



# CENTRAL WASHINGTON CATHOLIC

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## The First Christmas: Jesus' Humble Birth Was Rich In Meaning

By Christine Corbett Conklin

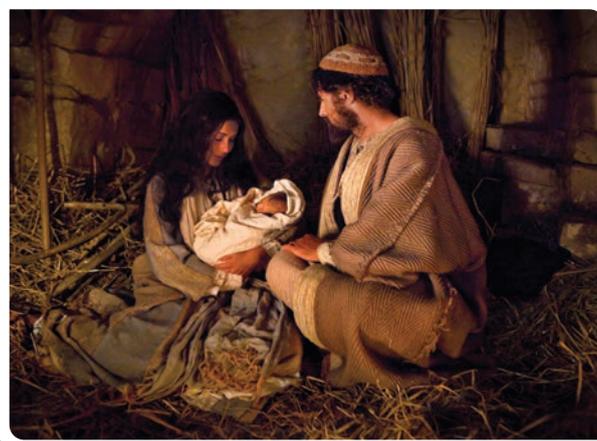
Beginning with the exile from the Garden of Eden, God promised that he would send a Savior to free His people. By the time the Israelites also found themselves in exile, they were expecting a “kind of military ruler, a Messiah who would establish a kingdom that would dominate the whole world,” observed Very Rev Michael Ibach, judicial vicar of the Diocese of Yakima and parochial vicar of Holy Family Parish in Yakima.

When that Savior did arrive, on the first Christmas Day, He wasn't quite whom anyone expected. He was a baby born in a stable or more probably one of the many caves surrounding Bethlehem where shepherds would take refuge at night with their flocks of sheep.

“God sent a little child because it's a sign that He has come as a humble person ... to welcome all people into his Kingdom,” Father Ibach said in a telephone interview with the *Central Washington Catholic*. “He came not to establish a kingdom on earth, but rather to bring us the Kingdom of God which would be eternal life.”

While the people of the time might have expected their Savior to arrive in fine silk clothing and jewels, instead, this Baby Jesus was wrapped in “swaddling clothes” – the equivalent of rags, Father noted. Unlike the Christmas cards that show Mary, in particular, dressed in a luxurious gown and veil, often edged in gold trim, she and Joseph, also, no doubt wore simple attire. It was far from the image of the “materialistic kingdom” that folks had anticipated.

Instead of being greeted by the royal rulers of the day, Jesus' first visitors were, in fact, the shepherds of the fields, individuals who were considered to be lacking in social stature. The Wise Men – possibly three, possibly even more --



came “from the East,” signifying God's love in welcoming all people to His Kingdom.

Although it all sounds like a magical fairy tale, Biblical and historical records show that the birth of Jesus was an actual event, Father explained. Josephus, a Jewish historian, noted the birth. Even Roman historians mentioned it, although they were “somewhat skeptical” that this Jesus would really be the miracle worker and Savior He turned out to be.

And, as Jesus went on to begin his public ministry, years later, records show this same humility and welcoming attitude continued. At one point, He “goes up into the hills to pray,” Father Ibach observed. “He didn't want people to praise Him, to glorify Him” for his miracles and acts of kindness here on earth. When he did perform a miracle,

he would sometimes say, “Don't tell anybody,” Father added.

Today, as we scramble to buy presents, decorate, bake and plan gatherings with others, the significance and simplicity of that First Christmas is easily forgotten. We should remember the example of Jesus who came “not to be served, but to serve.”

Father Ibach suggested that we can still share Christmas gifts with each other “as signs of love,” but should remember to include the disadvantaged in our plans. That could mean buying an item for a “giving tree” program at church, visiting someone who is all alone, contributing to a winter coat or clothing drive, providing food for the hungry or perhaps helping the homeless in other ways.

“Those are the things Jesus really wants us to do,” Father said. “His message is to be concerned for others.” This underlies “the dignity of every human being ...”

So, as the Christmas season begins, try to set up a Nativity scene in your home, as a reminder of that Baby born in such humble surroundings, Father suggested. Then, let His spirit guide you in remembering what really matters at Christmas – and all year around: humbly doing what we can for those in need.

## Mass Celebrated for Deceased Clergy

Deceased clergy of the Diocese of Yakima were remembered at an annual Mass celebrated November 23 at St. Paul Cathedral. Please pray for all of our deceased priests, deacons and sisters who have gone before us.



## A Message from Bishop Tyson...

Dear Friends:

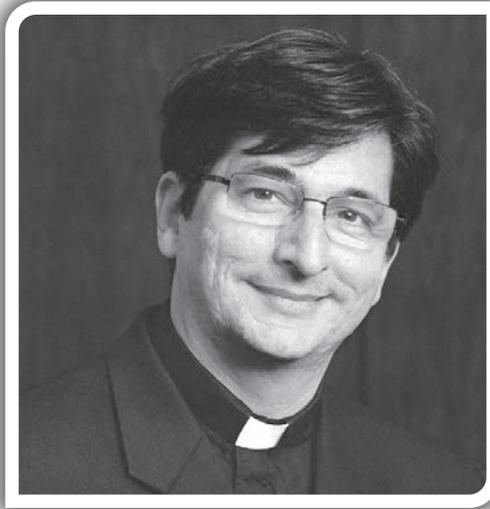
Welcome to Advent! The start of a new liturgical year! The last Sunday of the liturgical year is the Feast of Christ the King, uplifting a king who in the Gospels dies on a cross. Advent prepares us to welcome this unusual king at Christmas. Christ the King who has a wooden cross for a throne is the same Christ who comes as King of Creation in a wooden manger. Christ the King crowned with thorns enters this world in the simplicity of an animal stable. The journey to Golgotha mirrors the journey of the Holy Family into Egyptian exile.

Christmas reminds us that Christ comes, not in a palace but in an animal shelter. Christ holds court, not with the nobility of royalty, but with the simple shepherds of the field. Christ enters the world – not in Rome or even Jerusalem – but in the defeated city of the House of David. Bethlehem. Christ arrives not with a military squadron, but with a “strata” of angels – “strata” being the Greek word for “army.”

Beneath the tinsel and bows and bright colored lights lies a deeper journey of faith leading us from death to new life. Our participation in the Sunday Eucharist disciplines us to walk this journey with Jesus at every turn of His life. His life becomes our life. His walk is our walk.

In this context, then, we might begin to grasp the call of Pope Francis and the start of the “synodal” process. “Synod” comes from the Greek word “to walk together.” Normally, “synods” occur in Rome when the Holy Father invites a few bishops from around the world to walk with him and talk with him about specific topics. Thus we had a “synod” on the second reception of Vatican II during the time of Pope Saint John Paul II. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI had a synod on the “new evangelization,” part of which I attended when we canonized Saint Kateri Tekakwitha.

But Pope Francis has called forth a very different synod. This synod does not begin in Rome. It begins here at home. On October



**Bishop Joseph Tyson**

17, 2021 every bishop was asked by the Holy Father to be in his diocesan cathedral and launch the synod process. From the local parishes and diocese, consultations will lead up to a synod in Rome.

When speaking of the synod, Pope Francis highlights three key words: communion, participation and mission. Communion refers to our communion with Christ. First and foremost our communion refers to our celebration of the Eucharist. But communion also means the many ways we build up our spiritual life through prayer, spiritual reading, meditation on scripture, the rosary, our novenas and devotions, even our processions. Pope Francis notes that adoration is sometimes an underappreciated way in which we can foster deep communion with Christ.

So, when we get to his second key word – participation – our sharing with each other is not about our sharing our thoughts and opinions about the church, the social environment in which we live or the hot-button issues of the day. Certainly we all have our thoughts and opinions. But our participation and sharing with each other is about sharing the fruits of our communion with Christ. This begins first by listening. God gave us two ears but only one mouth for a reason: so we

can listen more than we can speak. Participation is about listening to the fruits of our communion with Christ. It is our experience of Eucharist in our parishes, our experiences of prayer, our ways of fostering our friendship with Jesus Christ.

The third key word – mission – grows out of our participation. As we share with each other the fruits of our faith journey, how can we invite more and more people into friendship with Christ? That is our mission. Our mission is calling forth more disciples, more followers, more friends of Jesus Christ. Our participation may reveal to us certain patterns that today offer a gravitational direction from the Holy Spirit leading us as a Church to foster friendship with Christ.

Communion. Participation. Mission. Those three words might be good to keep in the back of our minds and hearts as we read the Advent scriptures and meditate on the journey of faith made by the Holy Family. As we unite ourselves to these sacred scriptures and as we celebrate Jesus Christ who is our Bread of Life, how might we foster the attitudinal shift we need to make in order to walk the synodal journey, synchronizing our steps with those of our fellow believers around the world?

“Long live Christ the King!” Those words of the Cristero martyrs in Mexico echo the cry of St. Mark who begins the Gospel with the Greek word “euangelion.” Like St. Mark, we have the “real” good news. Not the good news of the latest conquest of a Caesar or ruler. No. The real news: Jesus Christ is Lord. That is the good news we share, even today. It is the true “euangelion.” And if you look carefully at that written Greek word, you see the word “angel” right in the middle. May we be like those angelic messengers this Christmas. May we proclaim the Good News! Jesus is Lord. ¡Viva Cristo Rey!

With every best wish and blessing,

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph J. Tyson  
Bishop of Yakima

## Sister Marina Rose Dies

Sister Marina Rose (Virginia Parisi), who served as Coordinator of the Yakima Valley Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) Mission Centre, died November 15 at Trios Kennewick Hospital. She was 89 years old.

Born in New York, she lived in Italy from 1939-45. After a brief time back in New York, she and her family moved to Seattle. She entered religious formation in Marylhurst, Oregon, taking her vows in 1955. She would go on to teach in Portland, Seattle and Tacoma. She also served as a teacher and principal in

Arequipa, Peru, later becoming Director of Religious Education in Wapato. She “retired” after 14 years there and moved to Toppenish where she would assume her most recent responsibilities. She also volunteered as a singing teacher at Heritage University’s Early Learning Center.

Sister spent 66 years in religious life. In an earlier interview, she said, “I have always been privileged to work with those in need.” She added, “It’s been wonderfully rewarding.”

Please keep Sister Marina Rose and all of our department clergy and religious in your prayers.

If you have been abused or victimized by a member of the Catholic clergy, please believe in the possibility for hope and help and healing. We encourage you to come forward and speak out.

The Yakima Diocese has a sexual abuse hotline for those who wish to report some incident concerning that issue as regards a bishop, priest, deacon or diocesan employee or volunteer. (888) 276-4490.

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# PREPARES Offers Cosmetics, Beauty Products To Those in Need

By Melanie Mosshart, PREPARES Communications and Volunteer Coordinator

PREPARES has recently received a donation from one of our stellar partners, Project Beauty Share. What exactly is Project Beauty Share® you may be asking yourself, and how does it relate to PREPARES?



Project Beauty Share provides personal hygiene, cosmetics and beauty products to non-profit organizations like PREPARES who serve women and families overcoming unexpected crisis or difficult circumstances in their lives. The goal is to help restore hope and dignity in these women's lives. "Women who are poverty-stricken or women-in-transition cannot afford these luxury items," Julie Farley, founder of Project Beauty Share, says. "A lot of what we do is about health

and hygiene, but it's really about dignity."

A makeup artist for over 30 years in Spokane, Julie knows the value of good hygiene and makeup for a woman's self-esteem. Motivated by the need she saw in her community, Julie founded Project Beauty Share and PREPARES has been an active partner in recent years.

Volunteers from PREPARES, students from La Salle High School, physician interns and PREPARES staff have pooled their efforts to create bags of beauty, hygiene and pamper products to deliver those who would otherwise go without. More than 500 bags of cosmetics, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner and detergent were shared

with women who don't have the daily luxuries that most of us take for granted. Some women, it's been said, are embarrassed to be in public because they don't have the detergent to wash their clothes and certainly can't afford beauty products!

Volunteers were encouraged to see such a generous donation and even people who have just learned about Project Beauty Share wanted to be of service,



offering to make decorated fabric bags to contain the products. God's goodness has shined a light on PREPARES by offering an extraordinary partner like Project Beauty Share and our incredible volunteers.

## Come Join Santa for Breakfast

Come and spend a morning with Santa Claus at the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Santa's Breakfast, sponsored by the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Saturday, December 11, at Holy Family Parish in Yakima.

The event will offer the chance to take pictures with Santa and enjoy a meal, prize drawings and shopping at a Country Store, all from 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. in the Father Murtagh Gathering Hall.

The cost of the event is \$4 for children age three to 12, and \$7 for anyone age 13 and over, with free admission for children under age three. For more information, call (509) 388-4128.

*"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."* – Luke 2:10



Blessings from the Central Washington Catholic Foundation during this holiday season.



<https://cwcatholicfoundation.org/>

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## How Many of The 'Saints of Winter' Can You Name?

If you'd like a little inspiration through the dark days of Winter, consider the lives of some of the remarkable saints who went before us. See how many of the following saints, whose feast days fall within this season, you can identify. Answers follow at the end.

1. This saint, whose feast day is **December 26**, died a martyr in about the year 34. He was among the first ordained deacons of the Church. Miracles and excellent preaching were attributed to him, leading to persecution. Just before he died, he reportedly had a vision of Jesus, which led to allegations of blasphemy, and stoning by an angry crowd.

2. A woman who was told of her upcoming motherhood by an angel, this woman is a central figure of the Bible and in salvation history. Born in Jerusalem, she was the daughter of Saints Joachim and Anne. She had a cousin by the name of Elizabeth. Known today as the Mother of the Church, one of her numerous feast days is **January 1**.

3. With a feast day of **January 4**, this woman was the first native-born American to be canonized a saint. She lived from 1774 to 1821, converting to Catholicism as an adult. She helped to establish the first free Catholic school in the United States and formed a group of sisters who started two orphanages and another school.

4. Born in Bohemia in 1811, this



man is another American saint. He lived from 1811 to 1860 and his feast day is celebrated on **January 5**. He came to New York to be ordained a priest and later joined the Redemptorists. He became a

bishop and was known for helping to establish Catholic education in the U.S., starting dozens of schools.

5. This saint was born in Rome about 291, and her feast day is **January 21**. Very beautiful in appearance, a number of men wished to marry her but she reportedly said,

"Jesus Christ is my only spouse." She was reported as a Christian and endured persecution, leading to her death by a sword at about the age of 12 or 13.

6. Born near Geneva, Switzerland, in 1567, this saint at first hid his vocation to be a priest. Riding his horse one day, he reportedly fell three times and his sword and sheath settled on the ground in the shape of a cross, revealing God's will. He became a priest and bishop, encouraged Calvinists to come back to the Church and developed one of the first religious tracts. With a feast day on **January 24**, he's credited with leading some 40,000 people to the Church, founding a religious order, being an author, and asserting that all Christians are called to sanctity.

7. This saint, whose feast day is **February 3**, had the unusual distinction of helping individuals who had objects stuck in their throats. He reportedly progressed from being "a healer" to becoming a

bishop and "physician of souls." He has been depicted as holding two candles, which are crossed, in his hands. He died in 316, after refusing to renounce his faith.

8. Canonized in 2017, these two Portugese children were honored, with their cousin, Lucia, by apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima. Greatly moved by their visions, they were drawn to Eucharistic devotions and sacrifice and prayed for hours. He died at the age of 10, she at the age of nine. Their feast day is **February 20**.

9. Captured by pirates and taken to Ireland, this saint had an adventurous early life. A vision encouraged him to study to become a priest. He later became a bishop and went on to preach the Gospel message across Ireland. He converted thousands of people, built churches, worked miracles and used the humble shamrock to help people better understand the Trinity, before his death in 461. His feast day is **March 17**.

10. This saint, whose feast day is celebrated on **March 19**, had the unique responsibility of being the foster father of Jesus. A carpenter by trade, he was visited by an angel who helped him to gain courage in his special role. He was known for his faithfulness to God and to his family.

### Answers:

1. St. Stephen; 2. Mary, Mother of Jesus; 3. Elizabeth Ann Seton; 4. St. John Neumann; 5. St. Agnes; 6. St. Francis de Sales; 7. St. Blaise; 8. Francisco and Jacinta de Jesus Marto; 9. St. Patrick; 10. St. Joseph.

## Here's A Litany of Praise and Thanksgiving for the Season

Courtesy of Virtus

This beautiful time of year gives us pause to remember the many things in our lives for which we are grateful. Despite the difficulties of the times, the losses of dear loved ones and the many alienations that come with a pandemic, we are people of gratitude – and we continually find joy in the small things and peace in the many blessings that come our way. In a large way, we are blessings to others by lightening their burdens and sharing the bounty, however small, bestowed upon us. We are people whose hearts are filled with gratitude for every small gift that comes our way, and so we pray:

For the bounty of our blessings, we thank you, God.

For the gifts of peace that fills our hearts, we thank you, God.

For the ability to share our wealth with others, we thank you, God.

For the wonder and awe of your love for us, we praise you, God.

For the beauty of nature and the joy it brings, we praise you, God.

For the gift of family, and the caring we share, we praise you, God.

For the great gift of life, we thank you, God.

For the mercy that you extend, we thank you, God.

For the opportunities to assist others, we thank you, God.

For the persons, places and things you send our way, we praise you, God.

For the gift of Faith, which soothes our hearts, we praise you, God.



For the ability to turn the other cheek, we praise you, God.

For the strength to do good things, we thank you, God.

For the opportunities we gather to pray, sing and honor you, we thank you, God.

For the gift of home, we thank you, God.

For the occasions we can join together and share a meal, we thank you, God.

For the ability to make room for one more at the table, we thank you, God.

For our thankful hearts, we praise you, God.

*Note: Virtus provides safe environment training materials to the three dioceses in Washington State as well as to many church organizations throughout the United States.*