

Meditation Outline for the Nativity of Our LORD, Christmas Eve 2006
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saint James the Apostle / Brogue, Penna.
Meditation with Children and Congregation on the Huron Hymn by Fr. Jean de
Brébeuf, S.J., "T'was in the Moon of Wintertime" (*Lutheran Book of Worship*
No. 72)

J. J.!

Welcome

Reading of the Christmas Gospel: Luke 2:1-20

2:1 In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.

2:2 This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

2:3 All went to their own towns to be registered.

2:4 Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.

2:5 He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

2:6 While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

2:7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

2:8 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

2:9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

2:10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:

2:11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

2:12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

2:14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

2:15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."

2:16 So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

2:17 When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child;

2:18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

2:19 But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

2:20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Questions:

- What did the shepherds see in the night sky?
- What have you seen in the night sky? Any angels? What about stars? What about the moon?
- How does the moon make things look in winter, when there is snow all over the ground? Do you need a flashlight to walk and see your way?
- A pastor of the Church once wrote a Christmas carol about the moon at night in winter. Would you like to hear it? Would you like to learn it?

Distribute the Instruments

The Story of Père Jean de Brèbeuf

- 400 years ago there was Father Jean was a Frenchman. Who here speaks French?
- Father Jean was very sick as a boy and as a young man. He was so sick that the Church shortened his time of studies so that he could graduate from seminary and be ordained before he died.
- Father Jean volunteered to be a missionary to the native people of Canada. He knew it would be hard, but he looked forward to a great adventure. Once he left France and landed in Canada, and once he breathed the good clean air of North America, he became healthy for the first time. He was very tall, but now, instead of being tall and skinny and weak, Father Jean was tall and very, very strong. He could take any hardship without complaining. The Native American people of the Algonquin Nation liked this about him, and that Father Jean was joyful about his God the Holy Trinity. He learned their language and told them stories from the Bible about Jesus and His mother, Mary. He taught them to pray in a new way and to practice patience and forgiveness, just as he himself did.
- Father Jean had to leave the Algonquins to go back to France once, but then he was able to return to Canada. He then worked as a missionary to the native people of the Huron nation. He stayed with them, even when their enemies, the Iroquois attacked them in a war. Father Jean was captured by the Iroquois who treated him and his other Christian friends very cruelly. They hurt Father Jean so bad

that he died and went to live with Jesus and Mary in heaven. The Huron people loved him and missed him so much that many of them decided to be baptized and believe in the God Jesus shows us, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Much later, even the Iroquois people who hurt and killed Father Jean and his friends were sorry for what they had done and became Christians, and they are Christians to this day.

The Hymn: LBW 72

One of the many gifts of friendship and faith Father Jean gave to his Huron brothers and sisters was a Christmas song we have right in our *Lutheran Book of Worship*. "*It Was [’Twas for short] in the Moon of Wintertime.*" Father Jean wrote this hymn in the Huron language and used an old French folk tune for the melody. Later, he translated back into his own French language and we can see that someone has translated it into English for us.

Stanza 1 with the children & their instruments

Stanza 2 with the children & their instruments + the choir and their keys

Understanding the Hymn

Far away from his French home, in his mission field in Canada, Father Jean might have felt lonely and homesick, especially at night and especially at Christmas. But, when he looked up at the night sky and saw the stars and then the bright moon lighting up the snow in winter, he thought of the bright angels appearing to the

shepherds in the hills outside of Bethlehem, and of the star that guided the Three Kings from Persia all the way to Bethlehem and the barn where Jesus, Mary and Joseph had found shelter when Jesus was just a newborn baby. Just as we cannot but look at the full moon in winter and marvel at the way it brightens everything around us, so, too, we sing in this great hymn, we must stop, especially on this holy night, tomorrow night, and all through the twelve days of Christmas and be joyful and thankful to God for the light of Christ in our world.

3rd Stanza with the children + the choir + the whole congregation and their keys

Recite with the children to the congregation:

JESUS YOUR KING IS BORN!

JESUS IS BORN!

GLORY BE TO GOD ON HIGH!

Amen. Thank you. Go in peace.

Gloria in Excelsis Deo!