

# Cardinal



December Edition  
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**"CHRISTMAS IS NOT A TIME NOR A SEASON, BUT A STATE OF MIND. TO  
CHERISH PEACE AND GOODWILL, TO BE PLENTIEOUS IN MERCY, IS TO  
HAVE THE REAL SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS."**

**- CALVIN COOLIDGE**



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## Editor-in-Chief

John Napolitano

# THE HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS

In ancient times, around the world, the middle of winter was a time of celebration. Early Europeans celebrated light and birth in the darkest days of winter long before the birth of Jesus. During the winter solstice, many people rejoiced that they endured the harsh winter and looked forward to longer days and extended hours of sunlight. The Norse celebrated Yule from December 21, the winter solstice, through January in Scandinavia. Fathers and sons would bring home large logs which they would set on fire in recognition of the return of the sun. 12 days of celebration would last until the logs burned out. The Norse believed that each spark from the fire represented a new pig or calf that would be born during the coming year.

In most areas of Europe, the end of December was a perfect time of celebration. Most of the cattle would be slaughtered during this time of the year so they wouldn't have to feed them during the winter. For many people, it was the only time of year when they had a supply of fresh meat. Also, during this time of the year, most wine and beer was finally fermented and ready for drinking. In Germany, people honored the pagan god Oden during the mid-winter holiday. They believed he flew during the night to observe his people and decide who would prosper or perish. As a result of this, many people chose to stay inside.

Saturnalia (holiday in honor of Saturn the god of agriculture) was celebrated in Rome. It began in the week leading up to the winter solstice and lasted a full month. Saturnalia was a hedonistic time in which food and drink were plentiful and the normal Roman social order was turned upside down. Romans also observed Juvenalia, around the time of the winter solstice, which was a feast honoring the children of Rome. Members of the wealthy upper class often celebrated the birthday of Mithra, the god of the unconquerable sun, as well, on December 25. For some this was considered the most sacred day of the year.

During the early years of Christianity, Easter was the main holiday and the birth of Jesus was not celebrated. However, in the fourth century, church officials decided to institute the birth of Jesus as a holiday. The Bible doesn't mention the date for his birth. Puritans used this to deny the legitimacy of the celebration. Pope Julius I was the one who chose December 25 as the celebration date for the birth of Christ. It is believed the Church chose this date in an effort to adopt and absorb the traditions of the pagan Saturnalia festival. It was first called the Feast of the Nativity and the custom spread to Egypt by 432. It then spread to England by the end of the sixth century. The celebration of Christmas had spread all the way to Scandinavia by the end of the eighth century. Today, Christmas is celebrated 13 days after the 25th, in the Greek and Russian Orthodox churches. This is also referred to as the Epiphany, or Three Kings Day, which is believed to be the day when the three wise men finally found Jesus in the manger.

Christmas is both a sacred religious holiday and a worldwide cultural and commercial phenomenon. For two millennia, people around the world have been observing it with traditions and practices that are both religious and secular in nature. The anniversary of the birth of Jesus is what Christians celebrate on Christmas. Popular customs include exchanging gifts, decorating Christmas trees, attending church, sharing meals with family and friends and, of course, waiting for Santa Claus to arrive. Since 1870, December 25th (Christmas Day) has been a federal holiday in the United States.

(Information found at [http://www.thehistoryofchristmas.com/ch/before\\_christ.htm](http://www.thehistoryofchristmas.com/ch/before_christ.htm))

## WHY IS CHRISTMAS TIME SPECIAL?

Christmas is a special time because it is the birth of Jesus Christ, our savior. It is a time when we reflect on the birth of Christ and we spend time with our families and friends. We exchange greetings, gifts and cards. When you send a person a gift or card, it is to let them know that you care for them. Christmas is a time when there is peace on earth. It is a time to be happy and be proud to have the people we have in our lives. It is a holiday celebrated throughout the world. Although some people may have different ways of celebrating Christmas day, we all ultimately celebrate the same event: the birth of Christ.

- Christopher Assou

## THE EVOLUTION OF TOYS

As part of Christmas tradition, Santa Claus brings children gifts for their good behavior throughout the whole year. Most of these gifts include toys. Over the years, children's expectations for gifts have drastically increased. Christmas began with Jesus as our first gift given to us over 2000 years ago. Then, the three wise men brought Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh to Jesus as gifts. They gave him gold as a precious metal, frankincense as perfume and incense, and myrrh as an anointed oil. These traditions are used today as gifts from husbands to wives or between good friends and relatives. After the wise men gave Jesus his gifts, many centuries later, gifts became materialistic and children began to receive dolls, race cars, etc. Fast forward to 2015 children began to receive high tech gifts such as sky walkers, eight-year-olds with phones, etc. Many of us all seem to have forgotten the actual meaning of Christmas, which is giving. Some of us are worried more about what we get and aren't happy because of what we didn't get.

- Carlito Rodriguez





# HAS CHRISTMAS LOST ITS MEANING?

As I sat down to write this article, I thought first about what's wrong about Christmas today. You see it everywhere- on store shelves and in television commercials. Almost anywhere you look there's a new, amazing product or grand sale taking place to celebrate the wondrous time that is Christmas. The industrialization and commercialization of Christmas has led many people to think that it's a very shallow holiday. However, I don't believe it has fully lost the meaning it once had, nor do I think it ever will.

First, we must ask, what is the true meaning of Christmas? This obviously doesn't have an objective answer. To some, it can be based in religion, celebrating the tale of Jesus' birth outside of Bethlehem on that cold night in the manger. To others, it can be symbolic of a year's work finally come to an end; a celebration of how far we've come and how far we plan to go in the years going forward. I propose, however, that Christmas be thought of as a time of effort. It is a time to celebrate the things and people we love about our lives, and to show our appreciation for those things or people by putting in all the effort we can to bring them joy this season. Or, in a religious sense, show the effort we put in day by day to stay loyal to our faith, be it through prayer at home or in the church.

In conclusion, the meaning of Christmas is dependent on how you, as an individual, feel about the season, and how you wish to celebrate it; be it through rushing through store aisles to get that special someone a gift or sitting in the pews on Christmas Eve to show your devotion to God. The important part is that you put in all your effort and love in these yuletide times.

- Joel Dominguez

# LASALLIAN GIFTS

Christmas is the celebration and birth of Jesus, but we also celebrate through giving gifts and spending time with family. Many teenagers focus on getting gifts and we show appreciation for all that we receive.

In a recent survey, the following were identified as Lasallian's top gift ideas:

- New phone
- Video Games
- Money
- Sneakers
- Clothes

Merry Christmas, everybody!

- Michael Suarez



# POPULAR CHRISTMAS SONGS



It's finally okay to put away your witches' hats and candy buckets and bring out your Santa hats and our overly decorated Christmas trees.

Although there are countless traditions that are done throughout the Christmas season, one of the most enjoyable traditions is listening

to Christmas tunes. Christmas songs undeniably put you in a great mood and bring out the Christmas spirit. Everyone has his/her favorite Christmas song that they listen to year after year.

There are many different Christmas songs that surfaced throughout the generations and have become vastly popular. It is not realistic for me to list every Christmas song that ever existed, but I definitely can inform you about some of the most popular songs that we all know and love today. One of the more well-known songs is "Jingle Bells". "Jingle Bells" was written by James Lord Pierpont in the fall of 1857. It was originally written to be sung by a Sunday school choir. At the time, however, the lyrics were too "racy" to be sung by children. "Jingle Bells" was actually originally called "One Horse Open Sleigh" and was originally written to be sung during the Thanksgiving season but became associated with Christmas many decades after it was first performed on Washington Street in Boston in 1857 ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jingle\\_Bells](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jingle_Bells)).

Another very popular Christmas song is a "Silent Night". "Silent Night" is a popular Christmas song/carol, composed in 1818 by Franz Xaver Gruber. It was written by Joseph Mohr. The song was first performed on Christmas Eve 1818 at St Nicholas Parish Church in Oberndorf, a village in the Austrian Empire where the song was originally written and became a instant Christmas classic for almost 200 years ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silent\\_Night](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silent_Night)).

A more classic Christmas song that is traditionally song duet style by a man and woman is "Baby, It's cold outside." "Baby, It's Cold Outside" is a song written by Frank Loesser in 1944. It is a duet where one of the singers, traditionally performed by a male voice, attempts to convince a woman, usually performed by a female voice, that they should stay together for a romantic evening because the weather is cold, and a trip home would not be a wise choice. Another more classic Christmas song is "All I want for Christmas is You" originally sung by Mariah Carey in 1994. The song falls into the category of a Christmas love song that many Christmas fans have instantly classified as their recent favorite ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baby,\\_It%27s\\_Cold\\_Outside](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baby,_It%27s_Cold_Outside)).

A final popular Christmas song is "Feliz Navidad." This Christmas song was written in 1970 by the Puerto Rican singer and songwriter José Feliciano ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feliz\\_Navidad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feliz_Navidad)). The song is a mix of English and Spanish and is an upbeat song that aims to wish the listener a merry Christmas and a happy new year in two languages.

Although I did not cover every Christmas song that was ever composed, I hope I mentioned one of your favorite Christmas songs. I encourage every Christmas fan to take some time to listen to some Christmas songs, old & new, to put you in the Christmas spirit. Feliz Navidad!

- David Matos

## CHRISTMAS POEM

As the days grow shorter  
And the cold at our door  
Marks the start of a season that we've all been waiting for  
Of course I mean Christmas  
The most wonderful time of the  
year  
A time of great joy  
And spreading Christmas cheer  
Since we were all children  
We continue holiday traditions  
Like stars and lights  
And money for the missions  
A widespread tradition  
Is that of gift giving  
Where people exchange presents  
And see the joy it is bringing  
There's a spirit in the air  
In the sights and the songs  
Where people feel more connected  
And attempt to right their wrongs  
The Christmas tradition started  
With our Lord Jesus Christ  
With religion we celebrate  
The beginning of the Messiah's life  
Just remember that Christmas  
Is not about yourself  
Not the gifts or the kicks or the new Gucci belt  
But Christmas is about spreading joy to all  
To start building bridges and not divisive walls  
To celebrate the Lord and His wonderful birth  
To try and put some spirit in all the humans on the earth



- Alex Valcourt





# ALUMNI NEWS



## La Salle “Man of the Month”



Colonel Christopher Weimar '80 remembers finding his confidence and determination at La Salle Academy, participating in a wide variety of activities like Track and Cross Country, prayer group and the school yearbook. One of Colonel Weimar's favorite things about La Salle when he was a student was the school's location as he commuted from Brooklyn. Colonel Weimar continued his education after La Salle, earning his Bachelor's at Fordham University, Master's from Boston University, and his Ph.D. from the Graduate Center City University of New York. He has completed 21 marathons, seven of which include the Boston Marathon. Colonel Weimar is now a Professor at the Air Force Air Command and Staff College and retired from the United States Air Force after thirty years of service. He has participated in the Veteran's Day Assembly at La

Salle for the past several years. His education at La Salle Academy gave him many of the skills he needed to succeed in life.

“Live Jesus in our hearts, forever’ says it all. [La Salle] has been a positive impact and influence in my relationships with family, friends, and with people throughout my career. [La Salle] has taught me the importance of teamwork and community. La Salle gave me the opportunity to find my confidence and desire to take on challenges and take the lid off of what's possible in life.” – Colonel Christopher Weimar '80

Like many La Salle men, Colonel Weimar took advantage of the opportunities life handed to him. Many of these opportunities began at La Salle.



## Upcoming Alumni Events

### La Salle Academy Basketball Happy Hour Fundraiser

December 19 @ 7pm to 8:30pm  
(Following the 5:30pm home opener)

The Gray Mare

61 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, NY, NY 10003

### Alumni Association Meeting

January 10 @ 5pm to 6pm

La Salle Annex

44 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, NY, NY 10003

### Alumni Basketball Night

February 2 @ 4pm to 9pm

La Salle Gym

215 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street, NY, NY 10003

## In Memoriam: December Edition

Robert Johnson '59

Thomas James Healy '51

## Will you be the next “Man of the Month”?

Alumni, we want to hear from you! Contact the Development Office to let us know what you are up to! Send one or two paragraphs to Caitlin Kerwin at

[ckerwin@lasalleacademy.org](mailto:ckerwin@lasalleacademy.org)

## SPORTS

Winter is upon us, and the Cardinals are competing.

On Tuesday, December 5th both JV and varsity bowling teams played their final regular season match against Archbishop Molloy High School. Both teams came out victorious. The JV ended the regular season 9 – 2 records, grabbing the second place and second seed in the Brooklyn-Queens Playoffs. The Varsity completed the regular season undefeated with an 11 - 0 record and sits in the top seed of the playoffs.

On Saturday, December 2nd and Sunday, December 3rd, the Varsity basketball team won the Brother Arnold Tournament at McClaney. On Saturday, December 9th, the Freshmen fell 69-58, while JV earned a close 52-50 victory taking control late in the game. Varsity trailed one point at half time, but came out on top 70-53.

## HOW TO KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS

### Sophomores

You could remember the important events in His life and reflect on the fact that none of the events would occur and His ministry would not be alive today if He was not born..

-Elijah Perez—Mendez

I can set up a Nativity scene around my home. I could listen to Christmas songs. I could be more active in my faith by helping others in a soup kitchen.

- Justin Alejo

We can keep Christ in Christmas by being with family and showing our love and gratitude for our life and friends

-Yamil Sanchez

### Juniors

Belonging to the Mexican culture I take part in “posadas” or the Ines. These are events when my family comes together and celebrate the Virgin Mary and the birth of Jesus. This way I know why Christmas is celebrated and how Christ is important during this time.

- Jancarlos Flores

To keep Christ in Christmas you can feed the poor and do something that is holy. Another way is by saying “Merry Christmas” and not “Happy Xmas”. Furthermore, you can say a prayer before eating dinner.

- Jeffrey Tejeda

### Seniors

We can make Christmas more about giving than receiving.

- Carlito Rodriguez

Be humble, go to church, thank God for all the blessings we receive during this time, being close with family and friends, celebrate the coming of Christ.

- Nikko Olvera- Vera

We can keep Christ in Christmas by spreading his message of peace and love to everyone. Regardless of religion, the people of the earth come together and help each other.

- Arthur Escobar

