

# Women's Life

December 2006

## *Mary and Joseph Traveled to Bethlehem*

In early December of 1973, when I waddled around awaiting the appearance of our first son (due on December 26<sup>th</sup>), my resourceful husband volunteered us to play the parts of Mary and Joseph. The plan involved reenacting the 70-mile trek from Nazareth to Jerusalem at Maryland's Wheaton Regional Park. Other adults would film the drama and then show it as the adult contribution to the annual church Christmas program. I somehow failed to see the humor my husband saw in this, but, after all, he was playing Joseph!

From various locations in Montgomery County came shepherds, wise men, an angel, and the expectant couple. The park had a complete bevy of sheep, goats, and a donkey. Needless to say, I quite literally, put myself in Mary's place, so I began to see her journey differently. Getting in and out of a car at that point of my pregnancy was an ordeal, but a donkey ride seemed impossible! The staff director at the park warned me not to get near the donkey, let alone attempt to ride the animal! "It's mean, kicks, and butts with its head," she commented. So Dave and I walked about 15 feet in front of the donkey, holding a long rope. "What had Mary's donkey been like?" I muttered. And as I lay the doll wrapped in receiving blankets into the dirty straw, it didn't look like the place to lay any newborn, certainly not the Son of God.

The filming of this epic lasted about two hours, but my bladder didn't. Again, I remembered that Mary had no comfort stations like this park. She also lacked a thoughtful film crew who brought food to keep the actors' moods cordial. And I was thankful for breaks when I could go sit in the car when the winds blew. Mary and Joseph's journey had many more inconveniences than I had ever realized in my readings of the Luke narrative.

*(continued on page 2)*

(continued from page 1)

Most Christmases I reminisce about that theatrical endeavor and laugh all over again. I also ponder that adolescent girl, Mary, and consider her inconvenience and hardship as she followed the taxation decree and accompanied her husband to Jerusalem. This young couple believed enough to obey; Mary submitted after Gabriel's visit, and Joseph obeyed after his dream.

Yet, an even greater truth stirs within me. If Mary and Joseph dealt with hardships, is there a word for the sacrifice Christ made in exchanging heaven's glory for 33 years of earthly existence and the cruelest of executions? His abandonment of everything for the likes of you and me will forever keep me in reverent awe. Philippians 2:5-8 certainly belongs in the Christmas story.

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!*

Christmas blessings, *Flo Wolfe*



## A Present for Jesus

Have a box available for each member of the family to put in something that represents what they want to give Jesus this year. Wrap it and put it under the tree with all the other presents.

When you come to that gift, each one can share why they put that particular thing in the box and what they want to give to Jesus.

## 1 Corinthian 13 Christmas

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, Strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home And give all that I have to charity, But do not show love to my family, It profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir's cantata, but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child.

Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the husband.

Love is kind, though harried and tired.

Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way, but is thankful they are there to be in the way.

Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return, but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost, golf clubs will rust... but giving the gift of love will endure.

You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.

Amen!

*Author Unknown*



## December

National Brownie Day—Dec. 8

National Chocolate Covered Anything Day—Dec. 16

Remember To Read The Instructions First Night—Dec. 24 (a night for assembling toys)

## This month in history

Captain Annie Fox received the first Purple Heart awarded to a nurse for her service under attack at Pearl Harbor—Dec. 7, 1941

The Boston Tea Party—Dec. 16, 1773

Chewing gum invented—Dec. 28, 1869

Jane Austen was born—Dec. 16, 1775

## Let the Stable Still Astonish!

Let the stable still astonish:  
Straw-dirt floor, dull eyes,  
Dusty flanks of donkeys, oxen;  
Crumbling, crooked walls;  
No bed to carry that pain,  
And then, the child  
Rag-wrapped laid to cry

In a trough.  
Who would have chosen this?  
Who would have said: “Yes,  
Let the God of Heaven and Earth  
Be born in this place.”  
Who but the same God  
Who stands in the darker, fouler rooms of our hearts  
And says “Yes, let the God of Heaven and Earth be born in  
THIS place

Leslie Leyland Fields



## Christmas in Cyberspace

They have organized the best website about everything Christmas—history, advent calendars, devotions, etc. “A Christ-centered holiday site.” <http://www.christmasincyberspace.com/>

## Singles and Christmas

*Five Steps to Enjoying Christmas:* <http://singleness.org/fivesteps.shtml>

## Organize your Christmas

Organized Christmas has tips and recipes. One tip? Keep a tearfile—when the catalogs come, tear out what you want to remember and use an accordion file to keep them by topic. Read more about it: <http://organizedchristmas.com/news401.html>

## *Thoughts and things*

### **Birthday Cake for Jesus**

A Chocolate Cake to represent our sins.

White Frosting because Jesus is pure and cleanses us from our sins.

There were 12 red candles on the cake, one for each month that Jesus is with us every day of every month of every year.

The red represented the blood that Christ shed for us.

The candle represents the Light that Jesus is to the world.

An angel to represent Gabriel.

A holy wreath to represent our ever lasting life in Jesus.



### **Use fabric softener dryer sheets?**

One person's experience:

The heating unit went out on my dryer. The guy that fixes things went right to the lint filter.

It was clean. We always clean the lint from the filter after every load of clothes. He told us that he wanted to show us something. He took the filter over to the sink, ran hot water over it.

The hot water just sat on top of the mesh. It didn't go through it at all. He told us that dryer sheets cause a film to form over that mesh and that's what burns out the heating unit. You can't see the film, but it's there.

It can also cause dryer units to catch fire!

He said the best way to keep your dryer working for a very long time (and to keep your electric bill lower) is to take that filter out, wash it with hot soapy water and an old toothbrush (or other brush) at least every six months.

He said that makes the life of the dryer at least twice as long.

Circulating over email.

## Cranberry Tarts or Pie

- 1½ cups sugar
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- ¼ tsp allspice
- 1 large apple (peeled, cored and diced)
- 3 Clementines (or tangerines)
- 1 cup cranberries
- ½ cup chopped pecans

Mix sugar, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, and apple in a heavy saucepan.

Wash 3 clementines, remove stem and cut in half. Chop into pieces and remove any seeds, leave the peel on. Chop the unpeeled clementines in a blender or food processor (use metal blades).

Add clementines, cranberries and chopped pecans to the saucepan.

Cook over medium heat until the cranberries burst. Cool.

You can prepare the mixture in advance and use it in tarts or make a pie with a latticed top.

For the pie, cook at 400 F for 30 to 35 minutes. For tarts, cook at 400 F for 10–15 minutes (until the edges are slightly brown).

Find more recipes and stuff for families at [www.kaboose.com](http://www.kaboose.com)



## Everything for Christmas Eating

For recipes, tips, and things you may not even have thought of—go to: [www.foodnetwork.com/food/et\\_hd\\_christmas/](http://www.foodnetwork.com/food/et_hd_christmas/)



Flo Wolfe, Dir. of Women's Ministries  
Micki Parkinson, Design and Editing

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