

"O come o wisdom
from on high"



celebrate
December

- 8 Immaculate Conception
holy day of obligation
- 9 Juan Diego
- 12 Our Lady of Guadalupe
- 25 Nativity of
the Lord
- 27 St. John
- 28 Holy
Family



new parable

Find the "W" in Christmas



There was a mother who, each December, vowed to make Christmas a calm and peaceful experience. She cut back on nonessential obligations: extensive card writing, endless baking, too much decorating and overspending. Yet she found herself exhausted, unable to appreciate the true meaning of Christmas.

Her kindergartner had practiced for weeks for his school's "Winter Pageant." The evening of the pageant, her son's class rose to sing "Christmas Love."

Children in the front row, center stage, held up large letters, one by one, to spell out the title of the song. The performance went smoothly, until, suddenly, the mother noticed a small, quiet girl in the front row holding the letter "M" upside down, totally unaware that the letter she held appeared as a "W."

The audience of first- through sixth-graders snickered at this little one's mistake. Although many teachers tried to shush the children, the laughter continued until the last letter was raised, and they all saw it together. A hush came over the audience and eyes began to widen. In that instant, they understood the reason they were there, why they celebrated the holiday in the first place, why even in the chaos of a so-called mistake there was a purpose for their festivities. For when the last letter was held high, the message was clear: "CHRIST WAS LOVE." The mother felt relief and filled with the shining belief that He still is.

- Adapted from an item circulating on the Internet

Photos by James Baca



**"The Mother bore
Him in her womb,
let us bear Him
in our hearts."**

— St. Augustine

kidscorner

Candy cane legend

The legend of the candy cane claims that long ago a candy maker wanted to honor the birth of Jesus in a special way. He created a sweet that was colored white for the goodness of Jesus and red for the sacrifice He made. The candy maker made the candy in the shape of a "J" for Jesus.

Using candy canes, you can make a Christmas decoration. Trace and cut out hearts from poster board. Use two candy canes to form a heart, and glue the candy to the paper. In the center of the heart glue a picture from an old Christmas card. Print the words, "Happy Birthday, Jesus." Punch a hole at the top of the heart and string a ribbon through for hanging.

Adapted from "Big Book of Ideas for Children's Faith Formation" (OSV)

the way we pray

Seeking Advent light

LORD JESUS,

Master of both the light and the darkness, send Your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas. We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear Your voice each day. We who are anxious over many things look forward to Your coming among us. We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of Your kingdom. We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of Your presence. We are Your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light. To You we say, "Come, Lord Jesus!" AMEN.

- Father Henri J.M. Nouwen

Jesuit nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

Jesuit Father John Dear has written or edited 25 books on peace, spent more than two years of his life in prison as a result of his political activism, endured 21-day fasts and received from Archbishop Desmond Tutu a nomination for the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize.

“We’re called to be the living and breathing nonviolent Jesus, to be dead to ourselves and Christ to the world,” Father Dear said. “Advent is a great time to reflect on personal violence

and get ready to be people of nonviolence with the coming of Christ in the world.”

As a Jesuit, Father Dear anchors his activism in Jesus Christ. “I take time with Jesus every single day. I think about Him and do things for Him, through Him, in Him, with Him. I can be depressed as anything, angry, despairing. I go to Jesus. He takes it away, and I feel new energy, and things happen. There’s no way I could do anything in my life without God and

prayer.”

Father Dear’s day might include working and praying in solitude in his off-the-grid hermitage situated in the high desert of New Mexico. Or the priest might catch a plane for a speaking engagement, retreat or a reading and book signing for his most



courtesy photo

recent work: “A Persistent Peace.”

His persistence relies on discernment: “Everything comes down to discernment, to choosing between which is good and which is God. It comes down to

letting go and being drawn and led by places you’d rather not go, and trying to live in peace every single moment.”

“It’s an endless journey, but it’s the only meaningful journey there is in life. The joke is that there are so many perks, which is a translation for blessings. You do feel better about your self and your life when you try to be part of God’s work by getting involved in the peace and justice movement.”

definingmoments Stewardship alphabet

Source: Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Dictionary

T**Theological Virtues:** The supernaturally infused “good habits” of faith, hope and charity that assist growing in holiness.

Title: A percentage of one’s income given as an offering to God. The traditional amount of 10 percent is based upon the law found in Leviticus 27:30. A Catholic precept urges all members to give support, in accordance with their circumstances, to the Church’s ministry.

Triumphalism: The concept that one is saved by means of the graces God has given through the Catholic Church. Triumphalism has been rejected by the Church as erroneous because Christ offers His grace to all — hence, one is primarily saved by responding to the gift of God by faith, prayer, good works and obedience.

Truce of God: Truce or agreement enacted by the Council of Elne in 1027, forbidding the waging of war on Sundays and later expanded to include the holy seasons of Advent and Lent.

Visit www.graceinaction.org for more “T” words and definitions from letters A-S.

sowingseeds Work for justice, peace

“Stewardship, then, is all-encompassing. It provides a place for the simplest individual gesture of kindness as well as stewardship communities working for systemic justice and peace.”

— Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response, U.S. Catholic bishops’ pastoral letter

Advent is an ideal time to extend simple gestures of kindness that go a long way toward spreading peace in a time of chaos. Share Advent joy by presenting a small gift to somebody who doesn’t expect it — your trash collectors, elderly neighbor or somebody especially helpful at your parish. Hold the door open for a shopper

burdened with packages. And during this season that celebrates the reign of the Prince of Peace, align yourself with a group promoting systemic justice and peace. Contact your parish for suggestions and give yourself a gift: the peace of mind that comes with making a contribution to the common good.

What simple gestures of kindness have left lasting impressions on you? What are you doing to work for systemic justice and peace? How can you carry out a simple gesture of kindness to create peace with somebody with whom you might feel at war?



Photo by James Baca / Illustration by Quincey Benton

