on time which is precious also on human and other available resources. Let us live **with** the past but **not in** the past. Ho, Ho, Ho!

COMMERCIAL BANKS

Many citizens are robbed on leaving Commercial Banks and at their homes after making significant withdrawals. It provokes serious thought. However, citizens cannot do the old practice of throwing a "box hand" and keeping money under the mattress because Criminals invade their homes. Santa, please provide suitable gifts to alleviate that situation.

CHILDREN

Santa, these days the children have become very sophisticated. They will not want such games as monopoly, snake and ladder, scrabble, dominoes, etc. They are enamored by technology and infected by smart phones so you have a challenge to make them happy. However, many children will benefit having kind, loving and caring parents, guardians, relatives and happy teachers. Santa, they need to be assured of food and shelter; be guided by religious teachings and have confidence in the future. These must be your choice of gifts.

CHOICE OF GIFTS

Santa, I did not suggest a specific gift under each category of the problems cited. You may have to take a holistic approach and give such gifts which allay fears, give confidence and bring happiness so that love, peace, goodwill and harmony will be in Guyana and its people, not only at Christmas-time, but always.

Santa, do have a nice stay in Guyana. Enjoy Guyana's hospitality and start preparing for Global Warming in the North Pole.

Thank you Santa, May God continue to Bless you. Ho, Ho, Ho!

Yours Sincerely,

Vibert Parvatan Georgetown, Guyana

A Letter to Santa Viewpoint

by Vibert Parvatan



The Birth of Jesus

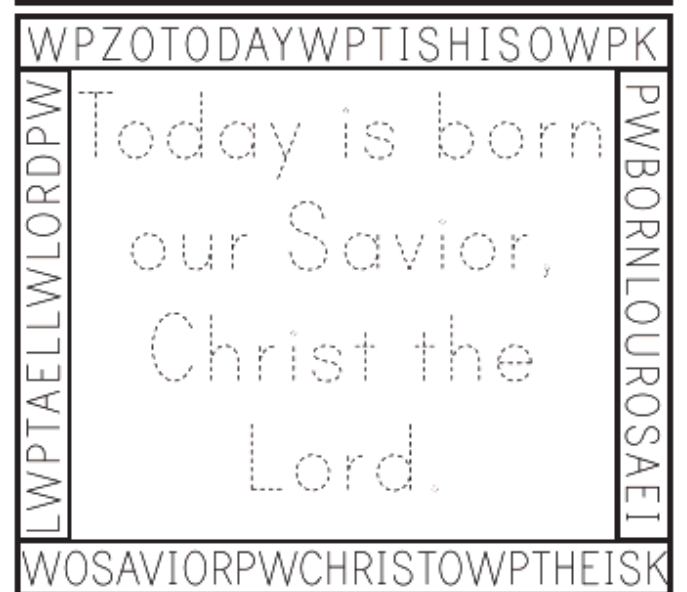
Dear Girls and Boys,

Christmas is here! What do you like best about Christmas? Is it the Christmas tree with its blinking lights? Maybe it's the beautiful music. Perhaps it's peppercorn, garlic pork, sorrel drink and black cake. For some it might be all of the parties or visiting with family and friends. For many people the best thing about Christmas is the presents -- both the ones we give and the ones we receive. Especially the ones we receive!

Hmmm... Can you think of anything we have left out? Oh yes! It's someone's birthday, isn't it? Whose birthday is it? That's right! It is Jesus' birthday. You know, sometimes we get so caught up in all of the decorations, lights, parties, and presents that we miss the real Christmas.

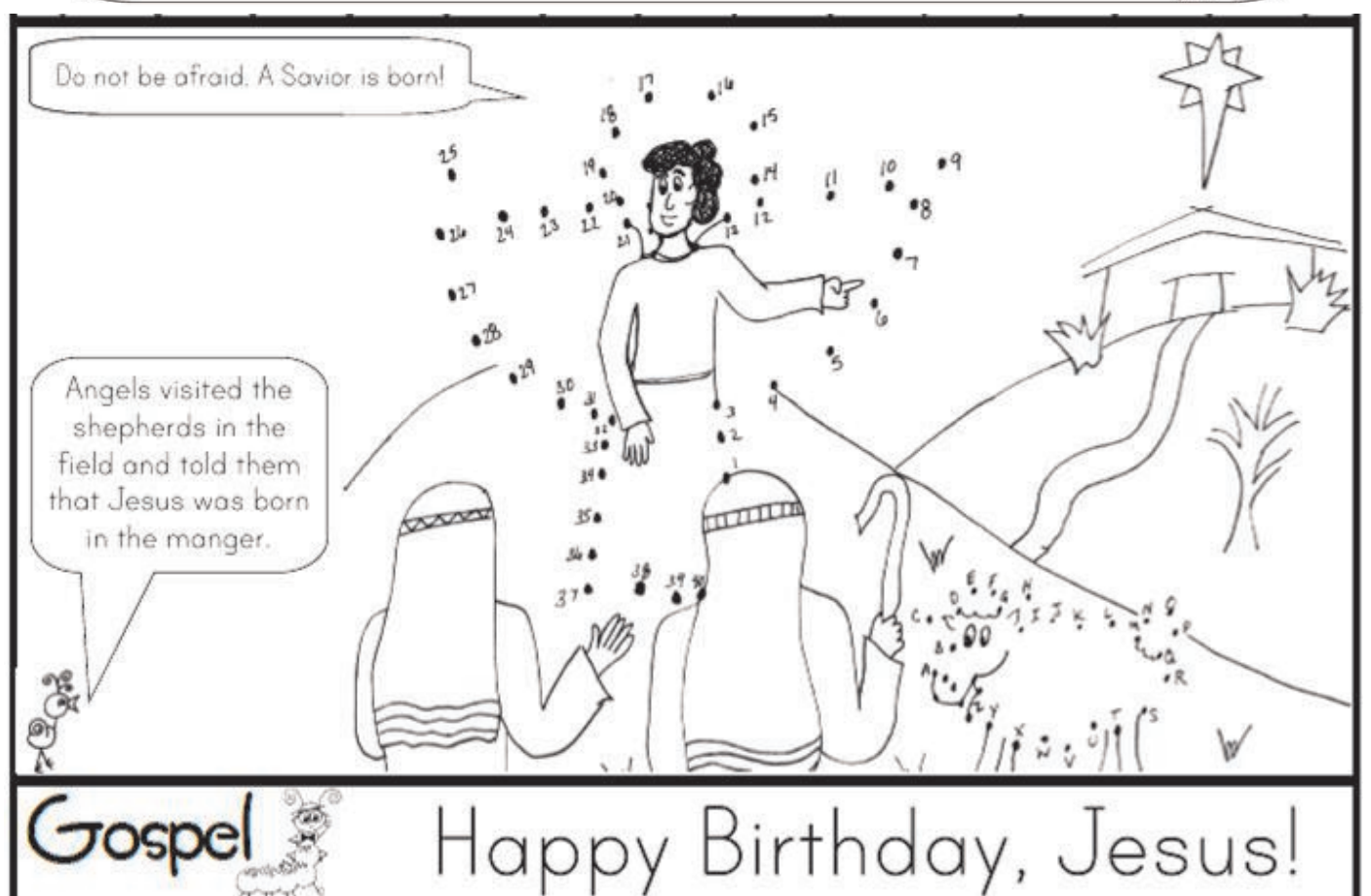
If we are not careful, we can get so caught up in the celebration, the decorations, and the gifts that we miss the real Christmas -- the birthday of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Dear Jesus, it is your birthday. We pray that we won't get so caught up in the celebration that we miss the real Christmas. Amen. ✨



A	B	Y	M	E	L	C	H	I	O	R	R	E
B	D	E	L	B	A	T	S	L	A	A	E	S
S	I	V	D	L	E	O	N	Z	T	R	H	N
A	S	R	E	J	O	S	A	S	T	E	R	E
N	G	G	C	N	O	H	O	S	P	E	T	C
T	N	Y	O	M	T	S	A	H	G	I	J	N
A	I	B	R	L	Y	M	E	N	T	E	R	I
C	K	A	A	S	T	R	A	P	S	A	C	K
L	A	B	T	S	D	M	R	U	H	T	O	N
A	B	R	I	G	H	O	S	H	O	L	Y	A
U	M	R	O	O	R	E	E	D	N	I	E	R
S	H	E	N	L	E	S	N	I	T	A	R	F
C	R	I	S	D	S	Y	R	A	M	I	N	G

- CHRISTMAS TREE DECORATIONS
- HOLLY
- REINDEER
- TINSEL
- MANGER
- BABY
- JOSEPH
- JESUS
- SHEPHERD
- KINGS
- STAR
- STABLE
- SANTA CLAUS
- ADVENT CAROLS
- ANGEL
- CRIB
- HOLY
- NOEL
- MARY
- BALTHAZAR
- MELCHIOR
- CASPAR
- GOLD
- FRANKINCENSE
- MYRRH



When talking to your sons and daughters about love, one of your best teaching methods could be about loving your spouse. Children learn so much when they witness the ways their parents react to one another. They learn the way we speak, the way we are kind, and unfortunately, for some children, the way parents may argue or scream at one another.

Now, we are not suggesting a Pollyanna world because, let's face it, we all get upset once in a while. But if our children hear us say, "I'm sorry," then they learn that we can forgive and be kind and loving once again.

Truthfulness is another part of good and loving relationships, within the family and for our friends and others we know. It can be hard sometimes, to tell the truth, but it is so much better than telling lies. When we do not tell the truth, we have so much to remember. We can forget what we say when we lie, but with the truth, it is easy, because it is always there for us.

If we love someone, it is good to be truthful with them. Love helps us in so many ways in life. Perhaps we could be more gentle with ourselves and learn to love who we are. We are all quite different, but when considering ourselves, we should check out our uniqueness. Maybe we have sparkling eyes or beautiful hair or a handsome smile. Perhaps we are good at sports, or music, or writing, or singing, or running, or baking an apple pie! Whatever we are good at, we should treasure it, develop it, share it and grow strong with our unique, God-given talent. Learn to love ourselves and thank God for our special spot in His big, big universe.



By Chris & Noelma Lam

When you are ready, reach out to the world about you. Love your family, your friends

and your neighbours. They may be quite different from you, but they too are creatures of God.

that's okay, too.

As boys and girls grow into adulthood, they usually find someone they love, better than any others. They become "sweethearts" and they love each other. They value that special person, be kind to him or her, and thank God for such a loving relationship. And as we often told our children, when they were young, "First you fall in love, then you get married and after that, you have the babies"

Now for a bit of humour. We found this on the internet:

Imagine a new dictionary is soon to come out, defining some issues in marriage that people were curious about. Here are some of the definitions.

Bachelor: A man who has been able to avoid the opportunity of making some woman miserable.

Bride: A girl with great prospects of happiness . . . behind her.

Compromise: A nice little arrangement between husband and wife whereby they both fully agree to let her have her own way.

Diplomacy: A man who is able to convince his wife that a fur coat would make her look fat.

Gentleman: A husband who holds the stepladder tightly so that his wife doesn't fall while she's painting the ceiling.

Housework: What a wife does without anyone noticing it, until she doesn't do it.

Husband: A man who has decided to give up privileges he never knew he had.

Love: An obsessive delusion easily cured by a wedding.

Mrs. A job title involving long duties, very light earnings, and zero recognition.

Spouse: Someone who will protect you, help you, and help you solve all the problems you wouldn't have had if you'd stayed single.

Wife: A partner who is always complaining that she doesn't have a thing to wear, at the exact same time she complains that she doesn't have enough room in the closet.

Father-in-law: A man, hated by a woman, because he always encourages her husband to spend a weekly boys-night out with him.

Mother-in-law: A woman who slowly destroys a man's peace of mind, by telling him what's on hers. ❖

TitBits

-- This Week's Reflection:

As we come to the end of the Catholic Standard's Year, We would like to say thanks for being with us every week. We look forward to sharing these articles and TitBits with you. We hope you enjoy reading them as much as we do writing them! We send special thanks to those of you who send us articles, suggestions and tips. And especially to those of you who made that special effort to tell us how you look forward to reading our column, your praise encourages us to continue.

God Bless You! Have a Great Christmas!

-- This Week's Bible Question:

Q. How many wise men visited the young Child Jesus?

-- This Week's Teaser:

Q: What's the best thing to give your parents for Christmas?

-- Today's Bible Verse:

Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will bring it to pass. - Psalm 37:5

-- Today's Marriage Tip:

Start and end each day by thanking God for letting your spouse be in your life. Just a quick smile when they walk in the room tells them you care that they are near you.

-- Humour:

Little Johnny had just finished his homework and asked his mother if she would like some help. When his mother asked him to clean off the front sidewalk he immediately picked up the broom to begin. It was very windy, and he was only five years old and small for his age, and the wind nearly blew him away. He picked up the broom countless times, but each time, the wind got the best of him and knocked him over. His mother came

out a few minutes later to see how he was doing and found him stuffing rocks into his pockets.

"I thought you were cleaning off the sidewalk," his mother said. "What in the world are you doing?"

Little Johnny replied: "Now? I weigh me down to sweep."

- A Card Hallmark Would Never Print:

I used to worry about where you were going. - Now, I worry about where you're coming from.

-- Answer to Bible Question:

Unknown, but more than one. - Matthew 2:1 & 11

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem... and when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Because of the three items it is assumed that there were three men)

-- Answer to Teaser:

A list of everything you want! ❖

Pope's Intentions

January Monthly Intention:

Young People

That young people, especially in Latin America, follow the example of Mary and respond to the call of the Lord to communicate the joy of the Gospel to the world. ❖

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Mind Puzzler Corner

Our Last Brain Teaser was:

These seven words all have something in common. See if you can figure out what it is!

Banana - Dresser - Grammar - Potato - Revive - Uneven = Assess (Hint: It is not that they all have at least two double letters.)

Answer: In all of the words listed, if you take the first letter, place it at the end of the word, and then spell the word backwards, it will be the same word.

This Week's Brain Teaser:

A man murders his wife in their car. He throws her out of the car, being careful not to leave any fingerprints on her body. Then he goes home. An hour later, the police call and tell him that his wife has been murdered and he needs to come to the scene of the crime immediately. As soon as he arrives, he is arrested. How did the police know that he did it?

Look for the Answer next issue

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Leaders we lost in 2018

They toiled, they taught and inspired. They lobbied and clashed with civil authorities and governments. They led many to God. They were all powerful witnesses of the love of God.

Here are just a few of our Catholic leaders to whom we said our final goodbyes in 2018.

Mr. Compton Young

Mr Compton Julian Young was perhaps best known to Catholics for his zeal for God, and for being a local pioneer and leading figure in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement that began sweeping through mainline denominations over 50 years ago. He died on Sunday March 18th after a long illness. He was 77.

Mr. Young was also a former Mayor of Georgetown and a popular florist.

Msgr. Terrence Montrose, the officiating priest at his funeral service described Mr. Young as someone who was always in the old Sacred Heart Church in Main Street, either decorating or leading, organizing or encouraging. He added that during his visits to Mr. Young after he retired he found that Mr. Young was always very thankful to God for being able to give his best to society.

Also at his funeral, Mr. Kent Vincent and Mr. Andrew James, leaders in the local Charismatic Movement, reflected that Mr. Young was one of the first lay persons to join what eventually became known as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Guyana, when, as a young man, at around 30 years of age he had an encounter with God while visiting the Sacred Heart Presbytery. As he listened to a group of priests and nuns who were singing and praying, according to Mr. Young, he "was summoned into the Eternal Courts of Heaven".

Bishop Benedict Singh

Bishop Ganesh Benedict Singh who headed the Roman Catholic Church in Guyana from August 1971 until his retirement in 2003, died on September 12th at the Balwant Singh Hospital where he was admitted one week before. He was 90 years old.

Commenting on his death, his successor Bishop Francis Alleyne OSB said, "... during my time in office, as I have come to better understand and gain insight into the events and circumstance in the Church and in Guyana over the period of his tenure, I have come to very much appreciate and admire



the quiet and formidable strength and resolve of this Churchman. This Son of the Soil has served Church and Nation nobly".

His episcopate was indeed at times very challenging. Although it was a time when everything in the church seemed to revolve around the clergy, he recognized the important role of not only Guyanese clergy but also of lay people in the work of the Church.

To this end, very soon after he took over as Bishop, he introduced the Parish Lay Assistant (PLA) training programme throughout the diocese.

His tenure was also remembered for the courage and zeal he showed in the struggle for democracy, justice and peace in Guyana during some of the country's more turbulent years.



In this 1989 picture, Bishop Singh is seen outside the locked gates of the Brickdam Police Station at the arrest of demonstrators against the Budget. The detainees in the police station included Father Malcolm Rodrigues SJ, Father John Persaud, Brother Patrick Ramsay SJ and Ms. Juliet Daniels. He was accompanied by a parishioner, Fr Terrence Montrose and Fr. Dereck Maitland SJ.

Sister Admirablis Browne RSM

There were hundreds at Our Lady of Fatima Church for the funeral service of Sister Admirablis Browne who died on July 28th at the Saint Joseph Mercy Hospital at the ripe old age of 93.

Seventy years ago, she entered the Sisters of Mercy. A teacher who taught in Georgetown and Santa Rosa, she became the principal of St. Joseph's High School. She was then asked to be the administrator of the Hospital, a job which she said was her most challenging ministry but one where she came to know and experience God's providential Care.

Sr. Admi was the first Regional Coordinator of Guyana. In her role of leadership, she was collaborative, courageous and open to new possibilities.

In sharing her memories of 70 years as a Sister of Mercy she told the story of a young boy who said to his father, "Look Auntie Jesus" She said that this experience shaped her life. She wanted people to experience Jesus when they encountered her. One



of her deepest desires was to let others know that God loved them unconditionally. She strove to love others in that way. Even in her later years she taught the children from the back of Meadow Brook and Sophia.

'Auntie' Enid Cheong

"We can do no better than to take a page out of her book". So said Vicar General Terrence Montrose at the funeral on July 7th of a very active and long-serving

member of the Catholic Church and Sacred Heart parish in particular, 'Auntie' Enid Cheong who died last July at the St Joseph Mercy Hospital at the age of 93.

She often described with great feeling the debt she owed the Sisters of Mercy who were her teachers both in the North West where she was born and at Sacred Heart School.

Perhaps that is why she was so deeply involved in a number of Catholic enterprises.

For many years she was a member of the Friends of Saint Paul's Seminary Committee. Although that was more than 40 years ago for now- Vicar General, Msgr. Terrence Montrose, he still has very fond memories of her at that time.

Along with being secretary to Bishop Benedict Singh for many years, Ms. Cheong also held the post of Treasurer of the Central Committee of the Ladies of Charity from 1982 until recently.

She was also chairperson of the Sacred Heart Parish Council for six years, was in charge of that church's feeding programme also for six years, and was also a Minister of the Eucharist there since 1984.

Ms. Carol De Jonge

Ms. Carol De Jonge was the deputy head of the Religious Education programme of the Brickdam Cathedral parish died in October. She devotedly taught the First Communion

Class and always volunteered to assist with the church's summer school programme every year.

She was also a very active Mercy Associate.

For more than five years she taught remedial English at the Mercy Wings vocational centre in Sophia which aims at transforming young people who have left school early into a new kind of youth who have a skill, a positive self-image and sound moral and spiritual values.

She also taught for a short period at Marian Academy. ❖





Ascension holiday light-show amazes many



By Leon Suseran

There was magic and music last Sunday as the Church of the Ascension, New Amsterdam, presented its Second Annual Light-up and musical show. The event was held along the backdrop of the parish's Annual Christmas Village on the church lawns. This year featured the usual Christmas foods and goodies including cakes, garlic pork and other holiday foods that are ever-popular at this time. When the sale of goodies ended, the light-up began.

Mr. Stephen Persaud and his team of helpers did it once again and enthralled dozens of onlookers as the front of the majestic church building was adorned with fairy lights that pulsed to the musical beat. According to Mr. Persaud, two spiral Christmas trees were

added this year. He laid 165 feet of lights, and the entire display utilised some 2,000 feet of wires! Amazing! "The music will blend with the sequences from the light so basically what you hear playing is brought to life with lights," he told the Catholic Standard. "It's not that hard but it's very time consuming. The hardest part is actually the wiring of the lights because you are taking a regular bulb and making it dim, shimmer, fade and flash."

"And to do that you have to have wires to every set of bulbs independently," he said.

That's a lot of wiring! Stephen and his team of helpers worked into the wee hours of the days before the event and this must be commended. He extended thanks to Ms. Rebecca Blair, Ms. Cynthia Harris, Ms. Roxann Pahalad and her husband, Ms. Sue Ann and

many, many others too numerous to mention. Those who attended were entertained and surely amazed at the intricate efforts Mr. Persaud - a professional in these things- put in to his light-show.

The kids received a treat and surprise after the show. "I also bought gifts that was given out for the kids too so it made the whole event special," he told this publication.

Thank you to the hardworking members of Ascension parish and even non-members for making this event a grand success.

The Christmas village is one of the most highly-anticipated events in Berbice each year and so too the light-up. May God richly bless those whose hard work paid off.

Videos and pictures of the special evening maybe seen at the parish Facebook page. ❖

On the Lighter Side



A Holy and Blessed Christmas

May the Peace and Hope of Christ's birth be with you now and in the days ahead



Merry Christmas

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