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Andover Clergymen Offer Thoughts On Christmas

Christmas, 1969 — A Birth of New Hope?

As we think about the significance of Christmas in 1969, we should reflect upon the hope given to mankind. As we have begun to see the vast expanses of the cosmos, it is incredible that the creator of all that would even bother with the inhabitants of our puny corner of the universe. Yet the fact is that He does care for and love us. John 3:16 has particular meaning for us during this Advent season: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. . . ." God's love, as shown through the birth of Jesus Christ, provides us with the hope we need for a life-time.

During this Christmas season, if we reduce our God and Christ to a cute little manger scene under the tinsel, then we shall have lost sight of the power and the hope which was given to men. If we can only see "jolly old St. Nick" cheerfully carrying his bag of goodies, then we lose sight of the man who willingly bore a cross for us. If our minds are filled only with the refrains of "White Christmas", we will not be able to hear the angelic choir which sang on that first Christmas, — "Peace on earth!"

It is my hope and prayer that you will become mindful of the hope and love expressed by God during this most sacred season of Christ's Advent into the world. REV. ALAN CHARLES MINARCIK

"The Gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." — Romans 6:23b

God has a personalized, special gift for each of us. Eternal Life does not mean an un-ending frustrating existence, but rather of being vibrantly alive. This gift of Life is given us only when, by faith, we accept the Person, Jesus Christ, as our Lord and Master, as well as our Saviour.

The offer can be withdrawn at any time. You can take it now. You need not wait until Christmas Day. With the gift of eternal life is given not only a book of proven instructions, with results as certain as the laws of chemistry. In addition is given the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, so that even you and I can rightly understand and apply His purpose for us. In Him we can bring to creative fulfillment each of the abilities which we already possess.

May each of you receive and be joyful this Christmas season, in your personal relationship in His Love. REV. FLOYD C. B. ALDRICH

"His Unspeakable Gift"

Christmas time is a time when everyone is involved in either the giving or receiving of gifts. On the first Christmas, the Magi of the East came and presented Christ with the costly gifts of gold, frankincense, and Myrrh. Yet, the greatest gift was not that which men were giving to the Christ-child, but rather the gift that God was giving to man.

Through the centuries, man has separated himself from his Maker and has followed after his own way. He has slipped into the degradation of idolatry and sin; thus man has not fulfilled his life's purpose. God, in His love, created man for the purpose of having fellowship with Him; now this fellowship has been broken. God gave a part of Himself in the person of His Son, in order to repair this broken tie between God and man. It is through Christ that our fellowship with God is restored.

At this Christmas season, let us listen to the admonition of the Apostle Paul, who said, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." Let us express our thanks by receiving the Christ as our personal Saviour by dedicating our lives to Him, and by sharing God's gift with others. REV. MILTON C. HURNE

"Will There Be Light This Christmas?"

An airplane pilot blinked in disbelief. Flying at 33,000 feet the lights of New York looked like a lake of sparkling diamonds in the distance. Then there was only blackness that November 9th evening. It was as if someone had pulled the plug of a Christmas tree.

That blackout, affecting 30 million people is now history. However, it is a perfect symbol of another blackout which resulted in spiritual darkness for three billion people — all the people of the earth.

The lights are out all around the world. Darkness blankets men everywhere with hopelessness. What is that darkness? It is sin. The Bible says, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23).

All of us know that the darkness of human failure is everywhere but only few pause to ask why the night of evil has no dawn.

The storm clouds of war, the mists of suspicion and hate, the smogs of anger and distrust, and the blanket-fogs of crime envelop us.

Back in N. Y., in the height of the blackout, a blind man, tap-tap-tapping along the street with no hesitation guided others with his lighted cane. He was untouched by the power failure because he had a light within.

So it can be for you this Christmas. We have the promise, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." (Isa. 9:2) Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12)

This Christmas can be filled with light and warmth for you.

You were not meant for darkness and fear. Here is why Jesus was born. He is the "true light which lighteth every man who comes into the world." (John 1:9)

Spiritual blackout and power failure is only experienced by those who reject the Babe of Bethlehem who is the Light of Life.

REV. GERALD A. WOLTER

To the members of Blessed Sacrament Church Andover, N. Y., I feel that nothing could express the Christmas greeting better than the Christmas Message of Bishop James McNulty in the diocesan paper "The Magnificent", December 18th, 1969.

"The Church will not survive our generation"

Thus the prophesy of a young coed to her dozen companions seated in a room where they were discussing Christmas Holidays.

It is strange that the church should intrude into this conversation.

Christmas, the birthday of the Christ Child, is her staunchest hope. It rests in the Heart of Christ. It is Our Savior's predilection for youth. Our Savior came to seek and to save what was lost. He came to captivate by His love, on the cross as in the cradle, those who have stumbled under their crosses.

"Give Me your sins, your tragedies" and know again the blessings of freedom, says the Redeemer of men.

We give to our dear ones expression of our love on the feast of Divine Love. What are we giving to the infant of Bethlehem? Something He can use to make christian the place where we live. A mind illuminated by His truths to instruct others: a heart warmed with His love to share with others as He told us to do. A will made resolute by a cross, our will identified with His. Thy Will be done.

REV. JOHN R. SHEA

Obituary

J. Gail Smith

J. Gail Smith, 35 Rochambeau Ave., Andover, died Saturday, December 20, 1969 in the Jones Memorial Hospital, Wellsville, following a long illness.

Born Oct. 10, 1902, in Glenville, W. Va., he was a son of the late Charles and Ora Wyant Smith.

Mr. Smith, a retired service station owner, was a member of the Andover Masonic Lodge No. 558 F. and A. M. and the Andover Volunteer Fire Department.

Surviving with his widow, the former Wilda Mayo, are a daughter, Mrs. Robert (Betty) Baker, Andover; two sons, Richard of Andover, and Robert, of Grandview, Mo.; two sisters, Mrs. Harry Bailey, Brownsville, Pa., and Mrs. Harry Taylor of Buckhannon, W. Va.; and nine grandchildren.

Funeral and Committal Services were conducted at 3 p. m. Tuesday at the Embser Funeral Home, Wellsville, with Rev. Elmer Krentz of the Trinity Lutheran Church, officiating.

Burial was in the Woodlawn Cemetery, Wellsville.

Joseph F. McKinley

Joseph F. McKinley, R.D. 1, Andover, died Monday, December 22, 1969 in the St. James Mercy Hospital, Hornell, shortly after his admission to the hospital.

Born Dec. 8, 1892, he was a son of Mr. and Mrs. Frances McKinley of Andover.

Mr. McKinley was a veteran of the Korean War.

Surviving with his widow are two sisters, Miss Susan and Mrs. Mat. Ann McKinley, both of Rochester; four brothers, James of Wellsville, Thomas and Michael, both of Rochester, and Michael of Hornell.

A Prayer Service will be held at 9 a. m. Wednesday at the Embser Funeral Home in Hornell. A Requiem Mass will be said at the Blessed Sacrament Church in Andover at 10 a. m.

Burial will be in the Woodlawn Cemetery, Andover.

John R. Mayo

John R. Mayo, R.D. 3, Wellsville, died Friday, December 19, 1969 in the Jones Memorial Hospital following several months illness. He had lived in Wellsville for 25 years.

Born July 7, 1882 in Buckhannon, W. Va., he was a son of the late Merriweather and Rebecca Lee Mayo.

A band saw filed until four years ago, Mr. Mayo was a member of the Andover Masonic Lodge No. 558, F. and A. M., and the Baptist Denomination. He lived in Ohio, as well as W. Va., before moving to Wellsville.

Surviving with his wife, the former Mary Jack, are a daughter, Mrs. Gail Smith, Andover; a sister, Mrs. Grace Slaughter, Buckhannon, W. Va.; two brothers, Edward Mayo, San Francisco, Cal., and Fityue Mayo, Ohio; four grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were conducted at the Embser Funeral Home, Wellsville, Monday, Dec. 22, p. m. with Rev. Joseph Stratford officiating.

Burial was in Woodlawn Cemetery, Wellsville.

Tailgating is a dangerous way to keep your eye on things. At least 10 feet should be allowed between cars for every 10 miles an hour of travel speed.

Backing up on a highway or major artery is no way to get where you are going. By taking a little extra time to take the next exit and circle around you have a better chance of arriving at your destination.