

Women of Faith Resources: December 2019



<https://www.pinterest.com/marthaveenstrav/goodmorningeveningnight-days/>

December Quotes

by Margaret Felice in *A Book of Grace-filled Days*

“Every decision we make has the potential to prepare us to meet Jesus, however He may come to us.” (p. 365)

“Jesus told us to build our houses on Him and His words, but He didn’t tell us there was only one way to decorate them.” (p. 369)

“St. Peter Canisius says: ‘Let my eyes take their sleep, but may my heart always keep watch for You.’” (p. 385)

Featured Day: December 25 – Christmas – “Christmas Just Begun”

Let us whisper the words: “Christmas Just Begun.” *Christmas Just Begun* will favor our remembering the Birth of Jesus in time, that sacred birth in Bethlehem. Then, we shall imagine that sacred birth anew in a manger in our homes or in our church, in the manger of our hearts,

and in the hearts of all who cross our daily pathways. We highlight the liturgical seasons of Advent and Christmas in the midst of nature's bringing us bleakness, biting cold, snow, and icy roads and sidewalks ... and in the midst of secular parties, gift exchanges, splendid lights, merriness, and radio stations playing round the clock Christmas songs and carols.

May this Advent and Christmas Season offer us a new and deeper understanding of Christ's life moving Him from the life-giving manger to the cross of redemption.

Inspirational Poems

Read each poem and notice what word or words jump out at you. Place yourself in the poems.

***Christmas Has Only Begun* by Margaret Penner Toews**

When the Baby is gone from the manger
And the shepherds are back on the hill,
When the hosts have returned to the heavens
And the grand hallelujahs are still,
And the Wise Men gone back to the Orient,
When the Star of midnight is gone,
And when Bethlehem's streets are all silent,
Christmas has only begun.

The News must be told from the housetops,
The Gospel of Christ must be spread,
The blind and the lame must be lifted,
the poor and the hungry be fed;
The power of Death must be broken,
The will of the Father be done.
When Bethlehem's streets are all silent,
Christmas has only begun.

O follow the Lord from the manger
To Galilee's beautiful shore;
Climb with Him the mountain of glory
In wonder to kneel and adore;
For Christmas is just a beginning
Of a joy that awaits those who come.
For when Bethlehem's streets are all silent,
Christmas has only begun.

(From [catzmews blog](#))

Christmas Poem by Mary Oliver

Says a country legend told every year:
Go to the barn on Christmas Eve and see
what the creatures do as that long night tips over.
Down on their knees they will go, the fire
of an old memory whistling through their minds!

[So] I went. Wrapped to my eyes against the cold
I creaked back the barn door and peered in.
From town the church bells spilled their midnight music,
and the beasts listened –
yet they lay in their stalls like stone.

Oh the heretics!
Not to remember Bethlehem,
or the star as bright as a sun,
or the child born on a bed of straw!
To know only of the dissolving Now!

Still they drowsed on –
citizens of the pure, the physical world,
they loomed in the dark: powerful
of body, peaceful of mind,
innocent of history.

Brothers! I whispered. It is Christmas!
And you are no heretics, but a miracle,
immaculate still as when you thundered forth
on the morning of creation!
As for Bethlehem, that blazing star

still sailed the dark, but only looked for me.
Caught in its light, listening again to its story,
I curled against some sleepy beast, who nuzzled
my hair as though I were a child, and warmed me
the best it could all night.

(From [Leighton Ministries](#))

What can we do?

Seasonal Customs at Fisheasters.com: Advent and Christmas customs draw us into the liturgical seasons. This site also brings you through other liturgical seasons.

The [Creighton University Ministry site](#) has been my favorite for many years for multi-devotional ideas for any liturgical season. This site is a treasure-hold of spiritual and religious practices.

[Ignatian Spirituality Advent Resources](#) is another place to explore a myriad of ways to pray during Advent and Christmastide.

[Adriel Booker](#) has the "Ultimate List of Family Advent Activities and Christmas Countdown Fun". (Free Printable)

Lectio Divina: Scripture and prayer for meditating

Read the following selections a first time. What word or words call out to you? Read the selection a second time. Ask the words or words calling to you: "what is it you want to say to me today?" Notice which quote(s) make your heart skip a beat.

Quotes Calling Us to Christmas Just Begun:

"God never gives someone a gift they are not capable of receiving. If He gives us the gift of Christmas, it is because we all have the ability to understand and receive it." ~ Pope Francis

"It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving." ~ Mother Teresa of Calcutta

"May you never be too grown up to search the skies on Christmas Eve." ~ Anonymous

"Christmas will always be as long as we stand heart to heart and hand in hand." ~ Dr. Seuss

"Peace on earth will come to stay, when we live Christmas every day." ~ Helen Steiner Rice

And Scriptures say:

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Matthew 1:21 KJV

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Isaiah 9:6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Psalm 72:10-11

May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts!

May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!

Matthew 2:11

“And going into the house they saw the child with Mary, his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.”

For Spiritual Reading

[Christmastide: The Celebration Has Just Begun!](#) Written by Genevieve Cunningham in December 2018, this article enjoins us to celebrate not only Christmas Day, but also the season of Christmastide.

[Why You Should Celebrate Christmas All Year](#) by Mallory Redmond is a reflection on being more intentional on celebrating Christmas throughout the year.

[7 Ways to Celebrate Christmas All Year Round](#) by Therese Bouchard shares how to cultivate joy well into the New Year.

Audio Divina: Music accompanied by images

These selections draw us into visioning Christmas in untold ways. They can touch our hearts and penetrate our being in new ways.

[Mary Did You Know](#) performed by Pentatonix.

[Shepherds and Kings](#) in Concise Dictionary.

[Emanuel](#) by Tim Manion from the album, Coming Home.

[Christmas Instrumental Music, Traditional Christmas Songs "Christmas Bells"](#) Music by Tim Janis. I was first introduced to Tim Janis' Christmas music while participating in an “End of Year” retreat. His music is prayerful and relaxing. It is at once beautiful, meditative, and calming. The accompanying video has wonderful scenes of creation.

Visio Divina: Art for Prayer and Meditation

"Visual images are another doorway to sacred awareness. They can touch into our desire to grow in intimacy with God. So, we encourage one another to let ourselves be touched by the colors, shapes, figures and symbols that capture our attention most as we are praying. While gazing at an image ~ a painting, a photo, an icon, a sculpture, a piece of pottery ... something may leap out at us, calling our attention to something of God just waiting to reveal itself to us."

(Ideas inspired by Christine Valters Paintner and Betsey Beckman in their book, *Awakening the Creative Spirit: Bringing the Arts to Spiritual Direction*. See also [Abbey of the Arts](#).)

Here are images of the Christmas crib by authors or artists who are looking into Jesus' future. Pray with them to see what they say to you today.



<https://www.swordofthespirit.net/bulwark/december2015p23.htm>



http://pam-intheshadowofhiswings.blogspot.com/2012_12_01_archive.html



<https://wbbarry.com/2018/12/03/advent-what-do-you-want/>

The Christmas star is shining over what could be your home, my home, anyone's home. If you saw the Christmas star shining over your home during Advent and on Christmas night, what would you pray as you gazed upon it?

YouTube Site: Good Christmas Movies

[Here is a playlist of Christmas movies](#) on YouTube.



<https://www.yourselfquotes.com/merry-christmas-greetings/>

**From the Leadership Team of Gatherings for Women of Faith
May we see Christmas with new eyes, as if for the first time. We wish you deep Peace, Love,
and Joy!**

Resources compiled by Sr. Yvette Bellerose, SSA