

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS AND MEMORIES 2.0

One of my favorite memories is about decorating the Christmas tree. My Dad loved Christmas and he would always spray the windows with snow and hang bells on garland from the ceiling. One year my sister Patty found us one of the biggest trees you have ever seen and somehow we managed to get it into the living room. My Dad bought the biggest ornaments he could find and it was the most beautiful Christmas tree you ever saw. I will always treasure the memories of us all decorating that huge tree.

Thanks for letting us share these wonderful memories.

– **Frances Scholl Klausman**

Preparing for Christmas at the Carmelite Monastery here in Columbus was inexpressibly joy-filled. Advent began with the lighting of the Advent Wreath, which hung from the ceiling just inside the sanctuary. The Sisters formed a procession in the refectory with the Superior carrying Baby Jesus. The postulants and novices sang a lullaby such as “Little Son of God” as they led the older Sisters to the manger in the chapel. When the infant was placed, another lullaby was sung and then the choir went to their seats to continue Evening Prayer. This ritual was repeated each evening of Advent.

– **Debi Matthews**



Today it is common to see electric candles in the windows of homes during the Christmas season but when I was growing up in Manhattan it was a rare sight. However, my mother would tell me about her memories of Christmas Eve in Ireland and one of those memories was the lighting of “real” candles and placing them in the windows so as to light the way of the child Jesus. She told stories of walking the dark country roads to Church for Midnight Mass and the way being lit up by the candles in the windows of people’s homes. At the end of her stories we would then place candles in our living room windows, thus there was at least one Manhattan house with candle light for the Child Jesus.

– **Sr. Anne**

When I was a young girl, a procession outside the Church was held and the Baby Jesus was placed in the crib before the midnight Mass. As the priest reached the crib, he looked and a large stray dog was asleep on the hay in the crib. He then placed the baby Jesus on the ground without disturbing the dog.

One year, when my children were young, we rode through the city to look at the Christmas lights. After that, we intended to eat at a restaurant but when we got back to the city everything was closed except for White Castle. So we ate there and I think that was the best Christmas dinner because we were all together as a family and really enjoyed ourselves.

– **Sally Welch**

Searching through my memories of Christmas past, I remember my mother joyfully singing carols as she decorated the tree and prepared the crib for the baby Jesus.

She always sang Silent Night in German.

I enjoyed moving the Three Kings (as we kids called them the Three Wise Guys) a little closer each day until their arrival on Epiphany.

– **Sr. Ruth Ann Heider, OSF**

We are very blessed to spend Christmas Eve with all of our family at our home.

Our family is close and our Children are very good to us. We all love each other and know that God has blessed us.

– **Frank and Dorothy Shirey**

One of the things that I have enjoyed, as an adult, is the symphony's Christmas Pop Concert. There are classical pieces, carols, even a Hanukah song, jokes, sing-a-longs and it all ends with Santa Claus and some elves. I've attended this concert for several years and it always puts me in the Holiday Spirit.

– **Helen Meers**

Since I am Polish, the Christmas Holidays always involved "oplatki". The head of household, usually an elder perhaps a grandparent, would begin by breaking off a piece of "oplatki" (a thin white wafer) and offer the oplatki with a wish or blessing such as "good health, success, good fortune and a place in heaven"; the wafer is then passed to each person until all have had an opportunity to offer a blessing/wish and to have a small taste of the wafer. The wafer can be pink or white, stamped with a Christmas scene, the Holy Family, the Nativity, the Star of Bethlehem etc., the pink wafer can be for family pets, to remember the animals at the stable.

– **Karie Urban**



*O Come,
All Ye
Faithful!*

Although I was born and raised in Pittsburgh, my Dad grew up on a farm in Latrobe, PA and each year we would drive there to cut down our Christmas tree. We would then keep it in a bucket of water in our garage and on the Sunday before Christmas Dad would trim the trunk and branches with the precision of a surgeon. After decorating the tree the lights were tested to make sure they worked then the tree remained dark until after dinner on Christmas Eve. Once we finished dinner I was given the honor of plugging in the lights and to this day, I remember how thrilling that was.

– **Jack Kustron**



Our Christmas Tradition was hanging stockings for St. Nick's day (December 6) and waking up to look to see what was left. Stockings were hung on our banister posts. Then there was Midnight Mass and waking up on Christmas morning to the presents but first having Mom's homemade Christmas cookies that we kids helped decorate and having Mom's delicious homemade Coffee cake. Then it was off to open presents with our Dad pulling out one gift at a time.

One last tradition, an afternoon birthday celebration for me! Yes I was born on Christmas Day!

– **Tom Duncan**