



Court Our Lady of the Valley #1974

Corvallis, Oregon

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Christmas Message from Father Matías



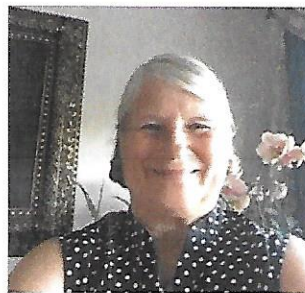
At the beginning of Advent this year we hear from the prophet Isaiah the following words: "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at thy presence" (Is 64:1). Immediately we

think of Jesus, he did rend the heavens, where He was with the Father from all eternity and came down. What a beautiful image. And more still, what a tremendous reality. A mystery to always ponder with awe and amazement. We cannot allow ourselves to domesticate the mystery, to be so used to it that we lose the wonder. As little children, we need to regain the capacity to stay admire what we celebrate in this feast. In the end that is what the Incarnation means, God has torn the heavens like a cloak to descend out of love for you and me.

Merry Christmas!

Father Matías

My Christmas List of Blessings



My Christmas list is more than just a way to keep track of the special people God has brought into my life to pray for and love.

It's like a treasured scrapbook with wonderful memories of all the times God answered prayer through CDA, family and friends.

Every name is a touchstone that leads to a place and time where God has used another's heart to reach out to mine. Through simple conversations, hard work, a smile or a warm hug (before covid) everyone on my list has helped me grow or laugh, heal or learn or smile...the blessings never end as God allowed our paths to cross.

This greeting is more than a Christmas wish it is a thank you card to God for putting you on my list as you have shown me Christmas joy each and everyday of the year. May you and your families have peace this Christmas and be guided by the strength of the Lord in the coming year.

Kathy Hale, Regent

Happy Birthday to Our CDA Ladies! Wishing You a Joyous Celebration with your Family and Friends!



Mary Kay Kalenius
12/2



Harriet Paradis
12/11



Kathy Hale
12/14

Mary Prevost's Saint of the Month

Saint Jane Frances 1572-1641

"Displaying who you really are"
December 12th, 2020 in Europe



(August 12 in the US)

I had already done much of the research and writing regarding St. Jane Frances De Chantal when I came across an article online that said that in the US her Saint day had been changed to August 12 as to not conflict with Our Lady of Guadalupe. I hope you all will not mind

being Europeans for the sake of this article!! I really feel she is the perfect Saint for our Advent Season!

St. Jane was a wife, mother, nun and founder of the religious order called, "The Visitation of the Virgin Mary".

St. Jane was born to a very wealthy family. She lived as many other aristocratic people of her time. But she was not without hardship as her mother died when she was just 18 months old. At 21 years of age she married a wealthy man named Christopher de Rabutin, Baron de Chantal. They had 6 children, 3 of them dying in infancy. St. Jane's husband died after 8 years of marriage (1601) leaving her a widow with three young children. She struggled with depression for months after his death. For a time, she lived with her unkind father-in-law who threatened to disinherit her children if she did not live with him. She always tried hard to have a cheery disposition while living with him. She worked hard reaching out to the poor and disadvantaged performing many charitable acts during this time. She re-instituted daily Mass in the household of her father-in-law which gave her much joy. St. Jane was always searching for God's will in her life.

At age 32, she met the Priest who would become her spiritual director and best friend, St. Francis de Sales. She had met him during a Lenten service where she heard him preach. He asked her if she intended to re-marry. She replied no as she intended to enter religious life. That night St. Jane, as was her custom, was dressed as many aristocratic women would have been with much finery and jewelry. When she expressed her desire to serve the poor and become a nun Francis' reply to her was, "Well, then, why don't you lower the flag?" Jane immediately began to change her life style. She began dressing modestly without finery and living her life to serve the Lord. She continued to visit the sick and dying and became a good mother to her children. At one point St. Jane wanted to become a Carmelite, but St. Francis de Sales had a different plan for her. Instead in 1610, the two formed an order especially for women who wanted to serve the Lord in Community, but for



St Jane

reasons of age, health or other circumstances had been rejected by other orders. These women were to embody the virtues of Mary's visitation to Elizabeth--humility and meekness. They worked hard to care for all those in need especially those affected by the great plague. St. Jane continued to work with St. Francis de Sales

until his death in 1622. St. Jane was inconsolable after his death. More sadness was to come when her son died in the war. Her son-in-law and daughter-in-law both died as well as many good friends as the plague ravaged the region. She also experienced much spiritual darkness and dryness, but St. Jane continued to trust in Jesus through all her trials and unhappiness. Her face was always one of contentment and peace no matter how much she was tormented inside. She always looked for God's will in her life. She strove to find it and follow His will no matter where it took her. St. Jane believed strongly in, "displaying who you really are" and always being genuine.

HOW TO PRAY THE ST. ANDREW CHRISTMAS

NOVENA: say the following prayer 15 times a day. The 15 times can be divided up in groups of five and said three times a day, or any other combination that works for you (or you can pray the prayer whenever you think of it).

As for me, I will make copies of the prayer and put them in different places around my house.

NOVENA PRAYER

Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born Of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in the piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires (here mention your request), through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ, and of His blessed Mother. Amen.

I found this version on "Pray Catholic Novenas" app.

Praying that you all have a blessed Advent season!

Tess Cersovski
Oregon State Regent

CHRISTMAS STORIES



My earliest Christmas memory was sitting in the Balcony of our Church at the Christmas Eve service (my family was Methodist at the time). I was about 4 years old and was in such awe seeing the Christmas story being played out down below me. We went home and my Dad read the Christmas story from the Bible. It was one of the only memories I have of him doing this. My husband, Ron has had this tradition with our family each Christmas morning

MARY PREVOST



My memory of the year I found out that Santa Claus lived in our attic about 1938. The day before Christmas Santa was coming to the town of Cottonwood, Idaho. It seems I was running a fever so I had to stay home with Mom and Dad while my big brother drove the rest into town. Mom had the wood cook stove going baking Christmas goodies –all of a sudden it sounded like a freight train in our chimney (a flue fire). Daddy and Mom hurried with the stepladder to go up to the attic. There we were-Daddy handing down package after package so Mom and I could get things away from the chimney. When I saw all that stuff under the tree the next morning I was amazed! After all we were a family of 12 by then and that's when I learned Santa lived on our attic!

CASEY BROCKAMP



The Christmas I was 10 there was a HUGE box under the tree with my name on the tag. There was nothing on my wish list that would necessitate a box of that enormous size, so the intrigue was greater than the container. I opened it slowly, and inside: another box, wrapped in paper with a bow. I opened that one, and guess what was inside? *Another* box, wrapped in different paper, with another bow. This scenario continued through 10 boxes total, with the final box about 2" square. Nestled inside was a medallion with my name engraved, spelled correctly, from the boy next door. :) It was not only the first present from a boy not related to me, it was a treasure when such name-carrying artifacts were popular. The boxes were quickly dispatched, the bows recycled, only the medallion remains, and the sweet memory. **DIANN STEIMLE**



Anyone who has spent Christmas in Hawaii, knows it takes on a flavor all its own: Santa in shorts, culinary treats reflecting the melting pot they were prepared in, and "Mele Kalikimaka" shared by passers-by on white sandy beaches, instead of the more widespread "Merry Christmas" on city sidewalks. However my childhood memory of a special Christmas, has less to do with these rich and unique memories I hold on to as a fourth generation island girl, than it has to do with what binds us believers together: the Nativity of Our Lord. Every Christmas my mind still takes me back to St. Christopher's, the little country church I grew up in, where side panels opened to allow in warm breezes, and the coconut trees outside shaded the Japanese grass that was our Sunday school classroom. However even these images fade as I focus on my 9th Christmas and the childrens' pageant that would precede our Christmas Eve service. Practices and costumes had been completed. I had successfully reassured my Mom that my feelings really were not hurt about not being chosen to be Mary, or one of the angels. I was genuinely excited! The young 'cast' squirmed eagerly in the back of the church for the processional music to start. An adult surely 'shooshed' us lovingly with a finger to their lips. There I stood at the back of the line, in my long robe and 'jeweled' crown, bearing my gift (was it gold, frankincense or myrrh? I can't remember now.) My heart was beating with childhood pride, but also with a new feeling: HONOR to be called forth to bring my gift to Jesus. Parents giggled sweetly, as their nervous children moved down the aisle, now with appropriate solemnity. For the first time I felt a part of something very adult that was happening around me, and in me. My journey towards Jesus had begun, and I was part of something very grand, something very HOLY. This fall, as my 74th Christmas approaches, my heart still bubbles over with honor as I think of the role I was allowed to play on that particular Christmas Eve; and yet another emotion accompanies me as well. I have found humility growing in me, ever so gradually over all these passing years, in being chosen to play a part in this Great Pageant: then and now, every day of every year! I also continue to find great joy in walking with so many beautiful companions along "The Way."! **JO RICH**





As a child of 9 and being the oldest daughter, Christmas preparation was a lot of work but I loved the celebration. We always went to midnight Mass as a family so our Christmas started early with lots of singing and jubilation of Jesus' birthday.

We always had a difficult time settling down and getting to bed which did not make my parents happy because unbeknown to us they still had a lot of work to complete before they went to bed. My Mom was very creative and she always waited until we went to bed to put the Santa Claus goodie tree up with all the wonderful treats and of course our Santa gifts. Christmas always brought us together as a family and helped us to learn to share with each other as Christ shares with us each and everyday.

KATHY HALE



I was at the Barbie stage in my life one Christmas and the only thing I wanted was a Barbie townhouse. I asked Santa for one because I believed in him and was certain he could bring me what I wanted. My parent had arranged for a friend to be "Santa". Santa delivered a Barbie townhouse! But then I saw Santa drive off in a pickup truck. That's when I stopped believing in Santa Claus. **JULIE CASTILLO**



Christmas, growing up on a ranch 20 miles from a small town was quite routine for my family. After a family get together on Christmas Eve in town we went to midnight Mass. This particular Christmas as we came out of Mass, the snowflakes were falling softly. They were so big and fluffy

that by the time we got home, the road was getting quite treacherous. On Christmas morning the world was white, clear and beautiful. And the highway was closed. I didn't think we could go to our grandparents' house about 3 miles away. My Dad fed the cows with a hay wagon pulled by a set of draft horses we had, Beauty and Barney. Instead of using the usual wagon my Dad hooked the team to a wagon with sled runners. After feeding he drove over to the house and we all piled in and rode to Grandma's house in a 2 horse open sleigh. **BETH SCHAEFERS**



In the 1940's St. Marys Church was only a few blocks from downtown Corvallis, on Fourth Street, a California mission style building, including a choir loft.

Our parish hall stood beside it, a rectangular, single story white frame building. There was a small kitchen, and at the far end from the entry a small stage. Every Christmas the parish sponsored a bazaar...lots of good food, baked goods, and hand-made gift items drew a large crowd. There were drawings for door prizes and raffle tickets were available for a number of wonderful gifts. My favorite one year was a beautiful curly-haired doll whose wardrobe included outfits for every season and best of all, a wedding dress! I held my breath as the number of the winning raffle ticket was read—then asked my dad if we had won. He shook his head no, and my heart sank.

The raffle for the biggest prize of the day would be announced at the end of the bazaar. Meanwhile, Christmas music filled the hall from the record player on the stage, but at some point some teenagers took charge of the music program, and formed a line---they danced the Bunny Hop, and I was impressed! I can't remember the name of the priest who started a second Bunny Hop line, inviting younger children to join him. Too many for the stage, our line wound through the hall to much laughing and clapping of hands. When that record was over, the priest started the Hokey Pokey, "Put your right foot in, put your right foot out, put your right foot in and shake it all about..."

I think that is the first time in my life it occurred to me that priests are humans, and enjoy having fun—just like "real people." **JOAN HAMM**



Here is a memory I have. I would have been in first or second grade. On Christmas Eve, we would go into the back bedroom and pray the rosary. While we were praying my Dad would go out and see if Santa had come. We would hear noises coming from the attic. When we were finished praying, we went out into the living room and yes, Santa had come. **LINDA GILES**



Christmas was always special at our home. We cut a tree off of our farm and made our own decorations. Christmas eve, mostly clothes, new pajamas, a toy for the little ones and games for the older ones. Mom had ordered a bucket of hard candy from Sears or Montgomery Ward and Dad

bought home a box of oranges. On Christmas morning we went to Mass at St. Henry's in Gresham. Father Kereny gave us an orange and some candy. Christmas dinner was always special with roasted chicken and all the "fixins" off the farm.

The Christmas I was four, my Mother had given birth to my youngest sister. She was still in the hospital with complications. My aunt came to help my Dad with the family-six of us kids. She gave me a little wooden doll cradle about 8 inches in size. When I was old enough to print, I put my name on it and put it away. 71 years ago when Fran and I got married and settled in our home, his Mother sent a box of his collections through the years. In it was a little China baby doll that just fit in that little cradle. Every so often we get it out to show the family. It is a great conversation piece and gets lots of laughs. *Just a note; 99 years ago when Fran, (Francis) was an infant, little boys wore dresses and were given dolls.* **CARROLL GERDING**



My parents were born in Europe and it was St. Nicolas that came. Santa Claus was unknown at that time. If you were good you received fruit and nuts and if you were bad, potatoes and onions were left in your shoes. One year

my brother and I decided to put potatoes and onions in our Mother's shoe. We thought it was funny. We didn't think our Mother did but I'm sure she laughed. **Louise Jederlinich**



Christmas memories from my childhood were pretty traditional.

Christmas Eve at my grandmothers house with many cousins, aunts, uncles and great-grandmother. Lots of delicious food, crisp white tablecloth and napkins and a visit from Santa himself with a small gift for each of us! Well, great-uncle Fred

in a bad Santa suit, but hey....tis the season!

Waking up the next morning to see what Santa left under the tree, get dressed in our Christmas finery and off to Mass with the other grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins; and onto their home. No starched linens here, but an explosion of family, noise, laughter and love filled the little farmhouse. We felt blessed. **CARMEN SHERMAN**



Christmas was always an exciting time for me and my 3 brothers and 3 sisters in the mid 60's. My parents would decorate the tree on my oldest brother's birthday, Dec 19 and no gifts showed up until Christmas morning when we were allowed to open ours all at once. Rushing downstairs early Christmas morning was wonderful pandemonium! I had no idea that other families waited and let only one person open one gift at a time. I'm not sure we even waited for Mom and Dad, though we were supposed to.



I remember one Christmas when there were gigantic boxes that held life sized dolls; A red headed Georgette for 8 year old Margaret, and one for me and my little

sister, Maureen, I must have been 5 and she was 3, and the Princess Doll for Teresa who was 7. And I remember many Christmases when we lived on a lake when Santa visited on Christmas Eve on a motorized raft decorated with lights and gave each child a stocking full of candy and cheap toys that we hung around our fireplace waiting for Christmas morning. Each advent it was always a family project to unpack Dad's old trunk which held our beautiful nativity set, always set up as the center decoration in our living room. Together our family would say the rosary kneeling around it. I remember mostly going to a long but beautiful midnight Mass, being shuffled off to bed to wake up to a transformed world of toys and great food! I have so many warm memories of Christmases when I was young. **KATY HARMON**



For my 2nd Christmas in 1947, I received a rocking chair. When I was 12, my father made me give it to my 4 year old cousin. It was very emotional for me. Just before I got married, I contacted my cousin and offered to give her my twin bed in exchange for the rocker. She made

the trade. Since I have had it back, all of our children have used it, then it went into storage. We had a fire in 1979 and the chair sustained a great deal of smoke damage and was badly blackened. After we moved to Corvallis, I had it completely refinished and it is now a beauty that sits in front of our fireplace. This chair means a great deal to me!



SHARRON DEMONTIGNY



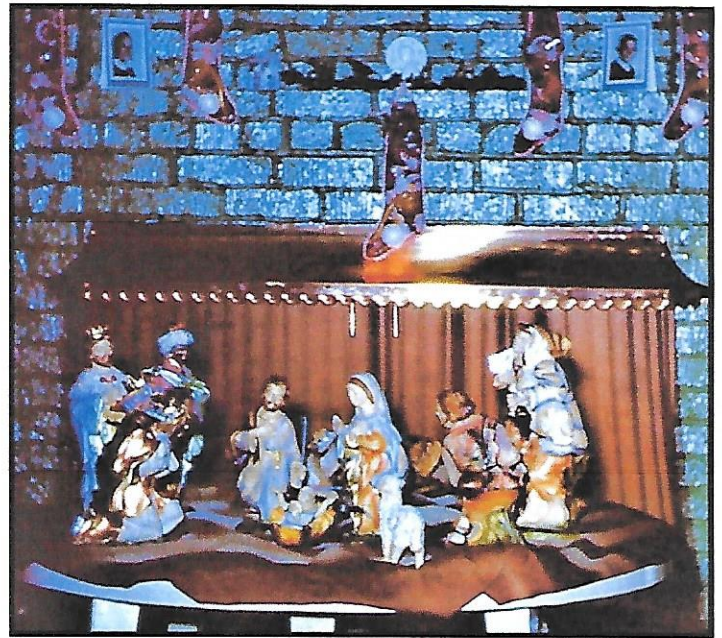
I grew up in New Orleans living with my Grandmother and like most everyone we were poor but happy. I remember one Christmas we walked several blocks and found a Christmas tree for fifty cents. For Christmas dinner we would have turkey or a roast in tomato gravy with eggplant or stuffed peppers. On Wednesdays my Aunt would bring spaghetti and meat balls.



Barbara Breaux



My Favorite Christmas Memory: I was about eight at the time, my Mom would make us hot chocolate and wrap us in warm blankets. **Isabel Hernandez**



The Nativity set that was a central part of Katy Harmon's Christmas



Christmas postcard my grandmother received in 1909.

Sometimes it is hard to concentrate on Mass, especially a midnight Mass when you are about 8 and are sitting in a pew that is not long enough for all who are sitting in it and you are next to a lady who is wearing a fur coat that she only earlier in the day took out of moth balls. **ED**

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