

THE MAN AND THE BIRDS . . . THE REST OF THE STORY

The origin and author of *The Man and the Birds* Christmas Story is unknown. According to the late Chicago based radio broadcaster, Paul Harvey, who retold this parable every Christmas for decades, “*the story was originally published by United Press International by Louis Cassels, a longtime friend of mine and colleague. He and I tried for many years to trace the author of these words. We never could and it occurs to me that maybe some things are supposed to be written without credit to any particular individual.*” The original story ends with the man kneeling in the snow. But together let’s imagine, as Paul Harvey would say, “The Rest of the Story.”

The man I’m going to tell you about was not a scrooge, he was a kind decent, mostly good man. Generous to his family and upright in his dealings with other men. But he just didn’t believe in all of that incarnation stuff that the churches proclaim at Christmas time. It just didn’t make sense and he was too honest to pretend otherwise. He just couldn’t swallow the Jesus story, about God coming to Earth as a man.

He told his wife I’m truly sorry to distress you, but I’m not going with you to church this Christmas Eve. He said he would feel like a hypocrite and that he would much rather just stay at home, but that he would wait up for them. 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 and then he went back to his fireside chair and began to read his newspaper.



Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound. Then another ... and then another. At first, he thought someone must be throwing snowballs against the living room window. But when he went to the front door to investigate he found a flock of



birds huddled outside miserably in the snow. They’d been caught in the storm and in a desperate search for shelter they had tried to fly through his large landscape window. That is what had been making the sound.

Well, he couldn’t let the poor creatures just lie there and freeze, so he remembered the barn where his children stabled their pony. That would provide a warm shelter. All he would have to do is to direct the birds into the shelter.



Quickly, he put on a coat and galoshes and he tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on a light so the birds would know the way in. But the birds did not come in.

So, he figured that food would entice them. He hurried back to the house and fetched some bread-crumbs. He sprinkled them on the snow, making a trail of breadcrumbs to the yellow-lighted wide-open doorway of the stable. But to his dismay, the birds ignored the breadcrumbs.

The birds continued to flap around helplessly in the snow. He tried catching them but could not. He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around and waving his arms. Instead, they scattered in every direction ... every direction except into the warm lighted barn.

And that's when he realized 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 them and confuse them. They just would not follow. They would not be led or shooed because they feared him.



He thought to himself, if only I could be a bird 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 ... 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.

He stood there listening to the bells, *Adeste Fidelis*, listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas.

And he sank to his knees in the snow ...

The anonymous author ended his story here.
ChristmasStory.org



Bowing his head, he repeated the words, "Come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant." But he did not feel triumphant surrounded by freezing birds. 'How does Jesus do it?' he thought. Then he remembered his wife saying something about his Holy Spirit who came with wind and fire. "Fire!" That's it! Jumping to his feet he ran to the barn and grabbed a fire-barrel. Placing it under a tree he lit the fire. As the flame leapt up, competing with the snow and wind, the birds found shelter on

the branches warmed by its glow.

Just then headlights shone through the gathering storm and he was awash with guilt and shame. He had forgotten all about his wife and children. Almost immediately the car stopped and, running to him, his wife wrapped him in her arms.



He tried to say, "Please forgive me for not going with you." Not seeming to hear, she said, "O Honey, thank you for the fire, without it we would have been trapped in a white-out." Holding her tight he thought of the events of the night - the bird strikes on the window, his frantic waving of his arms toward the lighted barn, his desperation answered by the ringing of the bells and finally the fire that saved not only the birds but his wife, too.

The night had begun with skepticism, "Why would God become a man? It makes no sense." Now he had to ask himself, "Where would we be if Jesus had not become one of us?"

Looking up into the tree he knew.



And now you know 'the Rest of the Story'.
The greatest story ever told. Merry Christmas.



Sr. Mary Pauline is pictured above with the tool that she created to slice through Styrofoam and sculpt these beautiful Mangers.

A metal guitar string attached to small PVC pipes and a window squeegee then wired to a 15 volt transformer gets just hot enough to make the fine cuts required for Sisters intricate designs.

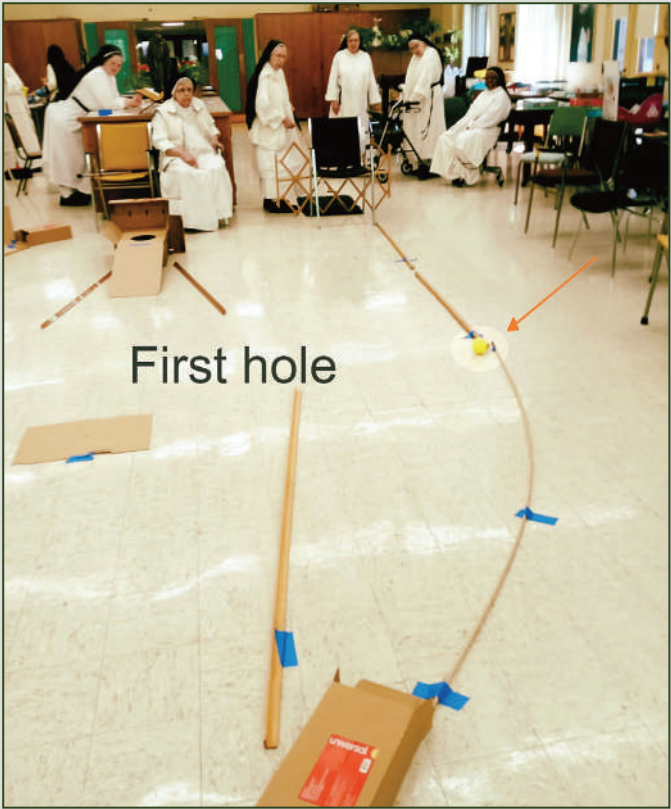
The first one, surrounded by battery lighted trees, was in our Chapel vestibule.

And the exquisite Manger on the right inspired worship in the Nun's choir.

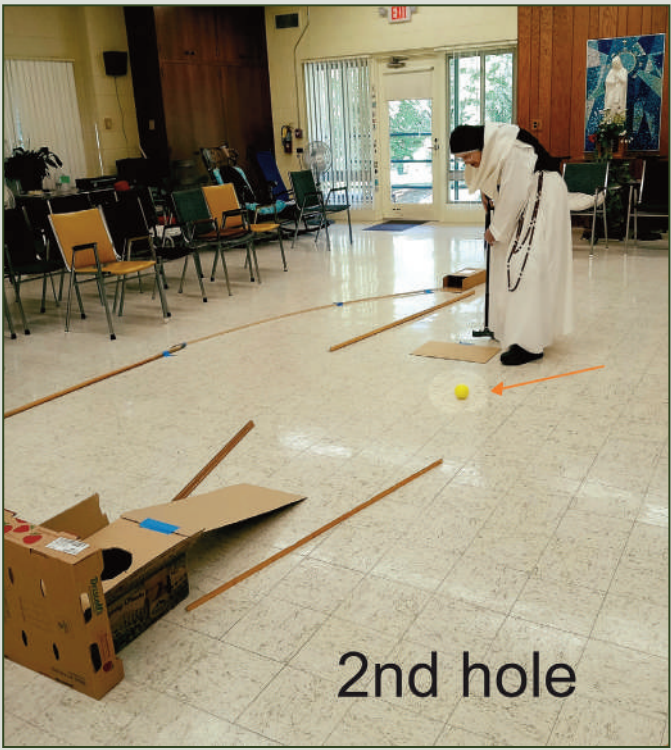


This lighted Manger graced Sr Mary Emmanuel's Feast Day table on the Epiphany of the Lord.

PICKLEBALL PUTT PUTT GOLF FUN FOR ALL!



This hole looks deceiving straight forward but balls jumped the curved rail & the box flap could be a stopper.



Sr. Mary Emmanuel, with a vacuum cleaner attachment as a club, hit the ball straight up the ramp.

During our yearly Quies week, when, we spend more time in personal prayer, rest and relaxation, Sr. Faustina Marie introduced a new 'sport'. Pickelball Golf (putt-putt) on a four hole course in our community room.

A bonus station, more like a pool table, allowed the participant to subtract 5 strokes from their scores. There were no Mulligans (second chances on a poorly hit shot) but plenty of creative scoring!!

The winner was Sr. Mary Catherine with a net score of "1". We won't mention the high scorer.



Wow, 'Pool Shark', Sister Mary of the Immaculate Conception hit a hole one to get the -5 point bonus.



The ball shot between the legs of the chairs jumped the rail and Sr. Anna Marie is asking, "Where did it go?".



Sr. Mary Thomas should have a straight shot into the dust pan but Sr. Pauline is moving a window blind duster across her path.

NEWS FROM THE MONASTERY



Our Vicar Father Louis Marrone, OP was elected Provincial of the Central Province. Above he is relaxing with a brother in the Dominican House of Studies in St. Louis, MO. Congratulations Father. We are grateful and proud.



The Madonna and Child statue from Our Lady of Mt. Thabor has found a new home in Sr. Mary Rani's flower garden. She can be seen and enjoyed from the house. But in a visit, she invites one into her intimacy with her



A flock of turkeys visited our back yard. As they ambled and pecked they found something good to eat among the leaves. Once, a 'Peeping Tom' hen sat on an Infirmary widow sill to catch a glimpse of a sister.

CHRISTMAS NOVENA OF MASSES ~ DECEMBER 16 ~24

From December 16 through December 24 our Dominican Monastic Community will offer a Christmas Novena of Masses *for and with* our friends and benefactors.



During these nine days all are welcome to our regular daily **7:15 AM Holy Mass**.

The Chapel will remain opened from Mass time until 2:30 PM

On Christmas Eve: Holy Mass at Midnight

Our doors will reopen at 11:30 PM for Midnight Mass.

Please unite with us by praying the Novena Prayer during these days, as we prepare our hearts to celebrate the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Intentions: _____
Please check here if no acknowledgment needed ☐

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Liturgical Celebrations

Christmas Midnight Mass
Chapel will open at 11:30 PM

Christmas Morning Mass - 9:30 AM
Our doors will open at 9:00 AM

New Year's Day Mass - 9:30 AM
Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God
Our doors will open at 9:00 AM

On Christmas and New Year's Day
our doors will close at 12:00 Noon.
so that all the sisters can be together for dinner.

If you are unable to be with us for Holy Mass
during this Novena, please join us in spirit by
reciting the Christmas novena prayer at home.

In observance of National Holidays on
Mondays: December 26th and January 2nd
our doors will close at 12:00 Noon

Novena Prayer

Wipe away, Infant Jesus, the tears of children! Embrace the sick and the elderly! Move men to lay down their arms and to draw close in a universal embrace of peace! Invite the peoples, O merciful Jesus, to tear down the walls created by poverty and unemployment, by ignorance and indifference, by discrimination and intolerance. It is you, O Divine Child of Bethlehem, who save us, freeing us from sin. It is you who are the true and only Savior, whom humanity often searches for with uncertainty. God of peace, gift of peace for all humanity, come to live in the heart of every individual and of every family. Be our peace and our joy!
Amen.

Pope Saint John Paul II (Urbi et Orbi 12/25/1994)

Sweet Jesus, please, hear the petitions we now speak in the silence of our hearts.

echoes

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Rejoice! Christ our Light has come. Cf. John 8:12
Look to Him and be radiant. Cf. Psalm 34:5

May the Lord’s Light shine through you to all whom you love.

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THE DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS



For many, the day after Christmas means - trees to undecorate, needles to be vacuumed and gifts to be returned. But for those who spent the four weeks of Advent with mounting anticipation, the day after Christmas is awash with joy and gratitude for the gift of Jesus and his Life-giving grace. Why then, on the 26th of December, does the Church celebrate the death of the first martyr?

Having dragged Stephen outside the city walls of Jerusalem, angry men began to stone him to death. His listeners were greatly disturbed by his teaching, since Stephen spoke to them of Jesus as the promised Messiah. The Acts of the Apostles reveals that, even as the stones struck him, Stephen’s face looked like the face of an angel. He prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” Dropping to his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!” Having said this, he fell asleep.

With the martyrdom of St. Stephen, the Church invites us to celebrate incredible truths: out of love, in Christ, God became man, by his death and Resurrection he obliterated the fear of death and death itself. From the cross he gave to us the incredible grace of forgiveness, even of those who rejected, denied and crucified Him.

For those who longed to celebrate the coming of our Savior throughout Advent, because He *has* come, the day after Christmas is not the end of our celebration but the beginning.