



Una Fides

An Apostolate
for Today's Catholic

- ◆ PRAYER
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Newsletter

Since 2003

Pope Benedict XVI's Prayer Intention for December:
Christ, light for all humanity. That Christ may reveal himself
to all humanity with the light that shines forth from Bethlehem
and is reflected in the face of his Church.



The Gift of Christmas

May our celebration of Christ's coming be filled with the greatest joy as we recognize the PERFECT GIFT that has been given to us. Pope Benedict XVI offers us this beautiful meditation to reflect upon as we draw near to Christmas.

"God's sign is that He makes Himself small for us. This is how He reigns, He does not come with power and outward splendor. He comes as a baby, defenseless 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 practice 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. Christmas has become the Feast of gifts in imitation of God who has given Himself to us. Let us allow our heart, our soul, and our mind to be touched by this fact!"



Louis Cassels, a noted correspondent and editor for United Press International, and a devout Christian, wrote the following story in 1959 to help his readers more fully understand the miracle of the Gift of Christmas.

Parable of the Birds

Now the man to whom I'm going to introduce you was not a scrooge; he was a kind, decent, mostly good man. He was generous to his family and upright in his dealings with other men. But he just didn't believe all that stuff about God becoming a man, which the churches proclaim at Christmas time. It just didn't make sense, and he was too honest to pretend otherwise. "I'm truly sorry to distress you," he told his wife, "but

"I'm not going with you to church this Christmas Eve." He said he'd feel like a hypocrite and that he would much rather just stay at home. And so he stayed, and they went to the midnight service. Shortly after the family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier. Then he went back to his fireside chair to read his newspaper. Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound. Then another and another, sort of a thump or a thud. At first he thought someone must have been throwing snowballs against his living room window.

But when he went to the front door to investigate, he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the snow. They'd been caught in the storm and, in a desperate search for shelter, had tried to fly through his large landscape window. Well, he couldn't let the poor creatures lie there and freeze, so he remembered the barn where his children stabled their pony. That would provide a warm shelter, if he could direct the birds to it. Quickly he put on a coat and galoshes and then he tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on a light, but the birds did not come in. He figured food would entice them. So he hurried back to the house, fetched breadcrumbs and sprinkled them on the snow. He made a trail to the brightly lit, wide-open doorway of the stable. But to his dismay, the birds ignored the breadcrumbs and continued to flap around helplessly in the snow. He tried catching them. He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around them and waving his arms. Instead, they scattered in every direction except into the warm, lighted barn. And then he realized that they were afraid of him. To them, he reasoned, I am a strange and terrifying creature. If only I could think of some way to let them know that they can trust me, that I am not trying to hurt them but to help them. But how? Any move he made tended to frighten and confuse them. They just would not follow. They would not be led or shooed because they feared him. "If only I could be a bird," he thought to himself, "and mingle with them and speak their language. Then I could tell them not to be afraid. Then, I could show them the way to the safe warm barn. But I would have to be one of them so they could see and hear and understand." At that moment the church bells began to ring. The sound reached his ears above the sounds of the wind. And he stood there listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas. And he sank to his knees in the snow. "Now I understand," he whispered. "Now I see why you had to do it."

**O Antiphons for the week before Christmas:
December 17- December 24th**

Pray the beautiful O Antiphons in the last days of Advent. These ancient prayers fix our attention on the messianic promises proclaimed by the prophets and address Jesus, our Savior, by one of His Old Testament titles. The seven titles attributed to Jesus in the antiphons are Wisdom (Sapientia), Ruler of the House of Israel (Adonai), Root of Jesse (Radix), Key of David (Clavis), Rising Dawn (Oriens), King of the Gentiles (Rex)

and Emmanuel. In Latin, the first letter of each title read backwards, means: "Tomorrow I will be there" (Ero cras). These short prayers are said before or after the Magnificat, Mary's song of praise in Luke 1:46-55.

Go to: <http://catholic-resources.org/Lectionary/Advent-O-Antiphons.htm>

A Christmas Gift that Will Change Those Who Receive It

Consider giving a life-changing gift to those whom you really love. Buy them 4 ½ hours of Matthew Kelly's wisdom and humor, live and in person, at the "Living Every Day With Passion and Purpose" workshop

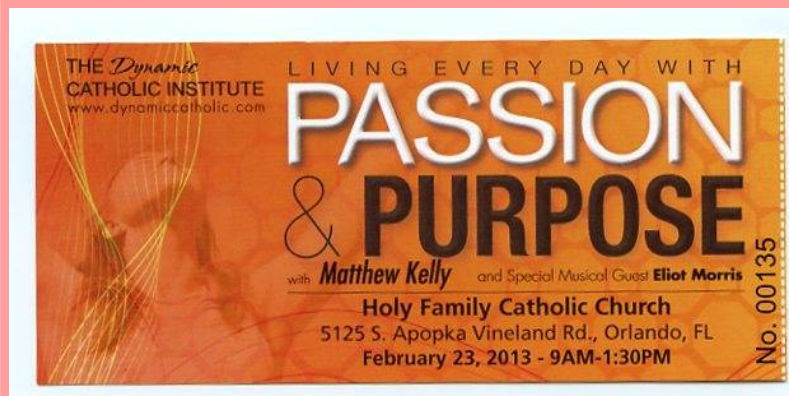
Matthew Kelly will be in Orlando Saturday, February 23, 2013 from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Holy Family Catholic Church in Windermere. The workshop is appropriate for adults and teens as young as 12.

Matthew Kelly's books have been published in 25 languages and have sold over three million copies. Raised Catholic, Matthew has been saddened by the lack of engagement among Catholics and founded the Dynamic Catholic Institute to explore building vibrant Catholic communities in the 21st Century.

The ticket price for the event includes one of Matthew Kelly's CDs, a book, a Mass journal etc. Tickets (\$39) can be purchased for the event through any of the six participating parishes: St. James Cathedral, Holy Family, Annunciation, St. Mary Magdalen, Sts. Peter and Paul or Corpus Christi, or online at DynamicCatholic.com.

For information or to purchase tickets for Christmas delivery contact Kitty Martinez at 407.340.5145.

Give the Gift of Passion and Purpose!





The Mission of Una Fides is to build the Body of Christ by encouraging Catholic men and women to enrich, fortify, and embrace their faith through prayer, study, and fellowship

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