True Spirit Of Christmas To Be Found Right At Home

Traditional Christian Symbols Present To Gladden Heart, Renew Shaken Faith

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The significance of Christmas? You could look for it in Bethlehem, but you would not find it there.

Last Easter I stood on the Church of the Nativity on the traditional site of His birth and sought the inner meaning of that great event. But the gilded manger and flickering lights and greedy guides destroyed all the magic.

Dr. Liston Pope

It was better outside on the Judean hills. They at least are much the same as then. Shepherds still tend their flocks and the stars come very close at night. In the darkness and quiet one can almost believe in the angel and the heavenly chorus and the Wise Men coming slowly down the Jerusalem road. But the heavens do not open again and no star comes on an appointed mission, and the mood passes.

You could look for it in Nazareth, where He grew in wisdom and stature, but you would not find it there. Children still play in the streets and I saw a small boy at work in a carpenter shop. But most of the people are Arabs and a good number are Communists and the sites associated with His youth are unconvincing and sometimes unkempt.

You could look for it at the River Jordan where He was baptized and commissioned, but you would not find it in that murky stream. You can buy a bottle of river water, preferably distilled, to use in the baptism of your grandson.

AN UNSPOILED SPOT

By the Sea of Galilee you might come nearer to what you were looking for. The fishermen still get prodigious hauls in their nets and the sea is very rough sometimes. The Mount of the Beatitudes is so serene that one can almost believe in the ultimate triumph of the meek and the merciful. You would find it all very beautiful, but like a garden from which the Gardener has gone.

In old Jerusalem, the Holy City in which He died, you could find both reverence and revulsion. From the Mount of Olives you can look down on the ancient city. You can see a courtyard in which the Romans played their games, and a hush might come over your spirit as you too walked the Via Dolorosa. But you would be shown two Golgothas and two tombs wherein they say He was laid, and you would find various groups of Christians contending with each other over their possession of Him.

BACK TO OUR TRADITION

And so you might come back to your own city and your own house, somewhat weary and shaken.

There are always the traditional Christian symbols to make the season both busy and glad: carols in the streets, magnificent displays in the stores, wreaths on the doors and lights in the windows. Each year's tree in the living room is the most perfect yet, and the brightly-wrapped packages under it are gayer—and more numerous—each succeeding year. And the children: the light in their eyes is authentic and their unfeigned wonder can kindle again a deeper wonder about the significance of it all.

We have been taught that Christmas should be a happy time, a "Merry Christmas." In a wonderful sense the time of Christ's birth was an occasion of "joy to the world." But Jesus Christ, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, is not a merry figure.

TO SAVE US FROM OURSELVES

We know that we should be generous and forgiving and hopeful at Christmas. But the meaning of Christ's coming is precisely that man is not good and able to save himself, but that he is always a mixture of good and evil, a sinner who needs a Saviour. Christ came to save men from themselves.

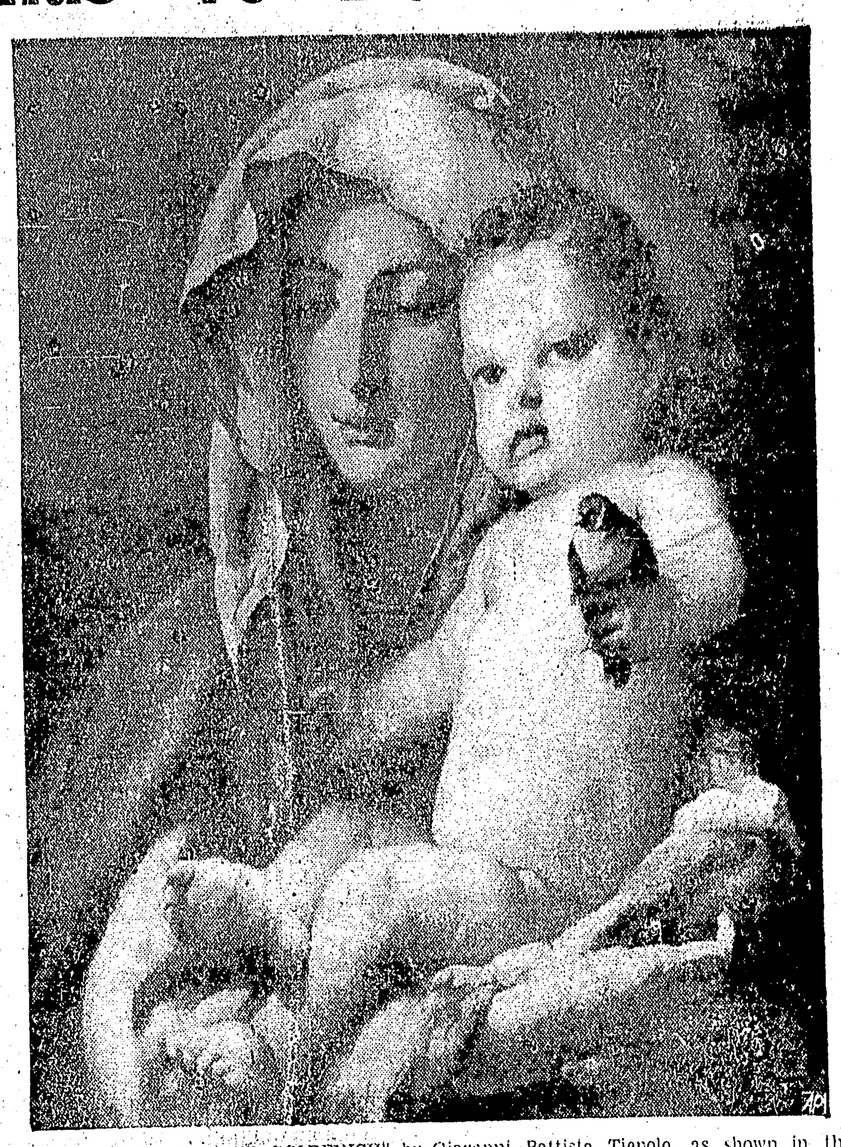
Great stress is put on Christmas as a family festival, with homecomings, a great family feast, special attention to children and grandparents. But Christmas is also for orphans and childless widows and deserted old people and sentries on lonely outposts. Perhaps it is especially for them. The Son of Man had no place to lay His head.

In the land of Christ's birth the significance of that event eludes us. In our own time it escapes us because we attempt to find Him in the pagan festival that the observance of Christmas has become. We can accept Him only on His terms, not ours. He proclaimed that He had come as the Son of God, as a representation of a God of love, to save the world and every man from self and sin.

END OF THE QUEST

The real significance of Christmas has never changed. It is to be found now, as at the beginning, in taking seriously and believing deeply the proclamation at the time of Christ's birth:

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."



"THE MADONNA OF THE GOLDFINCH" by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, as shown in the Samuel H. Kress collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.

Japanese Go All Out For Commercial Yuletide

TOKYO (AP)—Japan is going all out this year for the merriest Christmas in its history, with plenty of tinsel, music, Santa Clauses and bells — especially the jingle of cash registers.

Because only one Japanese in 267 is a Christian, the holiday is almost completely commercialized, with none of the solemnity of the West.

Department stores expect to sell 125 million dollars worth of goods in December, twice as much as in November and 10 per cent more than in December, 1955.

Joyous Christmas
May the joy and love that glorified the night of His birth shine in your heart this Christmas day, and all the days to come.
MIDWAY Grocery

Christmas GREETINGS
May this cherished holiday season bring high happiness to you and those you hold dear.
H. G. HELGERSON
Alf. Rivett

THE Season's HEARTIEST Wishes
We're coming your way with best wishes for a happy holiday and many thanks for your patronage.
CO-OP BAKERY

Christmas
For all of our friends we wish a real old-fashioned holiday filled with good cheer and happiness. Merry Christmas, all!
ALBERT & McCAFFERY

Merry Christmas
Christmas is here again, bringing a sparkle to children's eyes and joy to the hearts of all. May the spirit of the season enrich your life with its blessings, now and throughout the New Year.
RUPERT CEMENT PRODUCTS LTD.

GREETINGS
Our very best wishes to all our friends for a happy Holiday.
BURNS & CO. LTD.

Holiday greetings
EDWARD LIPSETT LTD.

Merry CHRISTMAS
DIBB PRINTING Co.

Christmas Greetings
Just as candy canes and evergreens are symbols of Christmas, let this greeting be a symbol of our appreciation of your good will and patronage. May you enjoy a full measure of good cheer throughout the Holiday Season.
STANDARD HEATING OILS
Sincere Best Wishes — W. E. (Bill) Bond
YOUR STANDARD OIL AGENT