

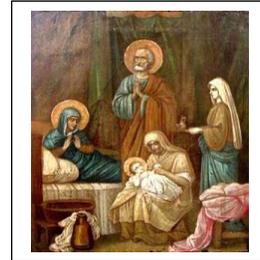
Coop's Scoops # 137 (I think!) Tuesday December 8, 2020

Hello! So happy to greet you today...the sun is shining, and the sky is more than enough blue to make 100 pairs of Dutchman's britches. The air is crisp and the snow is crunchy. A beautiful December day to be sure. Today was the last session of the God and the Pandemic study, so I've had people to sit "with" (at least two meters apart), and talk with (masked) and it was wonderful. I am grateful for these blessings and pray that you will have some blessings as well this lovely Tuesday.

On December 8th, the Church has a Feast Day,

Commemorating the Conception of the Blessed

Virgin Mary! Her birthday (picture insert) is



celebrated on September 8th) These feast days have their origins in legend, with the Conception of the Virgin Mary arising in the second century. The story goes like this (from "For All the Saints" Anglican Church of Canada).

"In Israel there lived a husband and wife named Joachim and Anne; they were righteous and kept all the commandments of God, but they had not been able to have any children. Their neighbours reproached them for their childlessness and even refused to let Joachim present his sacrifices in the Temple, saying "It is not fitting for you to offer your gifts first because you have begotten no offspring in Israel" Joachim admitted the justice of this reproach and in his grief departed into the wilderness to fast for forty days and forty nights. (aha.....)

Meanwhile, his wife Anne remained at home and carried her own grief in her heart. One afternoon she went into her garden and sat down beneath a laurel tree. She looked up, and seeing a nest of sparrows, uttered this lament: "Woe is me, to what may I be likened? I am not like the birds of heaven, for even the birds of heaven are fruitful before you, O Lord. Nor may I be likened to this earth, for even this earth brings forth its fruit in due season and praises you, O Lord."

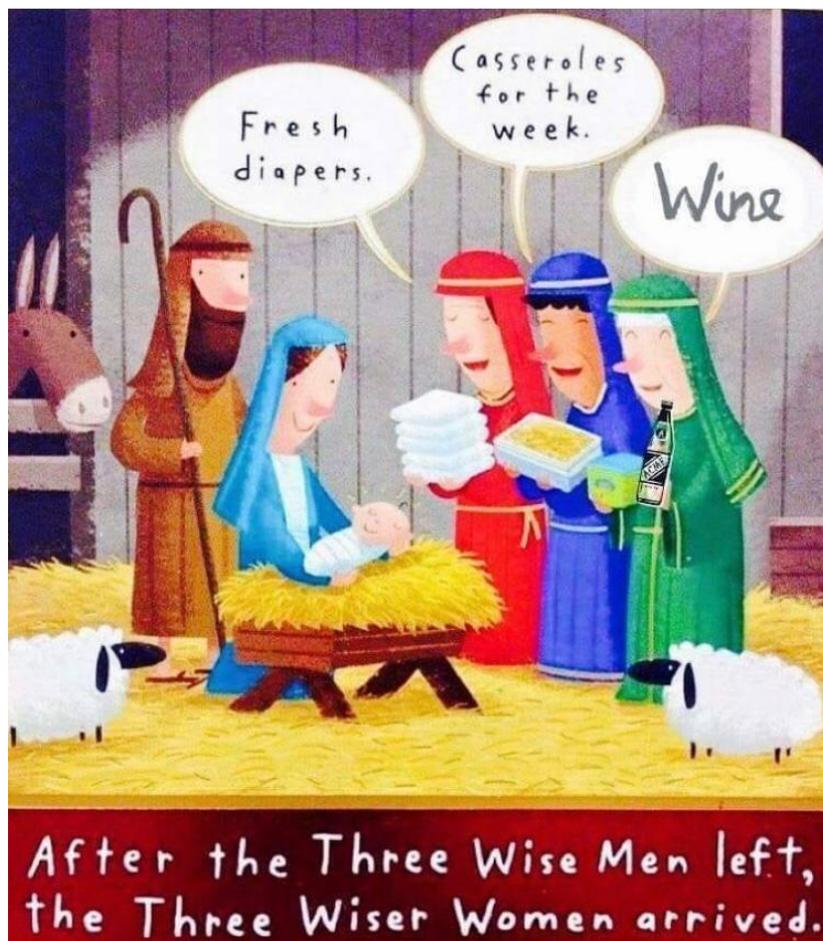
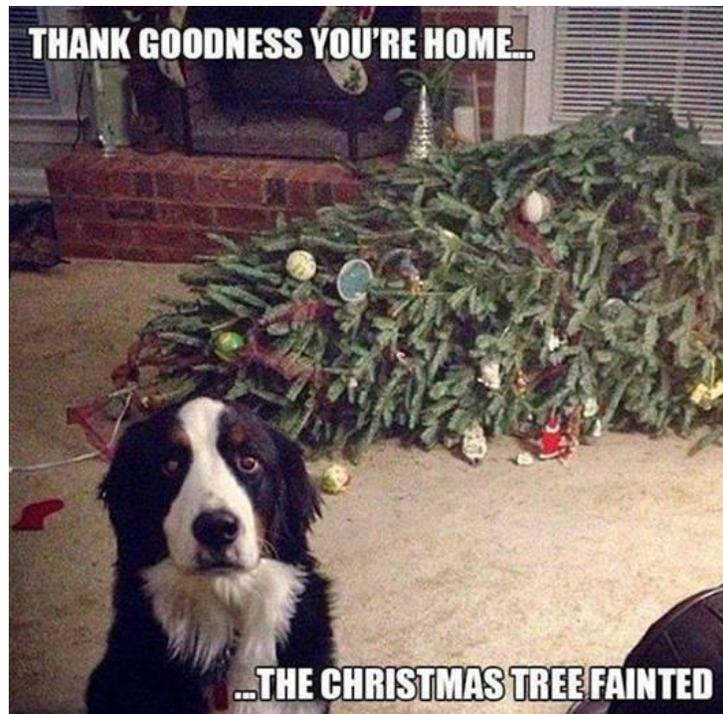
Immediately, an angel visited her with this message: "Anne, Anne, the Lord has heard your prayer, and you shall conceive and bear a child, and your offspring shall be spoken of in all the world". True to God's word, she conceived and gave birth to Mary – who did indeed come to be spoken of in all the world as the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ".

Such are the “folktales of the faithful!” (quote from Pg 631 of the book). Not Scripture, but having spoken to hearts through continuing ages, remembered and even celebrated by the people of God. The legends are the origins of the celebrations which cannot and should not be dismissed from the chronicles of Christendom. Sometimes myth is more “true” than “fact” methinks, else why would it be remembered for generations when “data” is not? With my apologies to Catholic believers, and to childless women who are not now, and were never, subordinate or less blessed in any way, to those women who bore them.

News from the Parish: Weekday Eucharists continue Wednesday and Friday of this week, at 10 am. Both mornings are now filled up with ten people each. We will begin these services again in mid January when community risk factors should, pray God, be reduced. A reminder that the Church and office will be closed from December 15th to January 15th. Your Christmas Eve service is being filmed this coming Sunday afternoon, to be posted for home worship at 7pm on December 24th. I will try to send a live link for you so that it is not difficult to access....more on that later.

If you need a gift card, please remember the FundScrip cards available at the St. Thomas office this week, Tues- Friday, 9-1. There is a wide variety of gift cards to choose from, and a percentage of the monetary value of the card is sent back to St. Thomas. I believe that several thousand dollars were earned in this simple fashion last year.

On the Light Side: Both pics sent by Jacquie Howell, (thanks!)



Scripture for Today: Colossians 3:16-17

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Homily: Sometimes we get so tangled up with the complexities of daily life that we overlook the truly simple things which might just untangle some of the problems that we dwell upon or fret about. Paul's words to the Colossians say "simple" very well. Want peace? Want some happiness? You don't have to buy anything, in fact, you couldn't buy it anywhere, for any amount, even if you tried. Remember Jesus, who considered Himself the most joyful, abundant life person ever – even though He had no house, cared not for possessions, suffered so very much and so very often – it was Jesus who said "I have come here so that YOU can have life, and have it abundantly,...that the joy which I have in myself may also be in you."

So what do we need? Well, a copy of the Bible is top of the list, so that we can have Christ's words living in our hearts, so that we can truthfully teach and share and correct and guide each other, so that we are not flailing around alone on the journey. Next is gratitude...there's nothing that will change an angry or bitter heart so quickly as gratitude... and so long as the sun comes up and the planet continues its journey around the sun, and we have a heart beat there is ample to be thankful for..not to mention all the wonderful personal blessings and gifts we carry about in us. And music helps....any kind....spiritual songs and blessings right up there alongside folk or rock or symphony or Broadway. And when we keep Jesus at the **forefront** of all that we do or say, then we can be sure we are following in His footsteps. And that is what forms the rock-solid basis for our peace in whatever circumstances the day dishes up. A shout out to John Lennon today, who was murdered 40 years ago today, but whose words and tunes still move me profoundly.

Here's an example of keeping it simple and keeping it true! Enjoy listening in on grace at a Farmer's table:

A pastor attended a men's breakfast in the middle of a rural farming area of the country. The group had asked an older farmer, decked out in bib overalls, to say grace for the morning breakfast: "Lord, I hate buttermilk," the farmer began. The visiting pastor opened one eye to glance at the farmer and wonder where this was going.

The farmer loudly proclaimed, "Lord, I hate lard." Now the pastor was growing concerned.

Without missing a beat, the farmer continued, "And Lord, you know I don't much care for raw white flour."

The pastor once again opened an eye to glance around the room and saw that he wasn't the only one to feel uncomfortable.

Then the farmer added, "But Lord, when you mix them all together and bake them, I do love warm fresh biscuits. So Lord, when things come up that we don't like, when life gets hard, when we don't understand what you're saying to us, help us to just relax and wait until you are done mixing. It will probably be even better than biscuits. Amen."

Within that prayer there is great wisdom for all when it comes to complicated situations like we are experiencing in the world today.

Stay strong my friends, because our life is being mixed with lots of things that we don't care for... relax and wait until the mixing is all done!

Sent by **Steve Newroth** to cheer us along! Thanks, Steve!

Prayer:

Make me a channel of Your peace
Where there is hatred, let me bring Your love
Where there is injury, Your pardon Lord,
And where there's doubt, true faith in You

Make me a channel of Your peace,
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope
Where there is darkness, only light,
And where there's sadness, ever joy

Oh Master, grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love with all my soul

Make me a channel of Your peace
It is pardoning that we are pardoned
In giving to all men that we receive
And in dying that we're born to eternal life. Amen, 'nuff said!

Blessing:

The blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you throughout this day and forever more. Amen.