

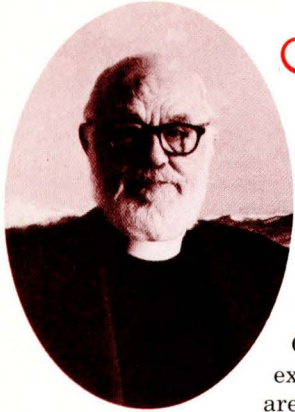


# the LOOKOUT

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK



DECEMBER 1975



# A Holiday Message

Dear Friends,

Once again it is our privilege, one which we covet deeply, to extend to you our greetings and to wish for you and all who are in your house, the supreme fulfillment of all the joys of this blessed season. May peace prevail and, under God, may your way be prosperous. May the realization of what He has given us break over us like the dawn and enlighten our lives and our understanding.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power."

Many there are who can identify that power in their own lives. Many there are who have no conception of it. While this situation remains, the interest and purpose of the Incarnation is hindered of consummation. We who know are therefore twice blessed because ours is the privilege and the opportunity to lead others to the joy of discovery.

During the past years your support and your prayers have been of immeasurable help to us and to all those in whose behalf we labor. We deeply thank you and pray for each of you that the coming year will be rich in blessings.

THE REVEREND JOHN M. MULLIGAN, D.D.  
*Director*

## the LOOKOUT

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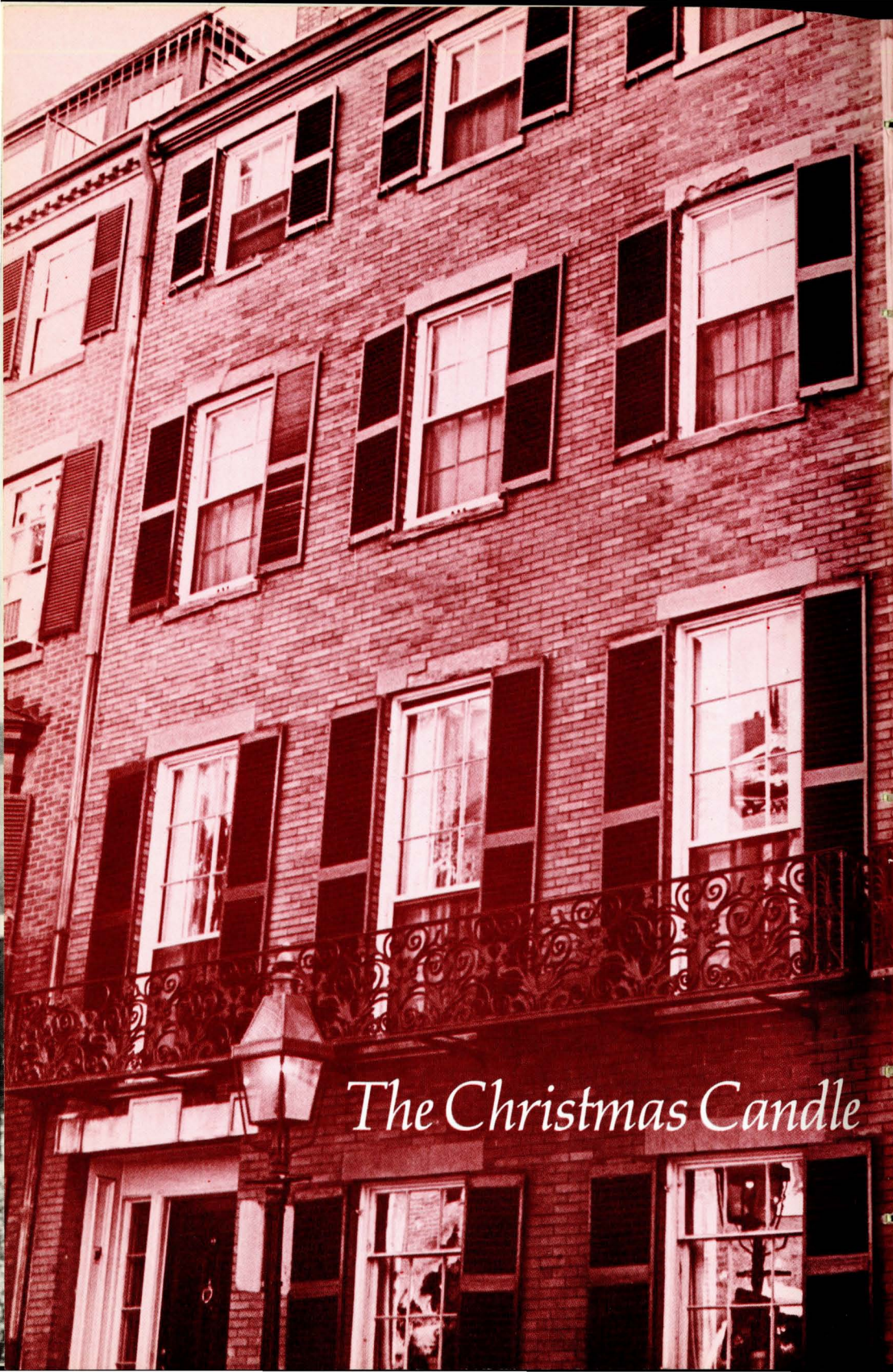


TO HELP launch the Christmas season, we send you this special potpourri of Christmas poems, stories and greetings.

Sprinkled liberally with salt from the sea, for added zest, we hope it gladdens the heart, pleases the eye and helps capture that special something in the air known to all who recognize it as . . .

## The Spirit of Christmas





## The Christmas Candle

by Frederick John

While it is true that a Christmas light is as old as Christianity, the custom of displaying *window* candles is strictly an American tradition that originated in Boston back in 1893.

That year, a lonely candle sparkling in a student's third floor window on the west slope of Boston's historic Beacon Hill, sent forth a ray that first inspired a neighborhood, then a city, and finally an entire nation with its beautiful symbolism of Christmas cheer.

The young man was Alfred Shurtleff. The candle was displayed in a window of his father's home at 9 West Cedar Street.

Shurtleff, who later became a Unitarian clergyman, said he was inspired by "the candles the wives of seamen used to place in their windows to guide their sailor-husbands home from the sea."

"The candles were a gesture of love," he told an interviewer years later. "Even when I was a young man, the wives over in South Boston, and in East Boston, along the waterfront, used to burn candles in their windows at night for their loved ones away at sea. These were older women who remembered the old nautical custom.

"To show my love for the Saviour, I decided to place a candle in my bedroom window one Christmas Eve. It was my own bright tribute to the Saviour. Now, on Christmas Eve, I see the reflection of my own little candle in the windows of homes on every street I travel."

In those days, carolers used to stroll around Beacon Hill on Christmas Eve serenading residents of the area. The carolers spotted the lonely candle in the window and, as they stopped at various houses, they told the occupants about it.

The following Christmas Eve, a handful of home owners on West Cedar Street displayed wax candles in their windows for an hour. After that, the custom spread

to adjoining Beacon Hill streets.

Then the Christmas window candles seemed to flicker out, and were displayed no more for a while. It must be remembered that these were wax candles, and the flames could easily have ignited curtains, or drapes.

However, in 1908, the window candles were revived again by a group of Beacon Hill residents who billed themselves as the Chestnut Street Christmas Association. The group distributed notices to all Beacon Hill homes.

The message read: "In order to promote a spirit of good will and Christmas cheer, the undersigned request that you contribute to that end by placing lighted candles in the windows of your house fronting on the street between the hours of seven and ten o'clock on Christmas Eve.

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Adams Crain  
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Winslow  
Mr. and Mrs. Hollis French  
Mr. and Mrs. Roger S. Warner"

The following year, the same group issued another invitation, this time beautifully drawn in black letters. The idea began to catch on. Also, about that time, more and more homes were installing electricity. As a result, home owners were able to display safer electric candles in their windows.

And that is how the holiday tradition of exhibiting window candles started.

Nowadays, you will find happy window lights sparkling in homes all over the world. Reverend Shurtleff's lonely candle did indeed have a mighty beam.



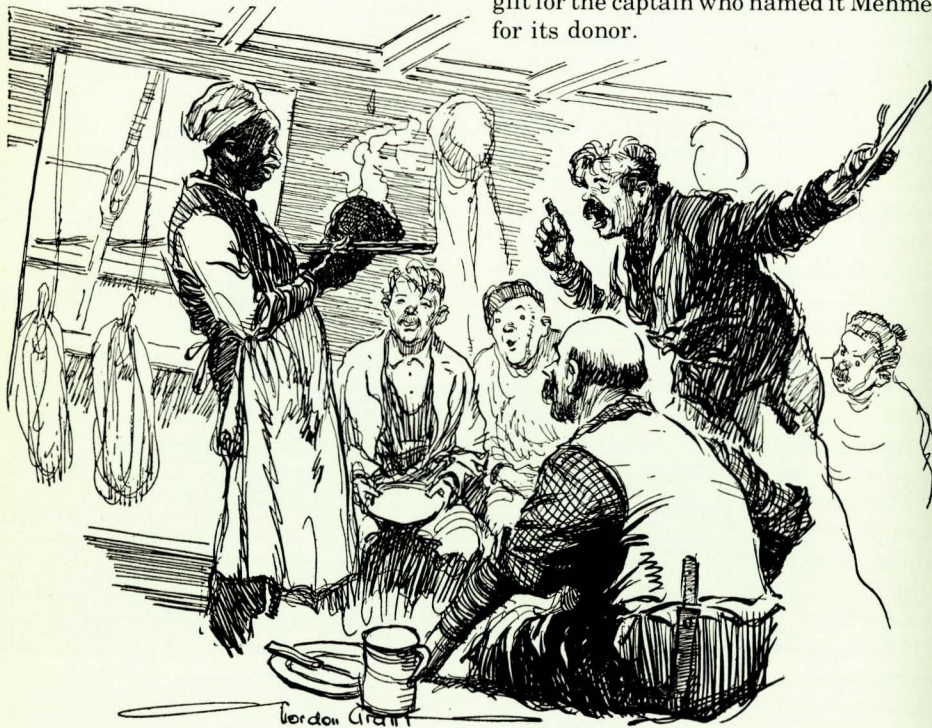


In the small New England village where I spent my childhood it

was always traditional to serve roast goose for Christmas dinner, so in the first year of my marriage, as the holiday neared, I anticipated the intimacy of dinner for two. I would place the platter on which rested the veritable golden goose in front of my husband, Peter, who would then beam with pride and shower me with compliments.

My daydream was never realized, for one evening when we were lolling in front of the fire with our coffee and brandy, we

started reminiscing about past Christmases and Peter recalled one in particular when his ship was docked in Istanbul. This is the time of year when the migratory geese are flying from Europe to Africa; and "Mehmet", the gangway watchman, had rescued a wan-looking goose unable to migrate with the rest because of a broken wing. He decided to bring the crippled creature aboard as a gift for the captain who named it Mehmet for its donor.



## Requiem for a Christmas Goose



As Peter was the chief steward, the captain turned the bird over to him, saying "This would make a fine Christmas goose, but it will need fattening." The goose probably weighed ten pounds but Charlie, the Chief cook, took personal and complete charge of Mehmet, force feeding it like a Strasbourg special. Often he could be heard conversing with the bird which had become so domesticated that it roamed the ship and would appear in the most unlikely places.

Whenever Customs men came aboard, Mehmet was kept out of sight and so remained safe through stops at ports in Spain, Portugal and New York. When the ship's cargo was discharged, the crew embarked on another voyage which would encompass the Christmas season.

The captain, a gourmand, had been keeping an eye on Mehmet and asked Peter to include the goose on the Christmas menu, only a week away; also hinting that the liver would make a delectable paté. Peter promised to garnish it with truffles which he had obtained in North Africa where dogs, rather than pigs, root them out.

When Peter asked Charlie, a southern Black, to have Mehmet slaughtered and dressed in time to hang before Christmas, he looked at him in disbelief.

"You mean we goin' to kill Mehmet! I can't do it!"

"Never mind, Charlie", Peter said. "I will take your ole Mehmet ashore to a butcher shop." When Charlie was given the dressed bird, he looked crestfallen.

On Christmas Day the succulent goose was borne on a platter to the captain's saloon, as he was to be the official carver. The captain beamed at the prospect of sampling Charlie's masterpiece with great aplomb; slicing portions for every officer's plate. Charlie was congratulated on his culinary triumph, a judgment based on appearance rather than flavor, for one by one the plates were all pushed aside.

After dinner it was customary to exchange presents and Charlie received a bottle of his favorite brand of bourbon and proceeded to drown his guilt, feeling as though he had betrayed an old friend.

The table was cleared and the uneaten portions of Mehmet returned to the ship's galley to be packaged and refrigerated so that when the ship anchored in Seville, the meat could be given to the Sisters of Mercy who always hurried down to the dock to pick up surplus foodstuff, as well as gifts and candy for their orphanage.

There was a happier side to Mehmet's story for he was eaten greedily by the hungry orphans who had no reason to be sentimental since Mehmet had never been their shipboard companion.

Peter and I have spent many Christmases together since that first one when his experience with Mehmet was still so fresh in his memory, and our children are grown with families of their own. Sometimes they come for the holiday but in deference to Peter, whose memory of Mehmet remains as vivid as ever, we NEVER feast on Christmas goose!

by Beatrice H. Comas



OOSE, notwithstanding, the family Christmas Dinner is a very special occasion; and at my grandmother's house the grandchildren always made some sort of favor for each "place" at the table.

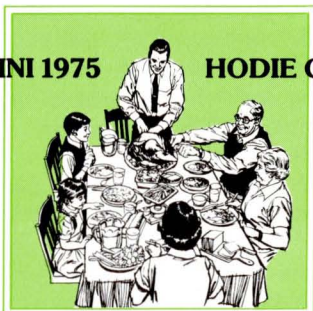
The other day one of our staff brought in a menu which his children had prepared some Christmases past.

Written in neo-Latin, befitting the season, we thought the youngsters at your house might enjoy making a similar menu this year. As a matter of fact, it could even be used for a "church" supper or other holiday community event.

Modify, invent and embellish, but here's a starter.

**ANNO DOMINI 1975**

**HODIE CHRISTUS NATUS EST**



Equi de Via  
Wassail in Dulci Jubile



Soup in Excelsis  
Celery Three Kings  
Olives Quem Pastores



Turkey Venite Adoremus  
Potato White Christmas  
Potato Five Gold Rings  
Creamed Onions True Love  
String Beans Noel

Cranberry Rudolph  
Stuffing St. Nicholas  
Gravy Resonet in Laudibus

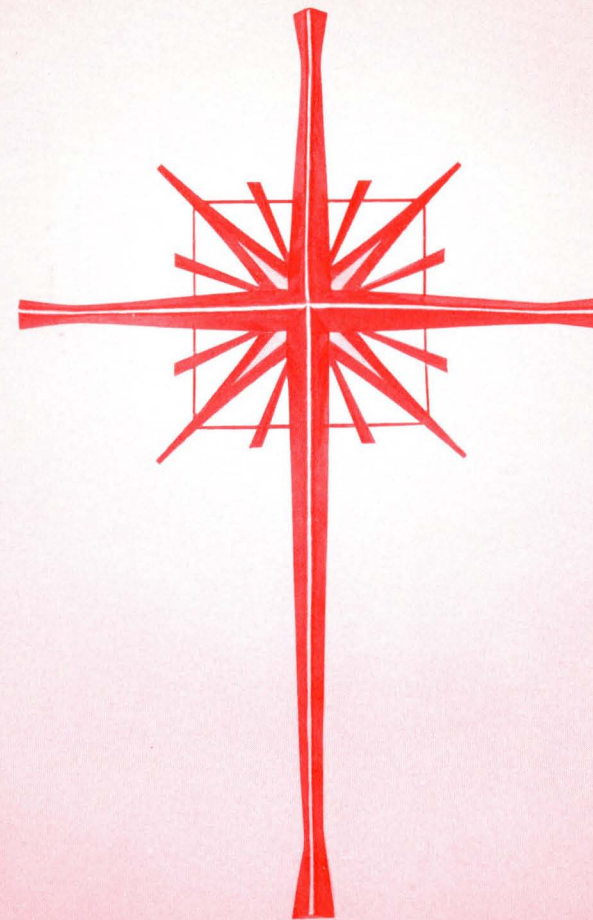


Milk Ten Miads  
Vino Divinum Mysterium

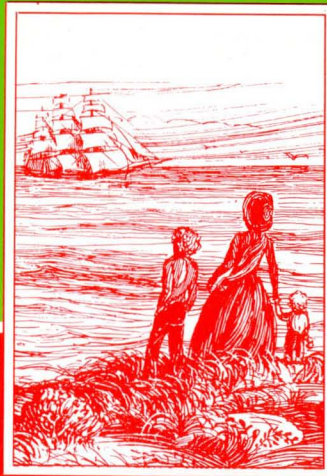


Plum Pudding Salve Festa Dies  
Ice Cream Bleak Midwinter  
Nuts et Tu Brute  
Coffee Midnight Clear  
Liquers Rosa Mystica

**GOD REST YOU MERRY GENTLEMEN**



*Christmas...*

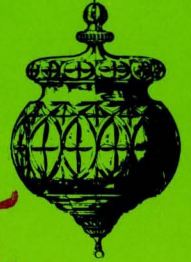


## Christmas— a season of the heart



CHRISTMAS—a time for remembering — for bringing together friends and loved ones into the home and around the hearth . . .

a time for recalling those special moments which bring so much happiness and meaning to all our lives . . . a time for sharing the joys and hopes which call forth the spirit of “Peace on Earth; Good Will Toward Men.”



## ... and a time for “Brotherhood”



IT is in the Spirit of the Season, that we invite your Special Christmas Gift (however small) so that we may make a Brighter Christmas for the many lonely seamen — far from homes and families — who spend their Holiday with us.

We ask you to share with us the responsibility of being your brother's brother, especially during this holiday season when just having a friend means so very much . . . not only to our American seamen, but to the hundreds of other seafaring brothers with us who have never experienced the warmth and fellowship of Christmas.

*thank you*



Santa takes time from his busy schedule to enjoy a dance or two at last year's Christmas Dance at the Institute's Seamen's International Club.



Contents of a typical SCI Christmas Box. Each year thousands of volunteers knit garments, wrap gifts and pack more than 10,000 boxes which are put aboard ships which will be at sea on Christmas Day. For many a seaman this is the only tangible evidence that there are those ashore who remember him at Christmas and want him to share its joy.



## Five Poems

by Donald Henderson, Jr.

*Editor's note:*

As long as men put to sea, there probably will be poets among them.

The following poems are by seaman Donald Henderson, Jr., a young man who, when quite "down on his luck", went to sea on a bet. That was roughly six years ago and he's still shipping out.

Contemporary in form, rather Zen-like in point-of-view, we think that his poems speak well to the concerns of body and spirit common to all of us. They certainly show that a life at sea can be more than just a job.



### WARM MILK AND HONEY

*Warm milk and honey,  
fond and gentle,  
loving  
thoughts  
of Julia.*



### NEW ORLEANS

*New Orleans  
The land of the cagin queens  
But, like most poor foke  
I's so broke  
I ain't got the means  
To stay in New Orleans.*



### SUNSET AT SEA

*Oct. 6, 1970 1800 hrs.*

*Shades of blue and gray,  
With slashes of red;  
Here I find a strength,  
And a view of my consciousness.*



*I've sailed o'er a particle,  
Of an atom  
In the mind of God  
Yet, Who Am I.*



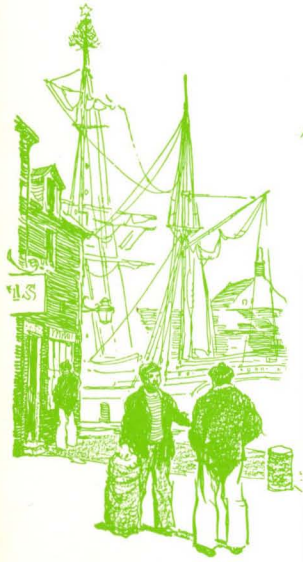
*Soon,  
It just is,  
Bewail not the passing  
For with the coming of an end  
There is a beginning  
One cannot exist;  
Without the other.  
All is -  
flowing -  
Into all.*



## A Seasonal "Note"

This past Spring our director, Dr. John Mulligan received a "note" from a lovely lady named Maria Louise Secor of New York. He showed the letter to us and we were so delighted with it that we asked if we could keep it for this issue. We think you too, will enjoy this "salty" note and poem.

Thank you Miss Secor



March 1975

Dear Dr. Mulligan:

I have the SEA in my blood; what with several privateers in my family. I often grieve at the injustice to Captain Kidd.

My great uncle was a Lieutenant in the blockading of Fort Sumpter. My brother an Ensign in the First World War. Also a cousin, a Lieutenant won the Congressional Medal.

My sister wrote "Christmas Tree" poems on all her cards — though it's hardly the season, I am enclosing "Santa's Chantey" to amuse you. Best of luck in your good work.

Maria Louise Secor



### SANTA'S CHANTEY

There is no difference I can see  
Between a ship and a Christmas Tree  
Each lights up and keeps a Log  
And fails to function in a fog.  
Crows nests common to a tree  
Also crown a ship at sea.  
We anchor down the yule tree, too  
For ships the stabilizers new.  
Both make knots, quite different tho'  
For some are made and some just grow.

Each equipped with one tall spar.  
Reaching upward to a star.  
Battered birds beset by storm  
Drop to their bows for comfort warm.  
Saps are found in both — by gum!  
(Let's hope the Captain isn't one!)  
There is a difference, I declare!  
With one you're never  
MAL DE MER!  
Marie Josephine Secor



WITH friends like you, even the wonderful words, Merry Christmas, cannot convey the feeling all of us here at the Institute have for each of you.

Without you we could not carry on our work; and though we may never meet, we each send to you, from our hearts, this timeless Christmas greeting ...

### Take Heaven, Take Peace, Take Joy

I salute you. I am your friend, and my love for you goes deep. There is nothing I can give you which you have not got; but there is much, much you can take. No heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in today. Take heaven!

No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this precious little instant. Take peace! The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind it, yet within our reach is joy. There is radiance and glory in the darkness, could we but see, and to see we have only to look. I beseech you to look.

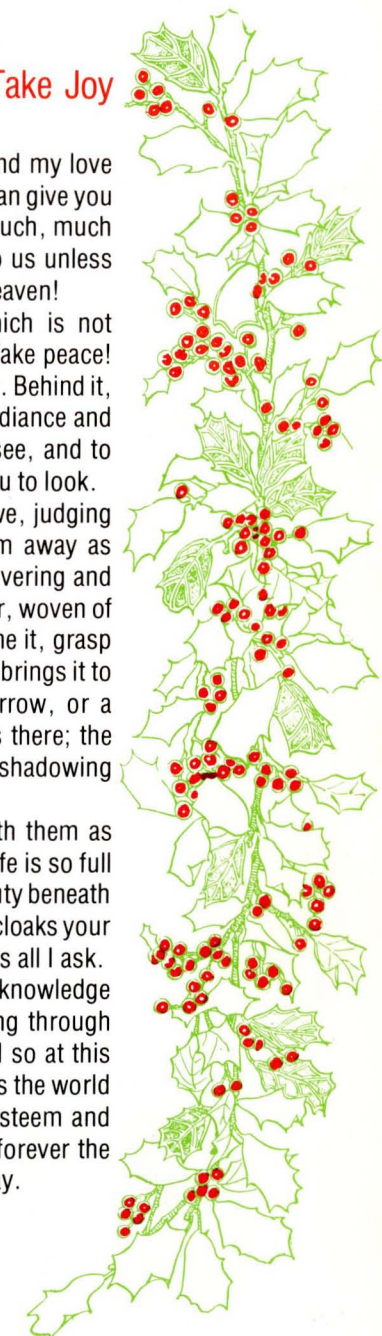
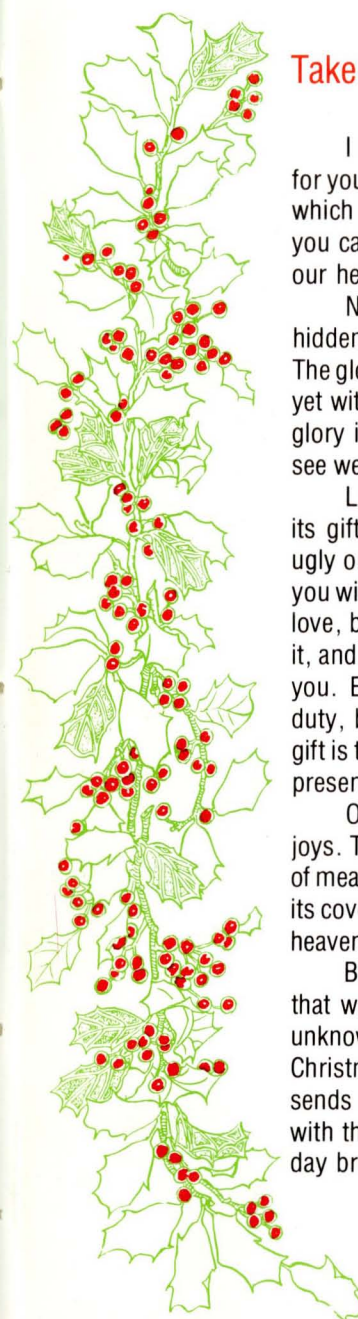
Life is so generous a giver, but we, judging its gifts by their coverings, cast them away as ugly or heavy or hard. Remove the covering and you will find beneath it a living splendor, woven of love, by wisdom, with power. Welcome it, grasp it, and you touch the angel's hand that brings it to you. Everything we call a trial, a sorrow, or a duty, believe me, that angel's hand is there; the gift is there, and the wonder of an overshadowing presence.

Our joys too: be not content with them as joys. They too conceal diviner gifts. Life is so full of meaning and purpose, so full of beauty beneath its covering that you will find earth but cloaks your heaven. Courage then to claim it: that is all I ask.

But courage you have; and the knowledge that we are pilgrims together, wending through unknown country our way home. And so at this Christmas time I greet you. Not quite as the world sends greetings, but with profound esteem and with the prayer that for you now and forever the day breaks and the shadows flee away.

Fra Giovanni

(written about 1515)

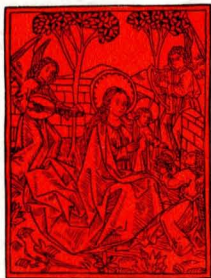


Merry Christmas



# A Christmas Quiz

by Josephine Opsahl



Only two of the Gospel writers tell the story of Jesus' birth. They are Matthew and Luke. Who said these well-known words? Pick the right answer from the suggestions given. The Bible reference will also help you.

1. "And she (Mary) shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus." (Matt. 1:21)
  - a. The high priests
  - b. The angel of the Lord (to Joseph)
  - c. Zacharias
2. "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." (Luke 2:10)
  - a. The angel of the Lord
  - b. King Herod
  - c. Caesar Augustus
3. "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass." (Luke 2:15)
  - a. Herod's scribes
  - b. Simeon
  - c. The shepherds
4. "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" (Matt. 2:2)
  - a. Roman soldiers
  - b. The Wise Men
  - c. King Herod
5. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14)
  - a. Zacharias
  - b. The high priest
  - c. Multitude of angels
6. "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." (Luke 2:12)
  - a. Mary
  - b. Anna
  - c. Angel of the Lord
7. "Take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt." (Matt. 2:13)
  - a. Simeon
  - b. The soldiers of King Herod
  - c. The angel of the Lord

- 
1. b - Angel of the Lord
  2. a - Angel of the Lord
  3. c - The shepherds
  4. b - The Wisemen
  5. c - Multitude of angels
  6. c - Angel of the Lord
  7. c - Angel of the Lord