



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), please
remember him in your prayers)**

God Bless

Gifts

1. Make a Christmas donation to Caritas. www.caritas.org.au/christmas-appeal
2. If asked 'What would you like for Christmas?' include one or two 'Presents for Jesus' in your wish list.
3. Give Columban Calendars as a Christmas Gift.
4. Support of the Oblate Fathers missionary work by purchasing a MAMI Gift Card to give to someone who would prefer to support needy young people by donating a Chook, a Tool Box, or a Goat or something similar rather than receive another pair of socks. www.oblates.com.au/christmas-cards
5. Babysit young children so a couple can celebrate a special occasion.

Prayers and Reflections

6. Load the 'bible in one year' app and listen to a bible reading each day. <https://bibleinoneyear.org/en/>
7. Commit to daily or weekly googling perthcatholic.org.au clicking on 'Organisations and Services' to find a different organisation or institution and ask the Lord to bless it, the people working in it, and the people they serve.
8. Set aside a regular time in your day to listen to God.
9. Pray for past and present parish clergy, ministers, volunteers, and benefactors.
10. Perhaps you could take the time to reconnect with your favourite saint.
11. Include the unknown person who wrote the Mary's Dream story in your prayers.

Outreach

12. Apart from Aboriginal Australians, we are in a very real sense 'boat people'. Joseph and his little family were political refugees in Egypt, maybe for several years. Find some practical way to be a welcoming Australian.
13. Invite someone who may be on their own to join you for a meal over the Christmas season.
14. Don't hide your Christianity at Christmas (e.g., write 'Christmas' not 'Xmas'; send 'Christmas' not 'Season's' greetings).

Personal

15. Send a Christmas card to someone you may have inadvertently or deliberately hurt together with a note or letter of apology/reconciliation.
16. Every day, try and pay someone a compliment, particularly for Christian acts of kindness.
17. Send a card, letter, or email of gratitude to those who have helped you along your life's journey who you have not specifically thanked in the past. Or just phone them.
18. Reconcile with a family member or former close friend you have 'lost'.
19. Share this 'Mary's Dream' handout with others who may not have received it.

Promises and Commitments

20. Is now the time to increase your first or second collection, or planned giving, contributions by (say) 10% to help support our priests and the parish, given the rising cost-of-living?
21. Resolve to say 'thank you' to God on a regular basis for His help and blessings.
22. We always carry car and house keys, as our material security blanket, why not commit to carrying our rosary beads or other religious object as a spiritual one?
23. Now might be a time to re-connect with your godchildren.
24. Commit to make special time for prayer or reflection (e.g., weekday mass, join a meditation group).

Teenagers and young people

25. Listen to Pope Francis's address at World Youth Day this year google <https://www.aciafrica.org/news/8810/pope-francis-first-world-youth-day-speech-gods-heart-beats-uniquely-for-you>
26. Set good example by the appropriate and respectful use of social media.
27. Join a university Christian club.
28. Follow the daily reflections in Christian Art info@christian.art

Donations

29. Provide a meal for the homeless by a donation to St Pat's care centre.
www.stpats.com.au
30. Support the Diocesan 'Life Link' appeal or one of its programmes.

Time and Talents

31. Become a letter writer for Jesus (e.g., write a gentle letter objecting to offensive advertisements or promotions; or write to the editor of a newspaper or TV station when an issue that would offend Jesus gets reported).
32. Lookup the parish web site under 'ministries', 'pastoral care', or 'music' to see if you might find satisfaction in joining a group or being a helper when needed.
33. Send a Christmas card with a 'Can I do anything for you this Christmas?' offer of help (e.g., to the Parish Office, a family member, nursing home or charity).
34. Become a Vinnies volunteer or supporter.
35. Give some of your time and talents to St Pat's 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.

Family

36. Make a list of community service acts your family could do and see how many of them can be achieved during advent (e.g., shopping for an elderly neighbour, babysitting for a harassed mother, providing a meal for a family in need etc.).
37. Commit as a family to say the rosary together (say) once a week.
38. Make the nativity scene the focus of Christmas decorations.
39. Include in our Christmas dinner grace a reminder that we give each other a Christmas gift, to celebrate the greatest gift that we have received, Christ, our Saviour.

Young Children - If you have young children or grandchildren you might:

40. At year end, have them bring a gift which they could give to a class mate, or donate for distribution to the needy, as if the person receiving it were Jesus.
41. Help them devise their own 'Present for Jesus'.
42. Take time out to read to or with them a true nativity story (e.g., google 'Catholic Nativity Stories for Children')
43. Help them to create their own Christmas cards with emphasis on aspects of the nativity.

Parish Initiatives

44. Organise 'hosts/greeters' to ensure all are welcomed at parish social events.
45. Promote or publicise lesser-known faith enrichment opportunities for parishioners (e.g., the Fremantle Circle of the Catenians, enquiries sec291freo@gmail.com).
46. Invite new parishioners to a parish morning tea where they can be introduced and welcomed to the parish.
47. Establish a 'talent register' where parishioners could register their willingness to offer their time and skills if and when needed for a parish project.
48. Organise a variation of the original 'boxing day' tradition and have parishioners bring in duplicate or otherwise unneeded Christmas presents or gift cards for re-distribution to the needy.
49. Encourage parishioners to get involved in liturgies and parish life (e.g., conduct a short course for readers, provide guidelines for greeters, 'Can you help with' requests for parishioners).

Other

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

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

	St Patrick's Basilica	St Anne's, North Fremantle
Saturday 23 December	RECONCILIATION 9.30am, 11.00am and 4.30PM 11.00AM - Adoration 12.00PM - Daily Mass 6.00PM – Mass of the 4 th Sunday of Advent	
Sunday 24 December CHRISTMAS EVE	8.00AM – Mass of 4 th Sunday of Advent 9.30AM (ITALIAN) 11am Mass of 4 th Sunday of Advent 5.00PM - Mass of Our Lord's Nativity with Carols at 4.45PM 8.30PM - Mass of Our Lord's Nativity with carols at 8.00PM	NO MASS at 8.15AM (St Anne's, North Fremantle) 6.30PM – Mass of our Lord's Nativity (St Anne's, North Fremantle)
Monday 25 December CHRISTMAS	MIDNIGHT - Mass of Our Lord's Nativity with carols at 11.30pm 8.00AM – Mass of Our Lord's Nativity 9.30AM(ITALIAN) - Mass of Our Lord's Nativity 11AM - Mass of Our Lord's Nativity NO 5PM EVENING MASS	NO MASS at 8.15AM (St Anne's, North Fremantle)

Please Note: From 26 December to 26 January 2024

Reconciliation only at 11am-12noon and 4.30pm to 5.30pm