



## *Birthday Presents for Jesus?*

Dear fellow parishioners,

As Christmas approaches we'd again like to share with you a simple story the late Father John Archbold OMI shared with us some years ago called "Mary's Dream":

### **Mary's Dream**

**"I had a dream, Joseph. I don't understand it, but I think it was about a birthday celebration for our son.**

**The people in my dream had been preparing for about six weeks. They had decorated the house and bought new clothes. They'd gone shopping many times and bought many elaborate gifts.**

**It was peculiar, though, because the presents weren't for our son. They wrapped them in beautiful paper and stacked them under a tree. Yes, a tree, Joseph, right inside their homes! They'd decorated the tree with sparkling ornaments. There was a figure like an angel on the top of the tree.**

**Everyone was laughing and happy. They gave the gifts to each other Joseph, not to our son. I don't think they even knew him. They never mentioned his name.**

**I had the strangest feeling that, if our Jesus had gone to this celebration, he would have been intruding. How sad for someone not to be wanted at his own birthday party! I'm glad it was only a dream. How terrible, Joseph, if it had been real!"**

**(Author Unknown)**

As you may recall, some of us were so moved by the story that we resolved to compile an annual birthday "Presents for Jesus" Christmas list for ourselves, and to share with others. Father John's and our shared hope was that you will read the list of suggestions that follow and give one or more of the suggested presents to Jesus this Christmas, along with your other gifts. Or you may think of another present that He would enjoy. We're sure that if you chose any one of the presents listed, or gave something similar, Jesus would be delighted. And we're also sure, given the delight Jesus enjoys in receiving His birthday gifts, Mary and Joseph would also smile with satisfaction too, knowing her dream was in fact not real.

**In memory of our much-loved  
Reverend Father John Archbold OMI (9/10/1933 - 17/11/2022)**

God Bless

*Gifts*

1. When you select your traditional Christmas gifts, think of them as birthday presents for Jesus and the recipient as His representative. And tell the recipient what you have done.
2. Gift a subscription to a mission society for a family member or friend.
3. Gift an engaged or married couple an "Engaged" or a "Marriage" Encounter weekend. <https://www.wvme.org.au/>
4. Make up a box of "Christmas Treats" and donate it to the Care Centre.
5. Give a gift subscription for a Catholic Publication (e.g. the MAMI Newsletter, [www.australiancatholics.com.au](http://www.australiancatholics.com.au)).

*Prayers and Reflections*

6. Subscribe to Mercator Net [www.mercatornet.com](http://www.mercatornet.com) an online magazine which offers lively news and articles promoting human dignity.
7. Think of someone who has given Christ to you and pray that you might be able to pass Christ on to someone else – remember you cannot give what you have not got.
8. Load the 'Universalis' app onto your phone for Sunday's mass readings (but turn your phone to silent if you use it during mass). <https://universalis.com/>
9. Include in your prayers the late Fr John Archbold OMI who brought "Mary's Dream" to our attention.
10. Regularly pray to God asking Him to help make you the person He would like you to be.

*Outreach*

11. Send Christmas cards with Christian themes, messages or images, rather than ones with pictures of a man in a funny red suit.
12. Pray for Anglican Catholics who are responding to the *Coetibus Anglicanorum*.
13. Introduce yourselves to "familiar faces" who attend your regular mass who you do not know by name.

*Personal*

14. Look for occasions to say something nice about someone you don't particularly like to someone else.
15. Do a Camino, and make each step that you take be a prayer that you make. (search Camino Compostela or Camino Salvado)
16. It is said that "world peace begins at the dinner table" – could you be a better advocate for world peace?
17. Perhaps we could re-commit to daily prayer.
18. Listen to the podcast *Heart and Soul: From riches to religion* on Apple Podcasts then subscribe to the free Christian Art series – email [info@christian.ar](mailto:info@christian.ar)

*Promises and Commitments*

19. If we were in an accident, would there be anything on our person to indicate that we are Catholic? If not perhaps we could change that.
20. Commit to putting aside time for some "God Moments" in your day.
21. If your "planned giving" commitments have fallen behind, put the "catch-up" amount in a Christmas card and submit it as your "Present for Jesus".
22. Commit to reading and reflecting on the readings for each Sunday before attending mass.
23. If you are a "Christmas and Easter Catholic", a resolution to become a more regular attender would be the most appreciated gift you could give Jesus.

*Donations*

24. Donate quality pre-loved household items (e.g. beds and bases, tables and chairs, wardrobes or chest of drawers) to Vinnies.
25. Could you "write off" someone's debt to you as a gift to Jesus?
26. Sponsor, or part sponsor, a young person's visit to World Youth Day in Lisbon/Fatima Portugal, 2023. <https://www.cym.com.au/wyd.html>

### *Time and Talents*

27. Give some of your time and talents to the parish or diocesan care centre, whether as a regular contributor; giving a day's voluntary work; or just popping in on a weekday, perhaps with a friend, and volunteering to wash up.
28. Become a volunteer at a Catholic or public hospital, nursing home or community service centre (e.g. Vinnies).
29. Make a meal for someone in need.
30. Volunteer as a helper for the Christmas Day lunch organized by Mission Australia for the less fortunate who do not have a home or a family to go to at Christmas.  
[christmaslunchinthepark.com.au](http://christmaslunchinthepark.com.au)

### *Family*

31. As a family decide to withdraw something from the Christmas Day celebration table and donate the money saved to the parish or diocesan charity or fund raiser.
32. Commit as a family to put other interests aside and have an evening meal together on a regular basis.
33. Agree that you would celebrate each family member's birthday by a family attendance at a daily mass.
34. Get the family together and make-over a sick or elderly relative or neighbour's garden, or join in a Parish busy-bee.

### *Young Children*

*If you have young children or grandchildren you might:*

35. Include in their Christmas present "allowance" a specific sum that they should spend on a birthday "Present for Jesus" of their choice,
36. Could you offer to help less able students with their reading program in the local primary school?
37. Sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus as the Christmas "pudding" arrives at the table.

### *Teenagers and young people*

38. Introduce this Mary's Dream campaign, suitably modified for the age group, into a Catholic College or High School.
39. Consider taking a "Gap Year for God".
40. Ask your parish priest if there is some way you could contribute to a parish ministry.
41. Why not commit to being part of World Youth Day in Lisbon/Fatima Portugal, 2023.  
<https://www.cym.com.au/wyd.html>

### *Parish Initiatives*

42. Coordinate a "give a lift" scheme to have vetted volunteers drive parishioners to Mass who are unable to drive themselves.
43. Start a Catholic Book Club for interested parishioners.
44. Coordinate a group of parishioners to visit a local frail aged lodge/old people's home to spend a short time with the residents.
45. When having a parish morning tea, organise "meet and greet" couples to extend a personal invitation to mass goers who may be a little reluctant to attend.
46. Coordinate a letter drop in the suburbs of the parish inviting all to a Christmas mass and include in the invitation some reference to the birthday of Jesus.
47. Say a public Hail Mary at the end of Sunday Mass for our families as a small devotion to Mary.
48. Organise a short course for readers to encourage less confident folk to take up the role.
49. Encourage inter-denominational cooperation to support inter-faith initiatives that encourage mutual understanding.

### *Other*

50. Can you think of other "presents" for Jesus along these lines as you see Him in your prayer life?

# **Basilica of St Patrick Christmas and New Year timetable 2022**

## **Wednesday 21 December**

11am Adoration  
12pm Angelus and Mass  
7pm Second Rite of Reconciliation

## **Saturday 24 December**

11am Adoration  
12pm Angelus and Mass  
6pm Children's Mass (5.30pm carols)  
8.30pm Mass (8pm carols)  
Midnight Mass (11.30pm carols)  
St Anne's Church: 6.30pm Mass (6.15pm carols)

## **Sunday 25 December**

Basilica Masses: 8am, 9.30am (Italian),  
11am and 5pm  
St Anne's Church: 8.15am Mass

## **Saturday 31st December**

11am Adoration  
12pm Angelus and Mass  
6pm Vigil Mass

## **Sunday 1 January 2023**

Basilica Masses: 8am, 9.30am (Italian),  
11am and 5pm  
St Anne's Church: 8.15am Mass