

Texas Grand Prelate's Message

Grand Prelate's Message - December 2003

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Thinking of Christmas evokes different thoughts and emotions for different people. Some people immediately think of gifts, decorations, family gatherings, and lots and lots of good food. Children think of Old St. Nicholas with his eight tiny reindeer and all those wonderful toys he brings down the chimney, even if they have no chimney. Many think of all the shopping required to supply those gifts; while others are overcome by the thought of the mountain of bills that come after Christmas. Others are saddened by the memories of tragic losses of family or friends that occurred during Christmas seasons of the past, ad infinitum.

But how many of us really consider what it meant to the baby that was born in a feeding trough that first Christmas Day?

We are taught by the holiest of volumes that the baby was the Eternal Son of God, who in order to be a shining light to mankind, was born of a woman as all men are. That he lived a sinless mortal life which he, some thirty-three years later, forfeited on a cruel Roman cross. That on the third day afterwards "He burst the bands of death, triumphed over the grave, and in due time ascended with transcendent majesty into heaven, where he now sits at the right hand of our Heavenly Father, a mediator and intercessor for all those who have faith in him."

What a message for mankind to remember at Christmas! Several years ago your Grand Prelate and his lady decided to convey that message in our outside Christmas decorations. We placed a lighted cross near the nativity scene and propped up the Baby Jesus in His manger to have Him look directly at the cross. In prior years we had received many compliments on our displays, but that year we had none. People driving by would stop, look at it for a few minutes, shake their heads and drive on. We were not looking for compliments, but thought surely someone would recognize the message, and make some comment about it. Maybe the arrangement was too subtle. Whatever the case, it seemed that nobody got the message that Jesus was born that first Christmas Day looking to ultimately die on the cross as a sacrifice for mankind's sins.

That baby was the **First Christmas Gift**, and what a wonderful gift He was; the greatest gift mankind could ever receive from a loving, compassionate God.

Wouldn't it be great if our first thoughts of Christmas were about Him who was born that day, and what he faced on our behalf as he lay there in the manger?

Have a very merry Christmas, ever remembering to thank God for His precious gift, and the purpose for which that dear baby came.

Howard M. McFarland
Grand Prelate

A York Rite Festival to be held at Ruthven Commandery No. 2, K.T., on December 13, 2003, honoring the Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of the United States, Sir Knight Kenneth B. Fischer. Location is 4911 Montrose Blvd. Registration will begin at 6:00 A.M. with the degrees to start at 7:00 A.M. Lunch will be provided. Sir Knight Kenneth B. Fischer

will confer the Order of the Temple with the officers of the Texas Grand Commandery. Please notify the Gulf Coast York Rite College No. 106, 18210 Nassau Bay Drive, Houston, TX 77038-3415, of the names of the candidates that your are bringing. You may wish to notify the Governor of the College, Ronald J. Price, (713) 675-7444 by phone of the candidates that you are bringing.