

**Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home & Rehabilitation Center**  
**C'est la Vie Apartments**  
**Newsletter ~ December 2016**  
A Ministry of the Marianites of Holy Cross

*In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled... And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)*

These verses contain within them some of the most powerful teachings of our Christian faith. As we celebrate Christmas, let us pause and take time to look deeper into the wisdom found hidden in these words wrapped in swaddling clothes.

Using some of the most unlikely characters of history, Divine Wisdom enacted a plan created from all eternity to bring about the salvation of the world. "In the fullness of time, God sent His son..." (Galatians 4:4-5) The long hundred-year-old bloody civil of Rome had come to an end and Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census be taken of the entire Roman world. This decision sets the stage for God's plan to unfold. God uses a Roman Emperor who thinks he is in control of the world to upset the power of the world and set the stage for an eternal birth. God's timing is always perfect and He uses people and situations to carry out what has been pre-ordained for all eternity.

In stark contrast to the pompous Caesar, two humble peasants lived in Nazareth. One was a carpenter and the other was his spouse, a pregnant teenager who was ready to give birth. Responding to the decree, they made the arduous four day journey in winter to Bethlehem. In obeying a human mandate, they enabled God's fullness of time to unfold. Caesar Augustus, as sovereign ruler over the entire Roman Empire, unwittingly served the plan of the Creator of the universe to fulfill the messianic promise. Through the obedience of the two humble peasants to Caesar, the birth of the Son of God took place in Bethlehem in fulfillment of the prophecy in the book of Micah (5:1): "But you, Bethlehem-Ephratha, too small to be among the clans of Judah; from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel; whose origin is from of old, from ancient times."

The Wisdom of God is evident in each moment of this story. *God chose an Emperor obsessed with control as the very moment to break through the boundaries of Roman rule. God chose a poor carpenter to carry out the complexities of the divine plan. God chose the womb of a teenager to become the tabernacle for his Son. God chose a couple without prestige, wealth, education, political influence as the parents for his Son. God chose an insignificant village to be the birthplace of Divinity.*

On the journey to Bethlehem, God chose to teach Joseph and Mary to trust in Divine Wisdom. They were alone; there was no family waiting to welcome them. Their encounter with the innkeeper was difficult, yet he was not cruel or inhospitable; he simply did not have any room. At the end of the day, Mary and Joseph had to rely on God to provide and what did God provide – a stable and a manger.

We have romanticized the birth of Jesus and cleaned the space around the animals. Jesus was not born in a warm, comfortable, safe home. The original stable and manger were harsh and cold! The Son of God was born in a stable where animals were kept and his first crib was a common animal trough. This place and setting were not by accident or due to our Holy Father's lack of provision for his Son.

Divine wisdom is wrapped in these swaddling clothes! In the stable were a few of God's animals who, with his parents, witnessed the union of heaven and earth in the birth of divinity. The manger symbolized serving and feeding. From the moment of his birth, tiny arms and hands reached out to humanity to touch us, to be with us. He is our food; He feeds us and provides for our needs. "The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve." (Mark 10:45)

God, our Father, teaches us many lessons in these seven verses of the Christmas story. He wants us to understand that it was a difficult time. It challenged the faith and trust of Mary and Joseph. It made them question one another. It set them on a journey in winter on a treacherous road through desert wilderness.

Christmas is a time that is held dear in the hearts of Christians. However, it is never a perfect time. It is a time of both joy and sadness. For some, this Christmas welcomes a new child in the family and a recovery from illness. For others it brings the memory of deceased loved one, or of a broken relationship, or someone far away, or of terminal illness. For all of us it is Christmas celebrated in our imperfect lives in an imperfect world. Whatever the circumstances, let us welcome Christ our Light to be born anew in our lives. Let us not yield to the temptation of commercializing and romanticizing this sacred moment in our salvation history.

Like Joseph and Mary, we are called to trust that God will provide for our needs - will take care of us in our own wilderness and offer us the nourishment needed on our journey. Once fed, we are called to feed and to be food for our sisters, brothers, and all of creation. We are called to serve when it is convenient and inconvenient; when no one notices, understands, or appreciates what is being done. We are called to serve in all times and seasons reaching out, not to those who are able to give in return, but to the least, the lame, the lost. Let us respond to its challenges, celebrate with our families, share with those in need, and render gratitude to our God for the gift of the Son wrapped in swaddling clothes of sacred wisdom!

## ***Wishing everyone an abundance of Christmas Blessings!***

### ***~Birthdays in December~***

<i>Sr. E Boudreaux</i>	<i>12/19</i>
<i>R Chavis</i>	<i>12/26</i>
<i>D Castille</i>	<i>12/27</i>
<i>Sr. K Farrell</i>	<i>12/14</i>
<i>M Gautreaux</i>	<i>12/27</i>

<i>R Joubert</i>	<i>12/08</i>
<i>M Lanclos</i>	<i>12/10</i>
<i>Fr. B Lebiedz</i>	<i>12/22</i>
<i>E Mengarelli</i>	<i>12/04</i>
<i>M Vidrine</i>	<i>12/13</i>

*Sr. E Vidrine*            **12/12\_\_Recently Deceased\_\_**  
**Verna Savoie 11/09/2016**  
**Sherri Bacilla 12/04/2016**

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