



<http://images.google.ca/imgres?imgurl=http://art.zealotblog.com/files/2007/12/20071212-britenbucher-o-christmas->

## December 2009

This edition is dedicated to the celebration of Christmas, exploring its place in our society, its place in our lives and its eternal meaning. Included is a look at who is celebrated, what is missing too often, and how the “season” seems increasingly secularized.

There are also many pleasant memories associated with Christmases past in Christian civilization. We try to evoke some of these feelings in a light way, with quizzes, crossword puzzles based on the Gospels and cultural lore. Let this supplement serve as a fun resource, but also as a sober reflection on the significance of the feast.

### Part I Reflections

Last year I received the following email “letter” from a Knight of Columbus contact. It illustrates the sad state we are in today when it comes to celebrating the birth of Jesus. The miracle of long ago continues today. The promise made long ago is valid today. It isn’t a maudlin feel-good season, although there is no harm in feeling good. It isn’t one big shopping spree that gets launched at the conclusion of Halloween, although consuming in a reasonable way is good and keeps people gainfully employed. Do we keep the right priorities in our haste to prepare for the “festivities”?

Students could be asked to simply reflect on the readings and to draw personal meaning from them. For example, the quotes could reveal the theology of the event, or the family aspect, or the sentimentality associated with it. The “letter from Jesus” could stimulate thinking about what may be forgotten amidst all

the hoopla or why many do not answer His invitation. The energy, time and thought given over to extravagant gift giving should remind us of God’s infinite extravagance in giving us Jesus, His own Son. What more could anyone ask for?

### Insightful Quotes About Christmas



[http://www.image-acquire.com/christmas\\_wallpaper\\_14\\_1024x768.jpg](http://www.image-acquire.com/christmas_wallpaper_14_1024x768.jpg)

*God’s sign is simplicity. God’s sign is the baby. God’s sign is that he makes himself small for us. This is how he reigns. He does not come with power and outward splendour. He comes as a baby – defenceless and in need of our help. He does not want to overwhelm us with his strength. He takes away our fear of his greatness. He asks for our love: so he makes himself a child. He wants nothing other from us than our love, through which we spontaneously learn to enter into his feelings, his thoughts and his will – we learn to live with him and to practise with him that humility of renunciation that belongs to the very essence of love. God made himself small so that we could understand him, welcome him, and love him.*

Pope Benedict XVI

*Mankind is a great, an immense family... This is proved by what we feel in our hearts at Christmas.*

Pope John XXIII

*Like snowflakes, my Christmas memories gather and dance - each beautiful, unique and too soon gone.*

Deborah Whipp

*They err who think Santa Claus comes down through the chimney; he really enters through the heart.*

Mrs. Paul M. Ell.

*It comes every year and will go on forever. And along with Christmas belong the keepsakes and the customs. Those humble, everyday things a mother clings to, and ponders, like Mary in the secret spaces of her heart.*

Marjorie Holmes

*When we recall Christmas past, we usually find that the simplest things - not the great occasions - give off the greatest glow of happiness.*

Bob Hope

## Remember my birthday

*Remember my birthday? As you well know, we are getting closer to my birthday. Every year there is a celebration in my honour and I think that this year the celebration will be repeated.*

*During this time there are many people shopping for gifts, there are many radio announcements, TV commercials, and in every part of the world everyone is talking that my birthday is getting closer and closer. It is really very nice to know, that at least once a year, some people think of me.*

*As you know, the celebration of my birthday began many years ago. At first people seemed to understand and be thankful of all that I did for them, but in these times, no one seems to know the reason for the celebration. Family and friends get together and have a lot of fun, but they don't know the meaning of the celebration.*

*I remember that last year there was a great feast in my honour. The dinner table was full of delicious foods, pastries, fruits, assorted nuts and chocolates. The decorations were exquisite and there were many, many beautifully wrapped gifts. But, do you want to know something? I wasn't invited. I was the guest of honour and they didn't remember to send me an invitation. The party was for me, but when that great day came, I was left outside, they closed the door in my face... ..and I wanted to be with them and share their table.*

*In truth, that didn't surprise me because in the last few years, all close their doors to me. Since I was not invited, I decided to enter the party without making any noise. I went in and stood in a corner. They were all drinking; there were some who were drunk and telling jokes and laughing at everything. They were having a great time. To top it all, this big fat man all dressed in red wearing a long white beard entered the room yelling Ho-Ho-Ho! He sat on the sofa and all the children ran to him, saying : "Santa Claus, Santa Claus"... as if the party were in his honour!*

*At 12 midnight all the people began to hug each other . I extended my arms waiting for someone to hug me*

*and ... do you know ... no one hugged me. Suddenly they all began to share gifts. They opened them one by one with great expectation. When all had been opened, I looked to see if, maybe, there was one for me. What would you feel if on your birthday, everybody shared gifts and you did not get one? I then understood that I was unwanted at that party and quietly left.*

*Every year it gets worse. People only remember to eat and drink, the gifts, the parties and nobody remembers me. I would like this Christmas that you allow me to enter into your life. I would like that you recognize the fact that almost two thousand years ago I came to this world to give my life for you, on the cross, to save you. Today, I only want that you believe this with all your heart.*

*I want to share something with you. As many didn't invite me to their party, I will have my own celebration, a grandiose party that no one has ever imagined, a spectacular party. I'm still making the final arrangements. Today, I am sending out many invitations and there is an invitation for you. I want to know if you wish to attend and I will make a reservation for you and write your name with golden letters in my great guest book. Only those on the guest list will be invited to the party. Those who don't answer the invitation, will be left outside. Do you know how you can answer this invitation? It is by extending it to others whom you care for... I'll be waiting for all of you to attend my party this year... See you soon.... I love you!*

Jesus

---

---

## Part II Light Fun

Some puns and riddles. Try these out with your students. You can blame us if they groan at the corny nature of the puns and riddles.

1. What do elves eat on Christmas eve?
2. What Christmas carol is a perennial favourite of tired parents?
3. Why does Santa have 3 gardens?
4. What do snowmen eat for breakfast?
5. What was so good about the neurotic doll the girl was given for Christmas?
6. Why did Santa spell Christmas N-O-E?
7. What did the guest sing at the Inuit New Year's party?
8. What did one angel say to the other?
9. Why did Santa push his bed into the fireplace?
10. Why did the gingerbread man go to the doctor?



11. What do you get if you cross an apple with a Christmas Tree?
12. What do monkeys sing at Christmas time?
13. What do Christmas trees and bad knitters have in common?
14. What would you get if you ate the Christmas decorations?
15. What do you call a letter that is sent up the chimney on Christmas eve?
16. Who makes toy guitars and sings, "Blue Christmas?"
17. Which of Santa's reindeer now works for Proctor and Gamble?



[http://z.about.com/d/gonyc/1/0/4/V/antique\\_postcards\\_02.jpg](http://z.about.com/d/gonyc/1/0/4/V/antique_postcards_02.jpg)

**Here are alternative names of Christmas songs with technical accuracy. Can you identify them by their traditional titles**

1. Move hitherward the entire assembly of those who are loyal in their belief
2. Embellish interior passageways
3. Vertically challenged adolescent percussionist
4. Natal celebration devoid of color as a hallucinatory phenomenon for me
5. Majestic triplet referred to in the first person plural
6. Twelve o'clock on a clement night witnessed its arrival
7. Soundless nocturnal period
8. The Yuletide occurrence preceding all others
9. Precious metal musical devices
10. Omnipotent Supreme Being who elicits respite to ecstatic distinguished males
11. Caribou with vermilion oil factory appendage

12. Allow crystalline formations to descend
13. Bipedal traveling through an amazing acreage from December 21st to March 21st
14. Exclamatory remark concerning a diminutive municipality in Judea southwest of Jerusalem
15. A blessed time between 8:00 pm and 5:00 am
16. Invitation to the Promised one of Ages
17. Castanea cooking in dry heat
18. Salutation in Latin to Joseph's wife



<http://softwarespread.com/shop/screenshots/christmas-candlelight-living-desktop.jpg>

### True or False

Choose true or false to correctly answer each statement. Test your knowledge of Christmas lore.

1. "The Firecracker" by Tchaikovsky is the name of the ballet performed around Christmas time each year.
2. The Friday and Saturday before Christmas are the two busiest shopping days of the year in North America..
3. In 1647, the English parliament passed a law that made Christmas illegal as such festivities were banned by Puritan leader, Oliver Cromwell.

4. December 26 commonly known as Boxing Day came about because money was collected in alms-boxes placed in churches during the festive season and the money was then distributed to the poor and needy after Christmas.
5. The first Canadian Christmas carol was written in 1649 by St. Jean de Brebeuf.
6. "Silent night" was written for an orchestra by a church organist.
7. According to tradition, giving a lump of coal in the stockings of naughty children comes from Italy.
8. Despite the tradition of three wise men paying homage to baby Jesus, the Bible never gives a number.
9. Carols weren't sung in churches until they were introduced by Martin Luther in the 16th century.
10. The word Noel derives from the French expression "les bonnes nouvelles" or "the good news".
11. The FBI labelled *It's A Wonderful Life* a "subversive" movie and charged that its use of a nasty, Scrooge-like businessman "was a common trick used by communists."
12. In Quebec the Christmas Eve banquet is called a *reveillon*.
13. Traditionally in Italy fifers announce the Christmas season coming down from the mountains of Abruzzo and Latium playing characteristic tunes on their bagpipes.
14. St. Nicholas was actually born in Switzerland.
15. There are 5 Sundays during the Advent season.



### Can you match the foods?

Every nation or ethnic group has a food that has a special connection with Christmas celebrations. Can you match the food with the correct country? Choose the name of the country from the list and write it beside

the food/description.

India,	Canada,	Ukraine,	
Germany,	Mexico,	Sweden,	
Venezuela,	Greece,	Australia,	Italy,

1. Buñuelos (dough with hint of anise deep-fried & drenched in a syrup of brown sugar, cinnamon, and guava.)
2. Hallaca (mixture of beef, pork, capers, raisins, and olives wrapped in maize bound within plantain leaves with string and steamed)
3. Rum balls (sweet dense balls flavoured with chocolate and rum)
4. Kutia (a sweet grain pudding)
5. Sorpotel (a pork dish, utilizing liver, the heart and the kidney cooked in a spicy sauce)
6. Lebkuchen (traditional Christmas cookies similar to gingerbread, made with honey, spices and nuts, almonds or candied fruit)
7. Torrone (a nougat confection, typically made of honey, sugar, and egg white, coated in crushed, toasted almonds)
8. Tourtière (a meat pie usually made with ground pork and/or veal, or beef)
9. Julmust (a soft drink that is consumed at Christmas)
10. Kataifi (phyllo-wrapped confections made from cinnamon and sugar and drizzled with honey)



### Scripture Based Facts

1. What was the name of the angel who appeared to Mary?
2. Whom did Mary visit immediately after the angel appeared to her?
3. What determined the city to which each Jew had to travel in order to be taxed?
4. Who were the first people to come to see Jesus according to Scripture?
5. What sign did the angels tell the shepherds to look for?





c) I'll Be Home For Christmas d) We Three Kings

3. "And Heaven and nature sing":

- a) Angels We Have Heard On High b) Joy to the World  
c) While Shepherds Watched d) White Christmas

4. "Tis the season to be jolly"

- a) Deck the Halls b) Feliz Navidad  
c) Jingle Bells d) God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

5. "God and sinners reconciled":

- a) O Come O Come Emmanuel b) The Christmas Song  
c) Hark the Herald Angels d) O Holy Night

6. "Disperse the gloomy clouds of night":

- a) Good King Wenceslas, b) O Come O Come Emmanuel  
c) Hark the Herald Angels d) The First Noel

7. "Joyful and triumphant":

- a) O Come All Ye Faithful b) Joy to the World  
c) We Three Kings d) Home for The Holidays

8. "Looked down where he lay":

- a) I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day  
b) O Little Town of Bethlehem  
c) Joy to the World  
d) Away in a Manger

9. "O tidings of comfort and joy":

- a) God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen  
b) Twelve Days Of Christmas  
c) Ding Dong Merrily on High  
d) Away in a Manger

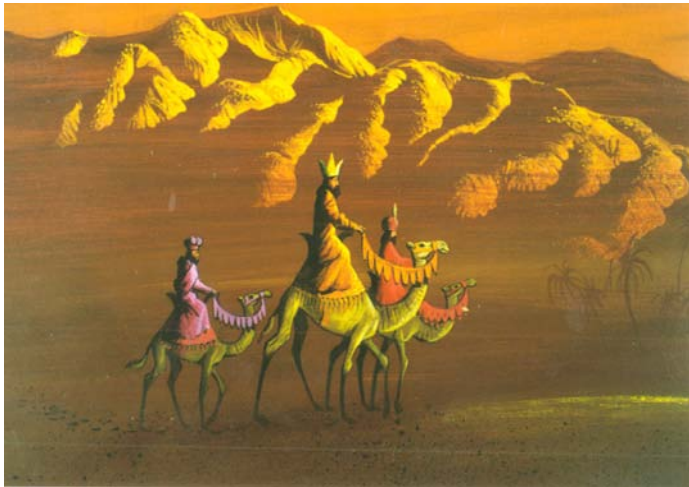
10. "On a cold winter's night that was so deep":

- a) It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas  
b) The First Noel c) Ave Maria  
d) What Child Is This?

11. "Take a look in the five-and-ten, glistening once again."

- a) I saw Three Ships  
b) It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas  
c) It's The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year  
d) Silver Bells

6. In what way do the meaning of the Hebrew term for Bethlehem and the sign given by the angels prepare us for Jesus' later ministry?
7. What was curious about the star that was seen by the Magi?
8. Who ordered the census to be taken at the time of Jesus' birth?
9. Who told Joseph to give the baby the name Jesus?
10. Where did Mary and Joseph immigrate with Jesus for a short period?



[http://www.animationguild.org/\\_ReuseLibrary/blogart/2007Xmas/04Xmas.jpg](http://www.animationguild.org/_ReuseLibrary/blogart/2007Xmas/04Xmas.jpg)

**Christmas carols and songs have lyrics that should be very familiar. Take this Christmas Music Quiz and Name the song!**

1. "Round yon virgin mother and child":

- a) Jingle Bells b) Silent Night  
c) I'll Be Home For Christmas d) We Three Kings

2. "Bearing gifts we traverse afar":

- a) Do You Hear What I Hear? b) Winter Wonderland

12. "I want to wish you a merry Christmas!"

- a) I Saw Santa Kissing Mom b) Winter Wonderland  
c) Jingle Bell Rock d) Feliz Navidad

### **Nonsensical Christmas Movie Lore**

1. What is the name of Rudolph's dad?

- a) Trickster b) Dixon c) Dasher d) Donner

2. Who was Scrooge's dead business partner?

- a) James Bondsman b) Silas Merchant c) Jacob Marley  
d) Ashford Millman

3. The rabbit in the magic hat in "Frosty the Snowman" is named:

- a) Scut Farkus b) Brer Rabbit c) Hocus Pocus d) Rabbit Claus

4. What is the guardian angel of George Bailey named in "It's a Wonderful Life"?

- a) Edward b) Clarence c) Robert d) Malcom

5. What did Ralphie want for Christmas in "A Christmas Story"?

- a) A Train Set b) A BB Gun c) A Bow and Arrow  
d) A Playstation

6. What is Scrooge's first name?

- a) Maxwell b) Ebenezer c) Graywall d) Martin

7. Why was the Grinch so nasty? Because he had a:

- a) Broken Leg b) Lower Back Pain c) Small Heart  
d) Crooked Knee

8. In what city did "Miracle on 34th Street" take place?

- a) Indianapolis b) New Orleans c) New York  
d) Edmonton

9. What did the angel get for accomplishing his mission in "It's a Wonderful Life"?

- a) Two New Trumpets b) Wings c) A Silver Halo  
d) A Gold Crown

10. Two men broke into a house and had a lot of trouble in which movie?

- a) Black and Blue Christmas b) A Christmas Story  
c) Home Alone d) Two Men in a Santa Suit

### **Answers to Christmas puns and riddles**

1. Elfabet soup
2. Silent Night
3. So he can hoe, hoe, hoe!
4. Frosted Flakes
5. It was already wound up.
6. Because the angel had said, "No L!"
7. Freeze a jolly good fellow....
8. Halo there.
9. He wanted to sleep like a log.
10. He was feeling crummy.
11. A pineapple.
12. Jungle Bells, Jungle bells.
13. They both drop their needles.
14. Tinseltitis
15. Blackmail.
16. Elfis.
17. It's true! Comet cleans sinks!

### **Answers to Alternative Names of Christmas songs with technical accuracy**

1. O Come all ye faithful
2. Deck the Halls
3. Little Drummer Boy
4. I'm dreaming of a White Christmas
5. We three Kings
6. It came upon a midnight clear
7. Silent Night
8. The First Noel
9. Silver Bells
10. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
11. Rudolph the Red nose reindeer
12. Let it snow ~ Let it snow ~ Let it snow
13. Winter Wonderland
14. Oh little town of Bethlehem
15. O Holy Night
16. O Come Divine Messiah
17. Chestnuts Roasting
18. Ave Maria

### **Answers to the True or False**

1. F (IT'S The Nutcracker) 2. T 3. T 4. T 5. T
6. F (written by the priest when the church organ broke down) 7. T 8. T

9. F (introduced by St. Francis of Assisi in the 13th century) 10. T 11. T 12. T 13. T 14. F (the historical St. Nicholas was a native of Turkey) 15. F (there are 4 Sundays during the advent season)

### Foods & Countries Match

1. Mexico 2. Venezuela 3. Australia 4. Ukraine 5. India 6. Germany 7. Italy 8. Canada 9. Sweden 10. Greece.

### Scripture Based Facts

1. Gabriel (Luke 1:26).
2. Elizabeth, her relative (Luke 1:36).
3. Lineage. Joseph had to go to the city of David since he was of "the house and family of David." (Luke 2:3-4).
4. Shepherds (Luke 2:8, 15-16).
5. The baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger (Luke 2:12, 16-17).
6. Bethlehem means "house of bread," which correlates with Jesus' Bread of Life discourse (John 6:22-65).
7. It was not constant (Matt. 2:2, 10).
8. Caesar Augustus (Luke 2:2)
9. An angel (Matt. 1:21)
10. Egypt (Matt. 2:13-23).

### Answers to Christmas carols and songs lyrics

1. b 2. d 3. b 4. a 5. c 6. b 7. a 8. d  
9. a 10. b 11. b 12. d

### Answers to Christmas Movie Lore

1.d 2.c 3.c 4.b 5.b 6.b 7.c 8.c 9.b 10.c

Material was sourced on the internet, but also liberally adapted, plus original material developed by Interim staff. Enjoy.

<http://www.theinterim.com>

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/top-stories/2006/12/18/50-things-yule-never-know-about-xmas-115875-18279636/>

<http://www.jokeschristmas.com/Christmas-Puns/>

<http://www.gomilpitas.com/humor/164.htm>

<http://sleepingopossum.homestead.com/Christmas/ChristmasNomenclature.html>

<http://www.corsinet.com/braincandy/xmastrivia.html>

<http://www.christmaslore.com/>

<http://triviapark.com/quizzes/xmasquiz.html>

<http://www.catholic.net/index.php?option=dedestaca&id=268&grupo=Podcast%20%20Webcast&canal=Music>

<http://www.the-north-pole.com/carols/index.htm>

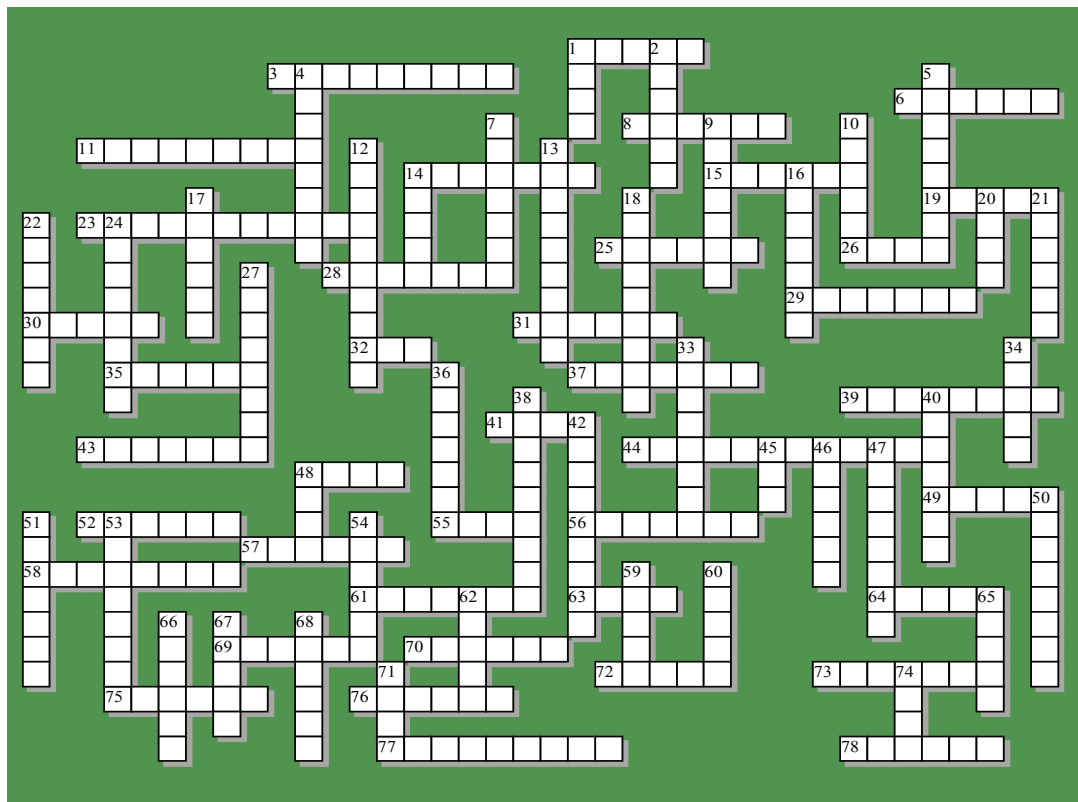
<http://www.allthingschristmas.com/quotes.html>

<http://www.catholic.org/advent/advent.php?id=28>

<http://www.americancatholic.org/Features/Christmas/How.asp>

<http://www.americancatholic.org/Messenger/Dec2008/Feature1.asp#F1>





**Across:**

- 1 - white crystalline carbohydrate added to coffee
- 3 - "House of Bread"
- 6 - the East
- 8 - fireplace
- 11 - a delicacy sold by Campaign Life Coalition as a fundraiser
- 14 - stick of wax with a wick in the middle
- 15 - ramus plural
- 19 - host land for Holy Family
- 23 - enfleshing of the God-man
- 25 - delivers the gifts in Italy
- 26 - sacred, pure, good
- 28 - the Promised One, the Saviour
- 29 - popular Christmas beverage with frothy texture
- 30 - ordered slaughter of new born babes
- 31 - stable
- 32 - in French auberge
- 35 - "\_\_\_\_\_ Fideles"
- 37 - soft thick unsweetened baked dessert dish
- 39 - an enveloping bandage
- 41 - savants from the East
- 43 - nougat sweet
- 44 - resin from the Boswellia sacra
- 48 - gospel writer and physician
- 49 - Santa's helpers
- 52 - mode of transport on way to Bethlehem
- 55 - wanderer in the sky
- 56 - conduit for Santa
- 57 - French for crib
- 58 - they pull Santa's chariot
- 61 - winter means of transport
- 63 - remove the edges from and cut down to the desired size
- 64 - money collected by governments
- 69 - "\_\_\_\_\_ We Have Heard On High"
- 70 - a circular band of flowers or foliage
- 72 - ilex aquifolium
- 73 - flash intermittently
- 75 - demands carving
- 76 - packaging
- 77 - hung up containers
- 78 - soft metal with atomic number 47

**Down:**

- 1 - crystalline water ice in multitudinous forms
- 2 - period of anticipation
- 4 - highest heaven
- 5 - foretelling uttered under divine inspiration
- 7 - led a delivery team through fog
- 9 - thin bands of flexible material used primarily for decorative tying
- 10 - foster father of Jesus
- 12 - brilliant red flower native to Mexico
- 13 - a royal personage who went out for winter fuel
- 14 - set of small pieces of stiff paper used for playing games
- 16 - messenger that delivered news to Mary
- 17 - the snowman friend of children
- 18 - caregivers to flock
- 20 - Scandinavian period of winter solstice
- 21 - a Roman measure of coinage
- 22 - adore
- 24 - Bishop of Myra
- 27 - "\_\_\_\_\_ the gloomy clouds of night"
- 33 - Asian aromatic bark used as spice
- 34 - bonbon
- 36 - trinkets
- 38 - father of John who lost his voice for a while
- 40 - gift
- 42 - Feast of the Holy \_\_\_\_\_, December 28
- 45 - vine with lobed evergreen leaves and black berrylike fruits
- 46 - festive songs
- 47 - event of being born
- 48 - positive emotion of affection
- 50 - hectic activity dominant before Christmas
- 51 - string of leaves or flowers worn for celebration
- 53 - an addition for beautification
- 54 - visitors to Scrooge
- 59 - a favourite past time during Christmas season
- 60 - Gene \_\_\_\_\_, singing cowboy
- 62 - pigment of growing grass
- 65 - among the first animals to hear about the glad tidings
- 66 - praise
- 67 - dromedary
- 68 - taking stock of the inhabitants
- 71 - decorative interlacing of ribbons
- 74 - "The First \_\_\_\_\_"



**Solution to Crossword on p. 8**

The crossword puzzle grid is filled with the following words:

- Across:**
  - 1: FRUITCAKE
  - 4: INCARNATION
  - 6: TORRONE
  - 8: DONKEY
  - 10: REINDEER
  - 12: ANGELS
  - 14: TURKEY
  - 16: WRATH
  - 18: BOXING
  - 20: STOCKINGS
  - 22: SUGAR
  - 24: HEARTH
  - 26: ROUGH
  - 28: REFANNA
  - 30: MANGER
  - 32: PUDDING
  - 34: MAGI
  - 36: FRANKINCENSE
  - 38: CHIMNEY
  - 40: TRIM
  - 42: HOIY
  - 44: TWINKLE
  - 46: SIVER
- Down:**
  - 2: RETHIEHEM
  - 3: CANDIES
  - 5: MESIAH
  - 7: UKE
  - 9: CRECHE
  - 11: STAR
  - 13: SIFIGHS
  - 15: GFI
  - 17: ROY
  - 19: FATH
  - 21: W
  - 23: V
  - 25: ROUGH
  - 27: REFANNA
  - 29: MANGER
  - 31: PUDDING
  - 33: MAGI
  - 35: FRANKINCENSE
  - 37: CHIMNEY
  - 39: TRIM
  - 41: HOIY
  - 43: TWINKLE
  - 45: SIVER

We are happy to announce that the **Father Ted Colleton Scholarship** program is renewed.

Now entering its eighth year it offers senior high school students the opportunity to learn about life issues through an essay-writing contest. Application form, contest details and essay evaluation rubric may be requested by contacting, via e-mail: **dirocco@theinterim.com** The applicants must submit (**preferably by email**) a typed original essay, (approximately 800-1000 words in length) **postmarked no later than December 8, 2009** on the following topic:

*The culture of death is all-pervasive, arising in one little corner and then engulfing the whole culture.* Demonstrate whether there is a real link between contraception, abortion, embryonic stem cell research and euthanasia.

There are three prizes: **\$1500 first prize, \$800 second prize and \$500 third prize.** The writing contest co-sponsored by *The Interim* newspaper and Niagara Region RTL is a determining factor in the awarding of the scholarships. The winners will be declared by January 31, 2010.

