



Campus Ministry Online

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Christmas Tree Blessing

Holy Creator of Trees,
bless with your abundant grace
this our Christmas tree as a
symbol of joy.
May its evergreen branches be a
sign
of your never-fading promises.
May its colorful lights and
ornaments call us
to decorate with love our home
and our world.
May the gifts that surround this
tree
be symbols of the gifts we have
received
from the Tree of Christ's Cross.
Holy Christmas tree within our
home,
may Joy and Peace come and
nest
in your branches and in our
hearts.
Amen.

Christmas Manger Prayer

O God,
whose mighty Son was born in
Bethlehem
those days long ago,
lead us to that same poor place,
where Mary laid her tiny Child.
And as we look on in wonder and
praise,
make us welcome him in all new
life,
see him in the poor,
and care for his handiwork
the earth, the sky and the sea.
O God, bless us again in your
great love.
We pray for this through Christ
our Lord.
Amen

The Real Meaning Of Christmas

The holiday season has started. December has come and with it all the preparation for Christmas. But what is the real meaning of Christmas? Is it the gifts under the tree, the lights in the windows, the cards in the mail, dinners and parties with family and friends, snow in the yard, stockings hanging in the living room, and shouts of "Merry Christmas" to those who pass us in the streets? Is this really Christmas?

For many people, Christmas is a sad time. In this economy some don't have the extra money to buy presents for their children, family, and friends. Many are saddened at Christmastime when they think of their loved ones who will not be able to come home due to illness, job or other various reasons.

Yet, Christmas can be a season of great joy. It is a time of God showing His great love for us. It can be a time of healing and renewed strength. You see, Christmas is when we celebrate the birth of the Christ child. God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to be born. His birth brought great joy to the world. Shepherds, wise men, and angels all shared in the excitement of knowing about this great event. They knew this was no ordinary baby. The prophets had told of His coming hundreds of years before. The star stopped over Bethlehem just to mark the way for those who were looking for this special child.

Why did He come? Why did God send His son to this sometimes cruel and hard world? He sent Jesus to us so that one day, He would grow up to become a very important part of history. His story (history) is one of truth, love, and hope. It brought salvation to all of us. Without Jesus, we would all die in our sins.

Jesus was born so one day the price could be paid for the things we have done that are wrong. We are all born with a sin. We do things that do not please God. We need to have that removed. The only way is through Jesus. Jesus came so He could die on the cross for ALL of our sins. Advent is a time of preparation for Christ coming into our lives. We need this time to reflect and make things right with God. Then we can truly be happy at Christmas! No matter what may be happening, we can know that we are His children.

Look at Christmas in a new way this year. This is the year to invite Jesus into your heart. You will then have a "Merry Christmas." The joy and peace you will receive will last all year as you look to God for all your needs to be met.

Jesus Is The Reason For The Season! Rejoice!

Christmas Prayer of Pope John XXIII

O sweet Child of Bethlehem,
grant that we may share with all
our hearts
in this profound mystery of
Christmas.
Put into the hearts of men and
women this peace
for which they sometimes seek so
desperately
and which you alone can give to
them.
Help them to know one another
better,
and to live as brothers and
sisters,
children of the same Father.
Reveal to them also your beauty,
holiness and purity.
Awaken in their hearts
love and gratitude for your infinite
goodness.
Join them all together in your
love.
And give us your heavenly peace.
Amen.

Pope John XXIII

***These newsletters are a
service of Mater Dei
Campus Ministry in an
attempt to:***

- 1. Share information about
our Catholic faith to
keep our community
aware of some of the
teachings of our
tradition.***
- 2. Update our community
of changes in
understandings and
rituals***
- 3. Assist parents with the
faith formation of their
youth.***
- 4. Provide links to sites
with helpful information
on faith and parenting.***

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Know Your Faith

Advent

The word Advent derives from the Latin word meaning coming. The Lord is coming. During Advent we recall the history of God's people and reflect on how the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament were fulfilled. This gives us a background for the present. Today we can reflect on the past track record of God and so begin to understand what it means to us now for the sake of what is to come, in our own future and that of our world.

Christmas Creche

The word *creche* is from the French word for manger. The French word comes from the Italian word *Greccio*. **Greccio** was the town where the first manger scene was set up by **St. Francis of Assisi** in 1223

Inexpensive Christmas Gifts

1. Let someone in line before you.
2. Pick up a piece of litter.
3. Smile to a crying child.
4. Listen with an open mind.
5. Give someone a cheer CD or music compilation.
6. Send a card.
7. Take bagels into the office.
8. Give a hug.
9. Give away a dozen roses or any flower.
10. Take your boss a cup of coffee.
11. Say thank you.
12. Ask a stranger how their life is going and really listen.
13. Babysit for a friend.
14. Sit with an elder in a nursing home.
15. Say a prayer for a friend.

Retreat Opportunities

The next Quest retreat will be held at St. Dominic in Breese on February 11 & 12.. Applications are available in Campus Ministry.

The next TEC retreat will be held at Red Bud on January 14-16. Applications are also available in Campus Ministry.

Helpful Websites

U.S.Conference of Catholic Bishops	www.usccb.org
Center for Parent/Youth Understanding	www.cpyu.org
Diocese of Belleville	www.diobelle.org
TEC Retreats	chairperson@bellevilletec.com
Quest Retreats	washed_up_dj@yahoo.com