

The Saint Raphael Link

Some Periodic Ramblings of the Prior

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Dear Members



Once upon a time, there was a man who 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 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.

A short time later the child died in an accident and it is told, that the father kept this little gold box by his bed for the rest 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.

May God bless each one of you this Christmas and all those you love.

+Geoffrey GRAND PRIOR

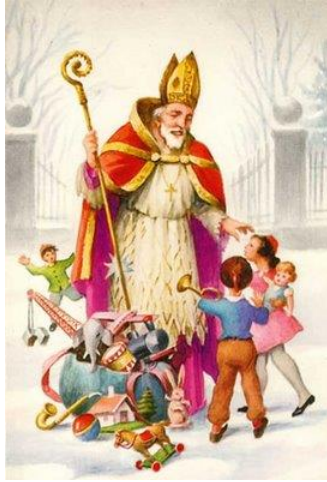


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Brigitte Duffet / Malcolm Corby / Eileen Duffy / Tony Kirby / Ronald Ball / Ian Cameron / Terry Duffy / Glyn Shipton, priest . Diane Shipton and parents Derek & Delia / Angela Billerness / Divina (Mill Hill in London) / Charlotte Ward.

Answers to Locations: 1. York Minster / 2, Big Ben in London / 3. Keele Hall Staffordshire.

Calendar of Saints



Saint Nicholas' Day

Is observed on December 6 (in Western Christian countries) and 19 December (in Eastern Christian countries), it is the feast day of Saint Nicholas. It is celebrated as a Christian festival with particular regard to his reputation as a bringer of gifts, as well as through the attendance at mass or worship services. In Europe, especially in "Germany and Poland, boys would dress as bishops begging alms for the poor." In Ukraine, children wait for St. Nicholas to come and to put a present under their pillows provided that the children were good during the year. Children who behaved badly may expect to find a twig or a piece of coal under their pillows. In the Netherlands, "Dutch children put out a clog filled with hay and a carrot for Saint Nicholas' horse. On Saint Nicholas' Day, gifts are tagged with personal humorous rhymes written by the sender." In the United States, one custom associated with Saint Nicholas Day is children leaving their shoes in the foyer on Saint Nicholas Eve in hope that Saint Nicholas will place some coins on the soles, for them to awake to.

The American Santa Claus, as well as the British Father Christmas, derive from Saint Nicholas. "Santa Claus" is itself derived in part from the Dutch *Sinterklaas*, the saint's name in that language. However the gift giving associated with these descendant figures is associated with Christmas Day rather than Saint Nicholas Day itself

Story Corner

"Merry Christmas to You,
Mary Christmas"

That's what the former Mary Young will be hearing this holy season, after she married Brian Christmas recently.

'It was meant to be,' Mary Christmas told her local newspaper. 'God has a sense of humour. What are the chances that it would ever happen?' She has found, however, that she is not alone. Mary Christmas has been working at Ancestry.com for three years and discovered there are as many as 100 other Mary Christmases in the United States. 'The last name of Christmas has its origins in Wales,' she said, 'It was given to people that were born on Christmas Day,' she continued.

Cook's Corner:



Ingredients

8 small pears (such as Seckel or Forelle)
5 tbsp. honey / 3 tbsp. sugar / 1 strip orange zest / 1 strip lemon zest / 1 tsp. fresh lemon juice / 1 stick cinnamon / 1 vanilla bean / 1 bag fruit tea (tropical green or passion fruit) / 2¼ c. fresh or frozen cranberries,

Directions

1. Place pears in saucepan large enough to hold them snugly.
2. Add enough water (about 4 cups) to barely cover.
3. Add honey, sugar, orange and lemon zest, lemon juice, and cinnamon stick.
4. Using tip of paring knife, scrape vanilla seeds out of pod and add to pan.
5. Toss in pod and add tea bag. Bring to a boil over medium high heat, stirring until sugar has dissolved.
6. Reduce heat and simmer until pears are tender when pierced with tip of knife, about 10 minutes.
7. Add cranberries and return to simmer until they burst, about 3 minutes.
8. Remove and discard tea bag.

9. Transfer pears to large bowl and pour cranberries and syrup over them. Cover and refrigerate overnight or up to 3 days.
10. Remove and discard citrus zest, cinnamon stick, and vanilla bean.

To serve, arrange pears on platter. Spoon cranberries and as much of poaching liquid as desired over pears.

Guess the Locations:



1.



2.



3.



A Prayer for Christmas Morning

Father in Heaven; the day of joy returns, and crowns another year with peace and good will. Help us rightly to remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the wise men. Close the doors of hate and open the doors of love all over the world? Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil, by the blessing that Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clean hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be your children, And the Christmas evening bring us to our bed with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven: This we ask through Jesus the Lord..
Amen



The Healing Teaching &
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