



Cardinal Gibbons Assembly 783
Newsletter
December 2020



REFLECTIONS FROM SAINT BASIL

A tree is known by its fruit; a man by his deeds. A good deed is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love.

Every evil is a sickness of soul, but virtue offers the cause of its health.

There is nothing unpremeditated, nothing neglected by God.
His unsleeping eye beholds all things.

Brainy Quote

<https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/saint-basil-quotes>

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

Our Assembly will be supporting Wreaths Across America. This program gives us a chance to remember and honor those individuals who served our Nation. The point of contact for this program is Past State Deputy Colin Jorsch. More information on this program is available at the following link:

<https://wreathsassamerica.org/pages/165678>

ASSEMBLY MEETING

The next Assembly meeting scheduled for 17 January 2021 at 2:30 PM at St. Patrick Roman Catholic Church, 2840 Village Drive, Fayetteville, NC. The date and location may change depending on guidance from K of C Supreme and local directives.

CHRISTMAS SYMBOLS

Faithful Scribe Christopher R. Cooper

How many symbols of Christmas are there? According to *The World Book Encyclopedia* there are eight. (Sechrist, 1969) The symbols are Saint Nicholas, Santa Claus, the Christmas Tree, the Christmas Star, Christmas Lights, Christmas Cards, the Yule Log, and Mistletoe. Some of these symbols date back to antiquity while others are fairly recent inventions.

I. Saint Nicholas

Saint Nicholas is the source of all the variations of kindly entities that bring gifts to good children. He was a real person who lived the fourth century A.D. (Burghardt, 1969) During the Diocletian Persecution Saint Nicholas was imprisoned for his Christian faith. He was released from prison when Emperor Constantine came to power. Saint Nicholas became Bishop of Myra in Lycia and he was present at the Church Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. He learned of three sisters whose father could not afford dowries for them. It was an unfortunate custom of the time if a woman's family could not afford a dowry for her she would have to enter a life of prostitution. Saint Nicholas prevented this horrific event from happening by anonymously giving the father a dowry for each of his daughters. Over time Saint Nicholas became associated with gift giving at Christmas. His feast day is the sixth of December.

II. Santa Claus

“Santa Claus is a distinctly American symbol.” (Selvi, 1969) He is based on Saint Nicholas. Santa Claus originated during the United States’ colonial period under Great Britain. The Dutch first colonized what was to become New York. Great Britain seized control, but allowed the Dutch settlers who were already there to remain. The British colonists adopted the Dutch custom of kindly man named “Sinter Klaas” who brought gifts to children at Christmas time. However, to the British colonists it sounded like the Dutch were saying “Santa Claus” and the name stuck. Our image of Santa Claus can be traced to the American author, Clement C. Moore. He was the first to describe Santa Claus in 1822 A.D. when he penned his poem, *A Visit from Saint Nicholas*. Mr. Moore’s poem is more commonly referred to as *The Night Before Christmas*.

III. The Christmas Tree

There are several stories about the origin of the Christmas Tree. (Sechrist, 1969) Some experts believe this custom originated in ancient Scandinavia. The pagans who inhabited this area worshipped trees. When the pagans became Christians they added decoration made with evergreen trees to their Christian celebrations.

Another story tells of a Christian missionary, Winfrid who became known as Saint Boniface. (Sechrist, 1969) Saint Boniface saved a child from being sacrificed to the pagan god Thor. The sacrifice was to take place at what was known as a “blood oak”. Saint Boniface prevented the sacrifice of the child by cutting down the blood oak. A fir tree miraculously took its place. Saint Boniface told the pagans the fir tree represented Christ the Savior and eternal life. The pagans he converted that day kept the fir tree as a Christian symbol.

One more story can be traced back to the Roman Empire. (Sechrist, 1969) A custom in the Roman Empire was to decorated homes with different types of tree branches for pagan celebrations. When the Roman Empire became Christianized under the Emperor Constantine this custom was incorporated into Christian traditions.

IV. The Christmas Star

The Christmas Star originated in the Gospel of Saint Matthew chapter two verses one and two. (Sechrist, 1969)

“When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of king Herod, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem. Saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to adore him” (Loreto Publications, 2005)

In modern times many households place a Christmas Star on top of their Christmas Tree as a symbol of this Bible passage. (Sechrist, 1969)

V. Christmas Lights

Christmas lights can be traced back to ancient Israel. (Roehrenbeck, 1963) Candles are used during the Jewish celebration for the Rededication of the Temple also known as Hannukah which originated during this time. During the Middle Ages this custom evolved into surrounding a candle with laurel leaves giving birth to the modern day wreath. This custom signaled the light of Christ coming into the world on Christmas. The candle was lit every evening of the Christmastide. The Christmas candle had special meaning in Ireland. When Ireland experienced religious suppression under British rule a candle was placed in the window of a house. It was a covert signal to invite any Catholic priest passing by to celebrate Mass there. After the religious suppression ended in Ireland it remains part of Irish tradition at Christmas time. The custom of Christmas Lights was brought to the United States by the Irish during their mass migration in the early nineteenth century. In modern times candles for the most part have been replaced by electric lights to decorate homes during the Christmastide.

VI. Christmas Cards

Christmas cards are fairly modern invention. (Sechrist, 1969) They were first printed in 1843 A.D. by Charles Goodall and Sons in the United Kingdom. In 1862 A.D., this company began printing them on a large scale. Louis Prang began printing them for use in the United States in 1875 A.D.

VII. Yule Log

The Yule Log is another pagan practice that became a Christian tradition. (Sechrist, 1969) The ancient pagans of northern Europe would burn a log once a year in tribute to their god Thor. When they became Christians the Yule Log became part of the Christmas season. In Great Britain an unburnt piece of the previous year's Yule Log is saved. It is then used to start the fire for the current year's Yule Log. "In Lithuania, the word for Christmas actually means *log evening*." (Sechrist, 1969)

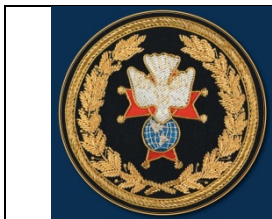
VIII. Mistletoe

Mistletoe is a custom shrouded in mystery. It is unknown exactly when or why Mistletoe became a symbol of Christmas. (Sechrist, 1969) The Druid priests of the Celtic people would use mistletoe as a charm. Sometime in the Middle Ages it became part of the Christmas season. Over time the tradition of hanging mistletoe in a doorway became popular. If a person is caught standing under the mistletoe they must kiss the person who caught them.

Out of our eight Christmas symbols many of them have origins that go back to antiquity while a few are recent inventions. They go back to pre-Christian times. Pagans who became Christians brought their ancient traditions with them. They made their old traditions into Christian traditions which are still enjoyed today.

Works Cited:

- Burghardt, W. J. (1969). Nicholas, Saint. In *The World Book Encyclopedia* (p. 320). Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational Corporation.
- Loreto Publications. (2005). *The Holy Bible - Douay-Rheims Version*. Fitzwilliam: Loreto Publications.
- Roehrenbeck, W. J. (1963). Christmas. In *Collier's Encyclopedia Volume 6* (pp. 403-405). P. F. Collier & Son Corporation.
- Sechrist, E. H. (1969). Christmas. In *The World Book Encyclopedia, Volume 3* (pp. 408-417). Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational Corporation.
- Selvi, A. M. (1969). Santa Claus. In *The World Book Encyclopedia Volume 17* (p. 102). Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational Corporation.



CARDINAL GIBBONS ASSEMBLY HONOR GUARD

4TH DEGREE UNIFORM

The 4TH Degree uniform and accessories are available to order at the following link:

<https://kofcuniform.com/CustomPage/OrderNow>

UPCOMING HONOR GUARD EVENT(S):

No Events Scheduled.

DATES TO REMEMBER

December 2020

December 8	Immaculate Conception
December 15	Family of the Month Form Due
December 25	Christmas Day
December 25	Tar Heel Knight Articles Due
December 31	Program Award Submission Due

January 2021

January 6	Epiphany
January 8-9	DD Mid-Year Meeting 2021
January 15	Family of the Month Form Due
January 17	MLK Day
January 25	Tar Heel Knight Articles Due
January 31	Annual Survey of Fraternal Activity (#1728) Due
January 31	Special Olympics Partnership Form Due

February 2021

February 1	Resolutions Due to State Advocate
February 1	State Award Submissions Due (OTY, Website, Newsletter, Scrapbook, etc.)
February 15	Family of the Month Form Due
February 15	Semiannual Council Audit Report Due
February 15	Presidents Day
February 15	Ash Monday (Maronite)
February 17	Ash Wednesday (Roman)
February 25	Tar Heel Knight Articles Due

March 2021

March 15	Family of the Month Form Due
March 25	Tar Heel Knight Articles Due
March 28	Palm Sunday
March 28	Hosanna Sunday

DEGREE EXEMPLIFICATIONS

IMPORTANT! PLEASE READ!

3/14/2020 – Governor Roy Cooper has issued an executive order banning mass gatherings of 100 people or more. Before attending any of the Degree Ceremonies listed below, please contact the host council to be sure that the event will still be held.

Further details for upcoming degree ceremonies are available on the K of C State Council Website:

Degree Exemplifications: <https://kofcnc.org/ceremonials/degrees/>

Degree Exemplifications On-Line: <https://kofcnc.org/ceremonials/upcoming-online-exemplifications/>

Fourth Degree Exemplifications: <https://kofcnc.org/4th-degree/4th-degree-exemplification/>

December 2020

December 5	3:00 PM	On-Line
December 12	3:00 PM	On-Line
December 27	8:00 PM	On-Line

FOURTH DEGREE EXEMPLIFICATIONS

There are no Fourth Degree Exemplifications scheduled at this time.

CHRISTMAS POEMS

BY

CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE

1779 AD -1863 AD

A Visit from St. Nicholas

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house

Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;

"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donner and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of Toys, and St. Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.

A Visit from St. Nicholas

Continued

His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!

His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!

His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle,
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
“Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night.”

POETS.ORG

<https://poets.org/poem/visit-st-nicholas>

Old Santeclaus

Old Santeclaus with much delight
His reindeer drives this frosty night,
O'er chimney-tops, and tracks of snow,
To bring his yearly gifts to you.

The steady friend of virtuous youth,
The friend of duty, and of truth,
Each Christmas eve he joys to come
Where love and peace have made their home.

Through many houses he has been,
And various beds and stockings seen;
Some, white as snow, and neatly mended,
Others, that seemed for pigs intended.

Where e'er I found good girls or boys,
That hated quarrels, strife and noise,
I left an apple, or a tart,
Or wooden gun, or painted cart.

To some I gave a pretty doll,
To some a peg-top, or a ball;
No crackers, cannons, squibs, or rockets,
To blow their eyes up, or their pockets.

Old Santeclaus
(Continued)

No drums to stun their Mother's ear,
Nor swords to make their sisters fear;
But pretty books to store their mind
With knowledge of each various kind.

But where I found the children naughty,
In manners rude, in temper haughty,
Thankless to parents, liars, swearers,
Boxers, or cheats, or base tale-bearers,

I left a long, black, birchen rod,
Such as the dread command of God
Directs a Parent's hand to use
When virtue's path his sons refuse.

POETS.ORG

<https://poets.org/poem/old-santeclaus>

IN MEMORIAM:

Please keep in your prayers for the repose of the soul of:

All Deceased Knights of Columbus.

All Members of the U.S Armed Forces.

All First Responders.

ARTICLES FROM THE ASSEMBLY MEMBERSHIP

Any Sir Knight who wants to submit an article to the Newsletter, turn the article into Faithful Scribe Chris Cooper at the next Assembly meeting or send it via email to COOP5614@yahoo.com.