

21/12/67  
 23/12/68 (p2-4) (62)  
 22.12.69 " (151)  
 24.12.70 " "  
 23.12.71 " "

Dutch Carol (2 versen)

[OL Gene all ye Faith].  
 Philips 840.577 P7]

Wonderful the dignity you bestowed ---- [Lorraine Sacren.  
 Prayer for Y. Cl. p 228]

Let's now recite our usual prayer, in a spirit of wonder  
 at the new birth of Christ, born to give us life

PRAYERS

An English carol now - I'm sure you know it quite well,  
 but let's listen to it ~~more~~ prayerfully, and in listening, try to  
 evoke in ourselves the wonder of what happened at Bethlehem

"First Noel"  
 (id.)

"May it not pass away but continue for ever, so  
 that the wonder of it will always be new"

I suppose it's children who really most see the wonder  
 of Christmas - not just all the toys, Santa Claus presents,  
 bells & decorations, ~~etc~~ christmas stockings and mince pies, but  
 the story of the birth of Christ too. For them, the christmas  
 crib in our churches is much more real - and it doesn't  
 matter that He looks different, his birthplace looks different in  
 different churches. It's the wonder & presence of who this child is  
 who was born on Christmas Day. Centuries before we got worried  
 about <sup>education & career</sup> how best to catch children's interest in teaching them the  
 Faith, the <sup>Jesus</sup> crib attributed to Francis of Assisi had already done it.  
 If you have memories, as I have, of visiting the crib at  
 Christmas <sup>as a child,</sup> <sup>by the night, it's then</sup> and being excited, when one day 3 Kings suddenly  
 appeared, perhaps you'll realise that what we've lost most about  
 Christmas as we've grown older has been it's wonder. To capture  
 the real spirit of this season, we must recapture the sense of  
 wonder at what this birth is and means, wonder at the  
 mystery of God becoming man for our sakes. It's not a  
 question of trying to get back to childhood feelings or childishness,  
 but of trying to see again, with fresh eyes and an open,  
 receptive mind the facts and history we've grown so accustomed to

that we don't really see it anymore, or at best see it only  
 hazily without thinking about it in prayer. I think I've only  
 once received a Christmas card where greetings, instead of being  
 conventional, banal or sentimental, really told me something  
 about the meaning of Christ's birth. That's the kind of wonder I  
 mean. ~~It's hard~~ It's hard to break out of conventional ways and  
 feelings, but we must try, for ourselves and for others, if the  
 birth of Christ is to be truly a thing of joy & wonder, always new.  
 Because a child is at the centre of our celebrations, it's all  
 too easy to become merely sentimental. But a child can also  
 give us joy, and this child has so much more than that to  
 give us. May his coming in this so human way not distract  
 our attention from who he is and why he has come. May he  
 always draw our hearts and minds to the mystery of his coming  
 while in those days we recall its history.

- 3'15"

I'll not be ~~speaking~~ talking to you again ~~until~~ <sup>until</sup> after  
 the feast of Christmas; so I want to wish you every joy, happiness  
 and blessing as you celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ this year.  
 May He, who was born like us, to bring us back into our Father's  
 family with Him, ~~make~~ make us always more closely united with him  
 and be <sup>with Him</sup> one family of peace and love. Help us, Lord Jesus,  
 to find you in the joy of this coming Christmas, as the shepherds found  
 you, with Joseph & Mary, at Bethlehem.

Finally, and appropriately, a children's choir inviting us to  
 Christmas Mass - it's a simple French card, with these words:

Midnight is ringing from the church's bells, let us all go to Mass  
 " " " " " " " " let us <sup>go</sup> to adore the child  
 The faithful are making their way, along the road they're <sup>each</sup> holding  
 hands.

Remember my friends, on a night such as this  
 " " " " our Lord was born.

He was born without pomp in a simple stable  
 " " " " " " without clothing or wraps.

But shepherds & shepherds, children, princes & wise kings  
 They all came to adore Him  
 For in him they saw all human hope  
 " " " " " " all hope of paradise