



## What is Christmas

The word **Christmas** comes from the words *Cristes maesse*, or "Christ's Mass." Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus for members of the Christian religion. Most historians peg the first celebration of Christmas to Rome in 336 A.D.

Christmas is both a holiday and a holy day. In America it is one of the biggest events of the year (especially for children), and for members of the Christian religions it is an important day on the religious calendar.

Christmas as we know it today is a Victorian invention of the 1860s. Probably the most celebrated holiday in the world, our modern Christmas is a product of hundreds of years of both secular and religious traditions from around the globe. The most cherished of holidays.

An Englishman named John Calcott Horsley helped to popularize the tradition of sending Christmas greeting cards when he began producing small cards featuring festive scenes and a pre-written holiday greeting in the late 1830s. Newly efficient post offices in England and the United States made the cards nearly overnight sensations. At about the same time, similar cards were being made by R.H. Pease, the first American card maker, in Albany, New York, and Louis Prang, a German who immigrated to America in 1850.

Celtic and Teutonic peoples had long considered mistletoe to have magic powers. It was said to have the ability to heal wounds and increase fertility. Celts hung mistletoe in their homes in order to bring themselves good luck and ward off evil spirits. During holidays in the Victorian era, the English would hang sprigs of mistletoe from ceilings and in doorways. If someone was found standing under the mistletoe, they would be kissed by someone else in the room, behavior not usually demonstrated in Victorian society.

Caroling also began in England. Wandering musicians would travel from town to town visiting

castles and homes of the rich. In return for their performance, the musicians hoped to receive a hot meal or money.

In the United States and England, children hang stockings on their bedpost or near a fireplace on Christmas Eve, hoping that it will be filled with treats while they sleep. In Scandinavia, similar-minded children leave their shoes on the hearth. This tradition can be traced to legends about Saint Nicholas. One legend tells of three poor sisters who could not marry because they had no money for a dowry. To save them from being sold by their father, St. Nick left each of the three sisters gifts of gold coins. One went down the chimney and landed in a pair of shoes that had been left on the hearth. Another went into a window and into a pair of stockings left hanging by the fire to dry.

Bishop of Myra in Lycia; died 6 December, 345 or 352. Though he is one of the most popular saints in the Greek as well as the Latin Church, there is scarcely anything historically certain about him except that he was Bishop of Myra in the fourth century. Hagios Nikolaos (a.k.a. St. Nicholas of Myra). Many legends and miracles are attributed to Saint Nicholas. A sailor who fell overboard was reputedly saved by Nicholas when the saint walked on water, retrieved the sailor and carried him back to the ship. During his lifetime, he adored children and often threw gifts anonymously into the windows of their homes.

The transformation of Saint Nicholas to Santa Claus happened largely in America -- with inspiration from the Dutch. In the early days of Dutch New York, "Sinterklass" became known among the English-speaking as "Santa Claus" (or "Saint Nick"). In 1809 Washington Irving, a member of the New York Historical Society (which promoted a Dutch Saint Nicholas as its patron saint), created a tale of a chubby, pipe-smoking little Saint Nicholas who rode a magic horse through the air visiting all houses in New York. The elfish figure was small enough to slide down chimneys with gifts for the good children and switches for the bad ones. Merry Christmas.





# Pat's Gourmet Coffee Shop

166 North Main Street, Mooresville, NC

The Most Patriotic Coffee Shop in the USA

Volume 02 Issue 12

December, 2006

## A Different Christmas Poem

The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light,  
 I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight.  
 My wife was asleep, her head on my chest,  
 My daughter beside me, angelic in rest.  
 Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,  
 Transforming the yard to a winter delight.  
 The sparkling lights in the tree I believe,  
 Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.  
 My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep,  
 Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep.  
 In perfect contentment, or so it would seem,  
 So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.

The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near,  
 But I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear.  
 Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know,  
 Then the sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.  
 My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear,  
 And I crept to the door just to see who was near.  
 Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night,  
 A lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.

A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old,  
 Perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold.  
 Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled,  
 Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child.  
 "What are you doing?" I asked without fear,  
 "Come in this moment, it's freezing out here!  
 Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve,  
 You should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift,  
 Away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts..  
 To the window that danced with a warm fire's light  
 Then he sighed and he said "Its really all right,  
 I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night."  
 "It's my duty to stand at the front of the line,  
 That separates you from the darkest of times.  
 No one had to ask or beg or implore me,  
 I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me.  
 My Gramps died at 'Pearl on a day in December,"  
 Then he sighed, "That's a Christmas 'Gram always  
 remembers."  
 My dad stood his watch in the jungles of 'Nam',  
 And now it is my turn and so, here I am.  
 I've not seen my own son in more than a while,  
 But my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile.

Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag,  
 The red, white, and blue... an American flag.  
 I can live through the cold and the being alone,  
 Away from my family, my house and my home.  
 I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet,  
 I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat.  
 I can carry the weight of killing another,  
 Or lay down my life with my sister and brother..  
 Who stand at the front against any and all,  
 To ensure for all time that this flag will not fall."

"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright,  
 Your family is waiting and I'll be all right."  
 "But isn't there something I can do, at the least,  
 "Give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast?  
 It seems all too little for all that you've done,  
 For being away from your wife and your son."  
 Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret,  
 "Just tell us you love us, and never forget.  
 To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone,  
 To stand your own watch, no matter how long.  
 For when we come home, either standing or dead,  
 To know you remember we fought and we bled.  
 Is payment enough, and with that we will trust,  
 That we mattered to you as you mattered to us."

PLEASE, would you do me the kind favor of sending this  
 to as many people as you can? Christmas will be coming  
 soon and some credit is due to our U.S. service men and  
 women for our being able to celebrate these festivities.  
 Let's try in this small way to pay a tiny bit of what we  
 owe. Make people stop and think of our heroes, living and  
 dead, who sacrificed themselves for us.

LCDR Jeff Giles, SC, USN  
 30th Naval Construction Regiment  
 OIC, Logistics Cell One  
 Al Taqqadum, Iraq

### Less We Forget!

A special thanks to Anne McCutcheon for this email.

**We wish our troops  
 A Safe and  
 Merry Christmas**





## All about Freedom

Remember the guy who got on a plane with a bomb built into his shoe and tried to light it? Did you know that his trial is over? Did you know he was sentenced? Did you see/hear any of the judge's remarks on TV or radio? Didn't think so.

Ruling by Judge William Young, US District Court. Prior to sentencing, the Judge asked the defendant if he had anything to say. His response: After admitting his guilt to the court for the record, Reid also admitted his "allegiance to Osama bin Laden, to Islam, and to the religion of Allah," defiantly stated "I think I will not apologize for my actions," and told the court "I am at war with your country." Judge Young then delivered the statement quoted below:

January 30, 2003, United States vs. Reid.

Judge Young: "Mr. Richard C. Reid, hearken now to the sentence the Court imposes upon you. On counts 1, 5 and 6 the Court sentences you to life in prison in the custody of the United States Attorney General. On counts 2, 3, 4 and 7, the Court sentences you to 20 years in prison on each count, the sentence on each count to run consecutive with the other. That's 80 years. On count 8 the Court sentences you to the mandatory 30 years consecutive to the 80 years just imposed.

The Court imposes upon you each of the eight counts a fine of \$250,000 for the aggregate fine of \$2 million. The Court accepts the government's recommendation with respect to restitution and orders restitution in the amount of \$298.17 to Andre Bousquet and \$5,784 to American Airlines. The Court imposes upon you the \$800 special assessment. The Court imposes upon you five years supervised release simply because the law requires it. But the life sentences are real life sentences so I need go no further. This is the sentence that is provided for by our statutes. It is a fair and just sentence. It is a righteous sentence.

Let me explain this to you. We are not afraid of you or any of your terrorist co-conspirators, Mr. Reid. We

are Americans. We have been through the fire before. There is all too much war talk here and I say that to everyone with the utmost respect. Here in this court, we deal with individuals as individuals and care for individuals as individuals. As human beings, we reach out for justice. You are not an enemy combatant. You are a terrorist. You are not a soldier in any war. You are a terrorist. To give you that reference, to call you a soldier, gives you far too much stature. Whether it is the officers of government who do it or your attorney who does it, or if you think you are a soldier. You are not---- you are a terrorist. And we do not negotiate with terrorists. We do not meet with terrorists. We do not sign documents with terrorists. We hunt them down one by one and bring them to justice. So war talk is way out of line in this court.

You are a big fellow. But you are not that big. You're no warrior. I've known warriors. You are a terrorist. A species of criminal that is guilty of multiple attempted murders. In a very real sense, State Trooper Santiago had it right when you first were taken off that plane and into custody, and you wondered where the press and where the TV crews were, and he said: "You're no big deal."

You are no big deal. What your able counsel and what the equally able United States attorneys have grappled with and what I have as honestly as I know how tried to grapple with, is why you did something so horrific. What was it that led you here to this courtroom today ?

I have listened respectfully to what you have to say. And I ask you to search your heart and ask yourself what sort of unfathomable hate led you to do what you are guilty and admit you are guilty of doing. And I have an answer for you. It may not satisfy you, but as I search this entire record, it comes as close to understanding as I know.

It seems to me you hate the one thing that to us is most precious. You hate our freedom. Our individual freedom. Our individual freedom to live as we choose, to come and go as we choose, to believe or not believe as we individually choose. Here, in this





# Pat's Gourmet Coffee Shop

166 North Main Street, Mooresville, NC

The Most Patriotic Coffee Shop in the USA

Volume 02 Issue 12

December, 2006

society, the very wind carries freedom. It carries it everywhere from sea to shining sea. It is because we prize individual freedom so much that you are here in this beautiful courtroom. So that everyone can see, truly see, that justice is administered fairly, individually, and discretely.

It is for freedom's sake that your lawyers are striving so vigorously on your behalf and have filed appeals, will go on in their representation of you before other judges. We Americans are all about freedom. Because we all know that the way we treat you, Mr. Reid, is the measure of our own liberties. Make no mistake though. It is yet true that we will bear any burden; pay any price, to preserve our freedoms. Look around this courtroom. Mark it well. The world is not going to long remember what you or I say here. Day after tomorrow, it will be forgotten, but this, however, will long endure.

Here in this courtroom and courtrooms all across America, the American people will gather to see that justice, individual justice, justice, not war, individual justice is in fact being done. The very President of the United States through his officers come into courtrooms and lay out evidence on which specific matters can be judged and juries of citizens will gather to sit and judge that evidence democratically, to mold and shape and refine our sense of justice.

See that flag, Mr. Reid? That's the flag of the United States of America. That flag will fly there long after this is all forgotten. That flag stands for freedom, and it always will. Mr. Custody Officer. Stand him down.

We need more judges like Judge Young, but that's another subject. Pass this around. Everyone should and needs to hear what this fine judge had to say. Powerful words that strike home. God bless America.

Thanks to Jerry Baxter for the email.

---o---

## December Birthdays

James Singer - December 8<sup>th</sup>

Norm Brittain - December 27th

Happy Birthday to anyone we missed.

## Christmas in Iraq

In the Christian homes an unusual ceremony is held in the courtyard of the home on Christmas Eve. One of the children in the family reads the story of the Nativity from an Arabic Bible. The other members of the family hold lighted candles, and as soon as the story has been read a bonfire is lit in one corner of the courtyard. The fire is made of dried thorns and the future of the house for the coming year depends upon the way the fire burns. If the thorns burn to ashes, the family will have good fortune. While the fire is burning, a psalm is sung. When the fire is reduced to ashes, everyone jumps over the ashes three times and makes a wish.



.On Christmas day a similar bonfire is built in the church. While the fire burns the men of the congregation chant a hymn. There is a procession in which the officials of the church march behind the bishop, who carries an image of the infant Jesus upon a scarlet cushion. The long Christmas service always ends with the blessing of the people. The bishop reaches forth and touches a member of the congregation with his hand, putting his blessing upon him. That person touches the one next him, and so on, until all have received "the Touch of Peace."

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq - Iraqis attend Christmas Mass at a church in Baghdad

