

Message of Christmas

Written by W.J.Pais

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Message of Christmas

Throughout history we come across great men and women, who have changed its course. They have been catalysts and acted like magnets to humanity. If one group loved them, another hated them. The change in historical events directly relates to the number of people who have been influenced by them. Among the people who have been such catalysts, **Jesus Christ**

seems to have influenced the maximum number of people in the world, over the past two millennia. Faith in Him has driven the creative energy of people in Theology, Philosophy, Art, Music, Architecture and Science. In other words, all spheres of human endeavor.

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The irony is that in **Jesus Christ**, we see the exact opposite of human expectations. According to the value system of ordinary humans, Jesus was the most disadvantaged person. He was born poor, in an insignificant part of an occupied country, and His parents had to fulfill the dictate of the occupiers and travel, at great trouble to themselves, from the north of the country to Bethlehem, just to register their family so that the Occupiers could draw up the census of their subjects.

The poor parents got a raw deal from their fellow Jews, who in the normal inclinations of people preferred richer clientele and guests at their inns, and taking a look at the parents of Jesus, decided there was no place for them in their company. The people who sheltered them were poor as they were, but good people at heart. They were shepherds.

If a Hollywood script writer was given the job of scripting this scene, he would have had different ideas, as he would work out his script from human values and behavior patterns. But the values which God wanted to impart to us, were quite different, and it is because He wanted to convey a message to us, that He saw to it, that Jesus would be disadvantaged not only at His birth but throughout His life, until the cruel end which could have been devised by the human mind. In spite of all these 'disadvantages', He attracted the maximum number of people, and one wonders how this was possible. It could have been so, only because it was the plan of God..

People of all political persuasions who follow Christ, *pick and choose* His precepts according to their own *ideas and convenience*

. Though Christ in His own wisdom, decided to form the human community of his followers in a particular way, by appointing 12 apostles, and giving them power to organize it, with St. Peter at the helm, humans have thought that they could do better and started dismantling what he had started and formed communities in their own image, and suiting their predilections, promoting themselves through every available media, with great rhetoric, pomp and splendor, which draws great crowds to them. Unfortunately, they may end up like many others who have come up like them and gone away. It is only those who follow Him without questioning His methods, have become Saints, and worthy of human admiration. People who bandy the "Word of God" - may find no 'words' to quote, in the story of Bethlehem, but only a shining example. Should we be affected by it? Should we learn anything from it?

As this is the time when each of us should introspect as to what choice we should make, regarding our own life. We have to give to Caesar what is his, just as His parents obeyed him by going for the census, but give to God what belongs to Him. The option is between the

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choices of the rich Innkeeper and the Shepherd.

May we hope that we will be given the strength to make the right choice.

Origins of the Feast of Christmas

The word for Christmas in late Old English is *Cristes Maesse*, the Mass of Christ, first found in 1038, and *Cristes-messe*, in 1131. Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church. The first evidence of the feast is from Egypt. About A.D. 200.

In Cyprus, at the end of the fourth century, Epiphanius asserts against the heretics that Christ was born on 6 January and baptized on 8 November.

From the fourth century every Western calendar assigns Feast of the Nativity of our Lord to 25 December. At Rome, then, the Nativity was celebrated on 25 December before 354; in the East, at Constantinople, not before 379

For More information click: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03724b.htm>

Music for Christmas

During my surfing the web, I discovered a website, which might interest my visitors. Visit: <http://www.live365.com/cgi-bin/directory.cgi?searchfields=TAC&genre=Presets>

On the right hand top corner is a search engine: Select Genre: Religious, then reselect Christian, and then in the bottom box, type Christmas, and it will take you to the Christmas music stations.

If you like Konkani music, you select the genre: Asian, first, then Folk, and then in the search box type: KONKANI and it will take you to the station operated by Goa World.

You can be a member, by giving a userid, email and a password, and then once it is activated, you can put your sections on Presets.

You can download their free radio player, which will pop up each time you click on the selection 'listen' icon.

Cribs in Mangalore

Mangaloreans are familiar with the cribs in the parish churches and homes. Until recently, we in Mangalore, were not aware of the custom of having Christmas Trees.

I would like to recall, how my elder sister, who was 15 years old then, had come home from Mangalore. In 1939 we had a rented house in Puttur, where my father was teaching in the Board High School.

She prepared a crib, from items available in the house. She used the dining table as the platform, made mountains out of newspapers, Coloured with a mixture of ash and chimney soot, but crumpling these when they were dry, to make jagged mountain sides. She made a running stream, out of the home enema can, letting the water flow down a mountain path, covered with clay from the field close by. The water was collected in a basin whose sides were camouflaged with grass patches from the fields. She used my mother's blue saree as a backdrop for the sky, and splattered it with silver stars, cut out of the silver foil that came with the cigar boxes of my father. It was the last Christmas we spent in Puttur, as in the following year we were back in Mangalore, and lived for six years in Jeppu, in another rented house. The picture of this crib is faintly implanted in my mind.

The other crib was in St. Joseph's Seminary Church, in Jeppu, where the Italian brothers would make every year an electrified crib, which was attracting many visitors. They had the ebbing of day and night worked out by dimming lights in the grotto. Village homes will have light one minute and then as the shepherds go to sleep, the lights would go off. The crib will become bright, at the time, Christ was supposed to be born. Then the daylight would come and again, the cycle will repeat on and on.

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Another important event during this month was the preparation of the Christmas Sweets. Every family who grew in Mangalore will remember the days that went preparing them. I have put the recipes of these sweets in the category Mangalore: under Sweets. Have a look.

Catholic Music

Under the main menu, Church Music, you will see two sections, Choral Music and Catholic Hymns. If you have downloaded the Finale Notepad software, which you get free of charge, and it is quite a small file, you can view the music score, hear the music play on your speakers, print the music as a music sheet on your printer, and send it to others who may like music, by providing them this link.

A very happy Christmas to all of you

Everyone will start preparations for the Christmas festivities, and I hope the recipes I have provided will come in handy. While you prepare your spiritual side, may you also pamper yourselves with little material happiness.

May you and your families be showered with God's choicest blessings, and may this year will be an extraordinary year in your lives.

Some Music for you to download:

To play, just click the left button of the mouse. To save on disk, click right button, and select "Save Target As" in the Internet Explorer Browser.

[Angels we have heard on high](#)

[Away in a manger](#)

[Joy to the world](#)

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[Hark The Angels](#)

[O Come All Ye Faithful](#)

[Silent Night](#)