

The Saint Raphael Link

Some Periodic Ramblings of the Prior

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Dear Members

For many; Christmas is just a holiday and a time spent in buying gifts they can't really afford. It's a time for squeezing parties and extra events into an already busy schedule. It's also a time when many people may feel rushed and overcommitted, when really what they need to do is to slow down and enjoy one of the most holy seasons of the year.

Christmas should be a time of peace, not of fear and unrest. Often, we fear we may have overlooked someone on our gift list; maybe they won't like what we bought them, or perhaps they will think our gift too cheap. Then for others, Christmas brings the added tension of bringing together fractured families. Instead of peace and goodwill, there are the dreaded inevitable conflicts; but deep down, we all know that Christmas should really be a time of peace.

Because Christmas is at the end of one year and the beginning of the next, it should be a time of hope, poised as it is at the crossroads of the past and the future. A previous year, with its blessings and its trials, is gone. A new year looms ahead, full of uncertainty. Yet, here is Christmas; the celebration of a birth that took place two thousand years ago. It should be a perennial bright

spot on our calendars, because God has given us hope. Christmas really should be a time of hope.

Centred around the greatest love story ever told, is God who so loved the world that He gave us His only begotten Son. Christmas is the story of God's greatest gift given to meet our greatest need, because God is Love. Christmas should be a time of love.

The Christmas story then is a tale re-told year after year; yet it never loses its majesty and wonder. My prayer for each one of you this Christmastide is that you will find room in your hearts for that Peace, Hope, and Love which Our Blessed Lord came to bring.

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen

+ Geoffrey GRAND PRIOR

For your Prayers:



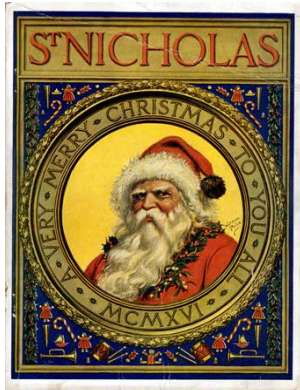
Beryl Anderton / Mary Gallagher / Gillian Gaiter / Lesley Fudge / Thelma Thompson / Paul Shaw / Sheila Hogarth / Ivy Holland / Maddie and Alan Penlington / Ruth Barr / Kathleen Roberts / Suzie Jeng / Tracey Solley /

Ian & Anne Weatherall / Marlene Addy /
 Pauline Weatherall / Ray & Doreen
 Connell / Margaret Smith / Florence
 Palmer / Sadie Sutton / Peter Bell /
 Norman Winstanley / Ruby & Calvin
 Brindley (Gozo) / John Leatherland,
 bishop / William Collier / Tania Walker /
 Tommy Ryan / John Bartle / Michael
 Greer / Brian Adams / Vicky Grimshaw /
 Patricia Grant / Brian Barber / Elizabeth
 Mills / Helen Kalli / Christine Felton /
 Lidia Flemming / Vera Balmforth / Tracey
 Rouse / Paul Sheridan / Roy Howard /
 Elaine Ingham / Carol Sagar / Albert
 Jones / Diane Shipton and Derek her
 father / Baby Charlotte Park / Nicole
 Vendettuoli / Tyler Page / Pat Crawshaw
 / Julie Stelling / Hannah Hudson . Cath
 Bromilow / Archbishop Norman Dutton
 (in hospital) / Bishop Mike Ward /
 Margaret Rixon / Vivienne Ainsworth / Jo
 Kelley.

Answers to Locations:

1. Durham Castle / 2, Portsmouth Harbour / 3. Roman Baths in
 the City of Bath.

Calendar of Saints



SAINT NICHOLAS

HIS FEAST DAY IS DECEMBER 6TH.

The Man Behind the Story of Father Christmas / Santa Claus

St. Nicholas was a Bishop who lived in the fourth century AD in a place called Myra in Asia Minor (now called Turkey). He was a very rich man because his parents died when he was young and left him a lot of money. He was also a very kind man and had a reputation for helping the poor and giving secret gifts to people who needed it. There are several legends about St. Nicholas, although we don't know if any of them are true!

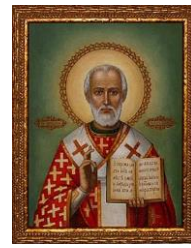


Image from the St. Nicholas Centre

The most famous story about St. Nicholas tells how the custom of hanging up stockings to get presents in first started! It goes like this:

There was a poor man who had three daughters. He was so poor, he did not have enough money for a dowry, so his daughters couldn't get married. (A dowry is a sum of money paid to the bridegroom by the brides parents on the wedding day. This still happens in some countries, even today.) One night, Nicholas secretly dropped a bag of gold down the chimney and into the house (This meant that the oldest daughter was then able to be married.). The bag fell into a stocking that had been hung by the fire to dry! This was repeated later with the second daughter.

Finally; determined to discover the person who had given him the money, the father secretly hid by the fire every evening until he caught Nicholas dropping in a bag of gold.

Nicholas begged the man to not tell anyone what he had done, because he did not want to bring attention to himself. But soon the news got out and when anyone received a secret gift, it was thought that maybe it was from Nicholas. Because of his kindness Nicholas was made a

Saint. St. Nicholas is not only the saint of children but also of sailors! One story tells of him helping some sailors that were caught in a dreadful storm off the coast of Turkey. The storm was raging around them and all the men were terrified that their ship would sink beneath the giant waves. They prayed to St. Nicholas to help them. Suddenly, he was standing on the deck before them. He ordered the sea to be calm, the storm died away, and they were able to sail their ship safely to port.

Story Corner

The Gold Wrapping Paper - An Inspirational Short Christmas Story



Once upon a time, there was a man who worked very hard just to keep food on the table

for his family. This particular year a few days before Christmas, he punished his little five-year-old daughter after learning that she had used up the family's only roll of expensive gold wrapping paper.

As money was tight, he became even more upset when on Christmas Eve he saw that the child had used all of the expensive gold paper to decorate one shoebox she had put under the Christmas tree. He also was concerned about where she had found the money to buy what was in the shoebox.

Nevertheless, the next morning the little girl, filled with excitement, brought the gift box to her father and said, "This is for you, Daddy!"

As he opened the box, the father was embarrassed by his earlier overreaction, now regretting how he had punished her.

But when he opened the shoebox, he found it was empty and again his anger flared. "Don't you know, young lady," he said harshly, "when you give someone a present, there's supposed to be something inside the package!"

The little girl looked up at him with sad tears rolling from her eyes and whispered: "Daddy, it's not empty. I blew kisses into it until it was all full."

The father was crushed. He fell on his knees and put his arms around his precious little girl.

He begged her to forgive him for his unnecessary anger.

An accident took the life of the child only a short time later. It is told that the father kept this little gold box by his bed for all the years of his life. Whenever he was discouraged or faced difficult problems, he would open the box, take out an imaginary kiss, and remember the love of this beautiful child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us has been given an invisible golden box filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children, family, friends and God. There is no more precious possession anyone could hold.

Cook's Corner



SNOWFLAKE COCKTAIL

This rich and creamy cocktail would be perfect after dinner on Christmas Day – Serves 1.

Ingredients:

- 30ml Dr. Oetker Liquid Glucose
- 50g Horlicks (malted drink powder)
- 25ml Advocaat (egg liqueur)

- 25ml Baileys
- 25ml full fat milk

- 1 small piece white chocolate, finely grated
- 1 Mikado milk chocolate stick

Method:

1. Using a small pastry brush, carefully coat the rim of a martini glass with the glucose syrup. Invert the glass onto a small plate covered with Horlicks to create a 'Horlicks rim'.
2. Three-quarters fill a cocktail shaker with ice. Pour in the Advocaat, Baileys and milk, then put the lid on and shake for 10-15 seconds, or until the outside of the shaker is frosted and ice cold.
3. Strain the contents of the cocktail shaker into your Horlicks-rimmed glass and garnish with a light grating of white chocolate and the chocolate stick balanced on the edge. Serve immediately

Guess the Locations:



1.



2.



3.



The Healing Teaching &
Chivalric Order of St Raphael