



Society of the Sacred Heart™
United States – Canada



Veillée 2019

Remembering.

Celebrating.

Believing.

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Voices & Experiences of RSCJ

Fran Gimber, RSCJ

I have vivid memories of *Veillée* at Kenwood as a postulant and at the motherhouse during probation. At that time, it was not as solemn and serious as it has become lately; it was fun, a family gathering around the crib; there were readings and songs, yes, but conversation and humor. At Kenwood, we always sang *Vamos, pastores, vamos*, accompanied by castanets when there was someone who could play them. (Remember, we had the Cuban novices.)

Mary Kay Hunyady, RSCJ

Veillée is a sort of intensified Advent to me: that is, in the space of an hour or two, we sit together, waiting. For what do we wait? The Light of the World, the birth of the Prince of Peace.

Helen O'Regan, RSCJ

My favorite Advent/*Veillée* hymn is *Long the Ages*.

I have found the most fruitful *Veillées* have been when each one brings something.

In Kenya once a young postulant (who unfortunately had to leave us) said she understood from her experience that *Veillée* was the moment Jesus was born again into the community. I have kept this as a grace!

Lolin Menendez, RSCJ

I want to add *Long the Ages* ... we cannot celebrate Advent without singing this. (Alas, in my heart only since I am in a Spanish-speaking community!)

Having just read Pope Francis' letter on the meaning of the manger, I remember that when I was teaching in the Lower School at Carrollton sometimes I asked the children, "Who do you want to bring to the Child?" The last day of classes they brought Mickey Mouse, Barbie, Superman ... not just shepherds and angels. One girl wanted to bring her puppy, but finally agreed to bring a photo, IF it was placed close to Jesus. This year for *Veillée*, I am going to invite my community members to "bring" someone to the manger, someone who isn't there ... yet.

Loretta Somerville, RSCJ

To me it has always been a very sacred time.

For those to whom poetry appeals, I find two things memorable for me from the "old days."

The poems of Caryll Houselander from *The Reed of God* and those of Rainer Marie Rilke translated from *The Life of the Virgin Mary*, Christmas section.

As for music, the traditional carols and, of course, *The Messiah*.

Lyn Osiek, RSCJ

One of the Society traditions that I have long loved is that of *Veillée*. Over the years, I have saved in a loose-leaf binder copies of those very special times of prayer when I have gathered with my community or with neighboring communities on Christmas Eve. The earliest of those in the collection goes back 22 years when, in 1989, the noviceship community in Boston prepared the *Veillée*. The theme was "Ready Me," based on an Advent meditation that Jean Hunter had submitted to the RSCJ Newsletter. There are several in the late 1990s whose cover sheets bear the unmistakable artistic touch of Gin O'Meara. The 2008 *Veillée*, beautifully prepared by Paula Toner for the St. Louis City communities, had as its theme "Lead Kindly Light."

From the Archive

GRAND COTEAU (1830)

We did not have Midnight Mass but we gathered at that hour in the chapel to sing hymns of rejoicing.

KENWOOD (1870)

At 9 P.M. all who wished joined Reverend Mother in the back infirmary – community room *pro tem* – surrounding a pleasant fire. Mother Bouvier read a pious allegory while we awaited the summons to Midnight Mass which, notwithstanding some fears about getting the chapel heated, came in due time.

CITY HOUSE, ST. LOUIS (1884)

We had some delightful Christmas surprises from Reverend Mother who had even allowed us to write letters to “Santa Claus.” Then a delightful *Veillée* with her; then Midnight Mass. The crèche in the chapel is charming with artificial plants with large leaves surrounding the Infant Jesus.

NORTH STATE STREET, CHICAGO (1887)

During the novena in preparation for the beautiful feast of Christmas, we took the teachings on silence of our Holy Mother Foundress. We had a little *Veillée* in the study hall of the junior school. We sang carols and had a tirage. The time passed rapidly.

OMAHA (1899)

We had *Veillée* in the community room from 9:30 P.M. till 11. High Mass at 12, followed by two Low Masses. Santa Claus did not come this year but we were happy to make the sacrifice of gifts in the interest of holy poverty.

Suggested Readings for *Veillée*

Readings that make “*Veillée*” – suggested by RSCJ from the USC Province, December 2019

Scripture

The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and Judah. In those days, in that time, I will raise up for David a just shoot; he shall do what is right and just in the Lord. In those days Judah shall be safe and Jerusalem shall dwell secure: this is what they shall call her, “the Lord our peace.”

Jeremiah 33:14-16

While all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, thy almighty Word, O Lord, came down from heaven from thy royal throne.

Wisdom 18:14-15

“For while gentle silence enveloped all things, and night in its swift course was now half gone, your all-powerful word leaped from heaven, from the royal throne, into the midst of the land that was doomed.”

Wisdom 18:14-15

“Be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.”

James 5:7-8

“... they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, one nation shall not raise the sword against another nor shall they train for war again. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.”

Isaiah 2:4-5

“On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a Spirit of counsel and of strength, a Spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord.

Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide, but he shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land’s afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips.

Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them. The cow and the bear shall be neighbors, together

their young shall rest; the lion shall eat hay like the ox. The baby shall play by the cobra’s den, and the child lay his hand on the adder’s lair. There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the sea.”

Isaiah 11:1-9

“In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Luke 2:1-7

RSCJ Readings

In our world today many people feel and experience poverty, pain and isolation. Each of us is challenged to keep “hope alive in a world of violence, fragmentation and woundedness that threaten the survival of our planet.”

General Chapter 2008

“He, as it were, took his first plunge into the heart of our troubles, of our difficulties, our experiences, into the heart of the life we are leading. And that, not as someone standing at a distance, but as thrown into the stream, feeling the shock, the human astonishment at what took place around him ... feeling the poverty, the pain, the isolation in which he was left. And it is there at the crib that we go to make our contemplation.”

1913 Christmas letter Janet Erskine Stuart

“The whole world was astir the first Christmas night, with caravans and processions ... and the most hidden of all was the small company for whose sake it was all done ... Let us cultivate the instinct of those who found the centre of it all at Bethlehem - Angels, Shepherds, Kings - by intuition, by simple faith, by reason and research ... they all reached the same truth.

It is said in one of the prophecies (Office of Christmas), *Ego ipse, qui loquebar, ecce adsum*, and in the

responsory which comes immediately after, we hear the first authentic witness, as it were, from outside. The Shepherds are asking, 'What have you seen?' and three times the answer is given, 'We saw a Child and the choirs of Angels praising God.' They were the first to give testimony to Him; so the nearest and first to come to our God are the poor and the simple.

The Shepherds were allowed a wonderful intimacy, for tradition tells us that Our Lady laid the Divine Child in their arms."

Christmastide - Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ

THE LONGEST JOURNEY, FROM CORAL CASTLES

By Carol Bialock

Back-story (according to Marie-Louise Wolfington, RSCJ): Muriel Cameron's mother was visiting the community in LaBelle, Florida, for Christmas, and Carol Bialock wrote a poem for her Christmas gift for the community:

We start alone. Uniqueness draws its breath
we burst triumphant into being, ego supreme,
each little queen sucks at her mother's breast, content.

Wit against wit we struggle to outshine.
School's one long test to see who wins.
We pyramid up; we climb the mountain of success.

And there, on top, we shiver. Aloneness hurts.
The view's fantastic, but with no one there to share
we turn to ice.

Perhaps the mountain is illusion
and level ground is where we best hold hands.
Maybe the magic's in the circle,
and everything that's blessed is plural.
The longest journey is from "I" to "we."

ANNICE CALLAHAN, RSCJ

In a long process of
past
present
Future

the Incarnation reveals itself
in the birth of a child born for us all.

Shadows are shattered
The world is aflame

A light shines in the darkness
calling us forth from our limited past
into a future of together-belief

A mother said, "Let it be."
and God took flesh in our waiting world.
A child is born to us
and peace prevails.

Walk,
wander towards the light
to see
and to rejoice.

Look then,
and go to be a light for others.

Watch,
Wait,
Worship at his feet;
the child born to us
the son given to us.

Wait,
Let yourself be born,
Then grow and be the joy
That gives birth to life
In others' hearts.

Watch,
and touch the gift.
Then reach out
to share the gift you are
with those in need of you!

OTHER READINGS

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST FROM THE ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

From the USCCB

INTRODUCTION

The announcement of the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord from the *Roman Martyrology* draws upon Sacred Scripture to declare in a formal way the birth of Christ. It begins with creation and relates the birth of the Lord to the major events and personages of sacred and secular history. The particular events contained in the announcement help pastorally to situate the birth of Jesus in the context of salvation history.

This text, *The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ*, may be chanted or recited, most appropriately on December 24, during the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours. It may also be chanted or recited before the beginning of Christmas Mass during the Night. It may not replace any part of the Mass. (The musical notation is found in Appendix I of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*.)

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

The Twenty-fifth Day of December,

when ages beyond number had run their course
from the creation of the world,

when God in the beginning created heaven and earth,
and formed man in his own likeness;

when century upon century had passed
since the Almighty set his bow in the clouds after the
Great Flood, as a sign of covenant and peace;

in the twenty-first century since Abraham, our father in
faith, came out of Ur of the Chaldees;

in the thirteenth century since the People of Israel were
led by Moses in the Exodus from Egypt;

around the thousandth year since David was anointed
King;

in the sixty-fifth week of the prophecy of Daniel;

in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad;

in the year seven hundred and fifty-two since the
foundation of the City of Rome;

in the forty-second year of the reign of Caesar Octavian
Augustus, the whole world being at peace, JESUS CHRIST,
eternal God and Son of the eternal Father, desiring to
consecrate the world by his most loving presence,
was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and when nine months
had passed since his conception, was born of the Virgin
Mary in Bethlehem of Judah, and was made man:

The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to the
flesh.

PROCLAMATION OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST (adapted from the Roman Martyrology updated)

Shared by Kathleen Hughes, written by an unknown source

From before the beginning of time when there was
always God;

From the creation of the universe, when God's Being
poured itself into time and space;

From the formation of galaxies and the galaxy we call
ours, with its sun and moon, stars and circling planets;
From the formation of planet earth and all life forms on it:
Seas and rivers, trees, mountains, rocks and deserts,
plants and birds, animals, all flowers, sea creatures, and
people, male and female;

From the origin of human history, the time of Abraham
and the prophets,

Moses, Socrates, Plato and Buddha;

From the era of the Roman Empire ...

When the world was at peace,

Jesus Christ, eternal God and Word from the mouth
of God,

Desirous to pour out the endless love of His Heart

By his most merciful coming to be one of us,

Having been conceived of the Holy Spirit

And nine months having elapsed since his conception

Is born in Bethlehem of Juda

Having become human of the Virgin Mary:

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO THE FLESH

"It is both terrible and comforting to dwell in the
inconceivable nearness of God and so to be loved by God
that the first and last gift is infinity and inconceivability
itself. But we have no choice. God is with us."

Karl Rahner

"Celebrate Christmas, dear Mr. Kappus, with this devout
feeling that it is precisely this fear of life that He needs
from you in order to begin; these very days of your
transition are perhaps the time when everything in you
works upon Him, just as once before in childhood you
worked breathlessly on Him. Be patient and without
displeasure, and think that the least we can do is not
make His becoming any more difficult for Him than the
earth makes it for the spring when it chooses to come.

"And be cheerful and confident."

Rainer Maria Rilke

“From the beginning, writers of the Christmas story have been bothered by the inn, with the stable and manger close at hand. That is where we find ourselves: not by the shepherds, whose poverty and simplicity we lack; and not by the wise men, whose watchfulness and decisiveness we lack. We are, at best, guests at the inn. We sleep, we follow our own plans and dreams. Can we be awakened by the angels’ news? That is the question.”

Source: from the foreword to the play
“The End of the Night,” Rudolf Otto Wiemer

“We are all meant to be mothers of God. What good is it to me if this eternal birth of the divine Son takes place unceasingly, but does not take place within myself? And, what good is it to me if Mary is full of grace if I am not also full of grace? What good is it to me for the Creator to give birth to his Son if I do not also give birth to him in my time and my culture? This, then, is the fullness of time: When the Son of Man is begotten in us.”

Meister Eckhart, 1260-1328, German Dominican mystic

“The frightened shepherds become God’s messengers. They organize, make haste, find others, and speak with them. Do we not all want to become shepherds and catch sight of the angel? I think so. Without the perspective of the poor, we see nothing, not even an angel. When we approach the poor, our values and goals change. The child appears in many other children. Mary also seeks sanctuary among us. Because the angels sing, the shepherds rise, leave their fears behind, and set out for Bethlehem, wherever it is situated these days.”

Source: *Watch for the Light*, Dorothee Soelle

“If you judge the future only according to yourselves, you cannot be pessimistic enough. But do not forget that your real future is my present, the present that began today and shall never again become transitoriness. And so you are certainly planning in a realistic way if you rely on my optimism, which is not utopia but the reality of God. This reality — incomprehensible wonder of my almighty love — I have sheltered, safely and completely, in the cold stable of your world. I am there. I no longer go away from this world, even if you do not see me now. When you, poor mortals, celebrate Christmas, then say to everything that is there and to everything that you are, one thing only — say to me: ‘You are here. You have come. You have come into everything. Even into my soul. Even behind the stubbornness of my wickedness, which doesn’t want to let itself be pardoned.’ Say only one thing, and then it is Christmas for you, too; say only: ‘You are here.’ No, don’t say anything. I am there. And ever since then my love is unconquerable. I am there. It is Christmas. Light the candles. They have more right to exist than all the darkness. It is Christmas, Christmas that lasts forever.”

Karl Rahner

THE CHILD IS BORN AGAIN

“For years I was held in a tiny cell. My only human contact was with my torturers. For two and a half of those years I did not experience the glance of a human face, see a green leaf. My only company was the cockroaches and mice. The only daylight that entered my cell was through a small opening at the top of one wall. For eight months I had my hands and feet tied. On Christmas Eve, the door to my cell opened and the guard tossed a crumpled piece of paper. I moved as best I could to pick up the paper. It said simply, “Constantina, do not be discouraged, we know you are alive.” It was signed “Monica” and had the Amnesty International candle on it. These words saved my life and my sanity. Eight months later I was set free.”

Constantina Coronel, released prisoner from Uruguay
Amnesty International Newsletter 1996

Two thousand years ago
a Child cries in the night
songs of silver-throated angels
beckon wild-eyed shepherds
running on trembling feet
beneath the dancing Star of joy.

Two thousand years later
Another cry in the night
A woman named Constantina
rots in tortured prison cell
only a sliver of sun
and never glimpse of green.

A message comes
on Christmas eve,
not with silver throats
or gleaming Star
but on crumpled note
amid cockroaches and rodents.

Words of assurance,
balm for a despairing heart
and the Christ
is born again
in the power of hope
and the candle of compassion.

Joyce Rupp

“All of us, at one time or another, have felt heart-sick about the war in the Middle East. And other parts of the world. Apart from all the politics, we know that war is a failure of peace. No matter how evil the enemy or how critically necessary it might be to remove him, war is simply tragic and results in the death of thousands of innocent people and scars thousands more – if not all of us in some way.”

Creighton University website

“CONSUBSTANTIAL”

We do not need to believe
The stories of kings and shepherds,
Choirs and messengers,
Though they tell us better
Than the metaphors of our creeds
That He who is above all
Has plunged Himself,
Out of love.
Into our commonplace.

God in Winter, Padraig J. Daly

“MARY”

If she had said ‘No,’
The world would not have stopped:
Birds would have flown high still into sky,
The heavens would have proclaimed His glory
And the firmament the work of His hands.
We would have gone on reproving Him,
Unaware of how deeply down
His love might plunge into our affliction,
Unaware of how He might have taken upon Himself/
The consequences of our ‘Nos.’

God in Winter, Padraig J. Daly

“Although we sing, ‘All glory to God on High and on the earth be peace,’ there seems to be today neither glory to God nor peace on earth. As long as it remains a hunger still unsatisfied, as long as Christ is not yet born, we have to look forward to him. When real peace is established, we will not need demonstrations, but it will be echoed in our life, not only in individual life, but in corporate life. Then we shall say Christ is born ... Then we will not think of a particular day in the year as that of the birth of the Christ, but as an ever-recurring event which can be enacted in every life.”

Mahatma Gandhi

Source: from a talk given on Christmas Day, 1931

“What good is it if Mary gave birth to the son of God centuries ago if I do not also give birth to God’s son in my time and culture?”

Meister Eckhart

“Silence in the early ascetic tradition was much more than not speaking. It was mostly a quality of heart. It was the creation of an inner space where genuine listening could take place. The ammas and abbas knew that in silence the Word most readily takes root.

To begin to enter into the profound silence that resides in the depths of our being is to begin to enter the realm of the Godhead beyond God. Our silence is both the empty pathway by which we venture most surely into the divine mystery and the clear road by which the Word proceeds most directly into our hearts.

The classic Quaker silent meeting is an experience of the whole community coming into the presence of the inward Christ, where all come to know each other in that which is eternal. The theological assumption underlying this ritual-less ritual is that the truly Christian life is one lived in reliance on the “Inner Light” of the living Christ who speaks most authentically in the silence of the soul. The silence is understood at the level not to be private but most deeply shared; for at the heart of the person dwells Christ, who speaks not simply for the comfort of each but for the good of all.

Silence encases a numinous mystery, alive with its own incommunicable splendor, something there are no words for, no images to express, but in the quietest hour of the night, we are close to it, in the silence itself, breathing in, breathing out, keeping watch, keeping vigil for the Coming.”

from *Vigil*, by Wendy Wright

“Why don’t you think of him as the one who is coming, who has been approaching from all eternity, the one who will someday arrive, the ultimate fruit of a tree whose leaves we are? What keeps you from projecting his birth into the ages that are coming into existence, and living your life as a painful and lovely day in the history of a great pregnancy? Don’t you see how everything that happens is again and again a beginning, and couldn’t it be His beginning, since, in itself, starting is always so beautiful? If he is the most perfect one, must not what is less perfect precede him, so that he can choose himself out of fullness and superabundance? Must he not be the last one, so that he can include everything in himself, and what meaning would we have if he whom we are longing for has already existed?”

As bees gather honey, so we collect what is sweetest out of all things and build Him. Even with the trivial, with the insignificant (as long as it is done out of love) we begin, with work and with the repose that comes afterward, with a silence or with a small solitary joy, with everything that we do alone, without anyone to join or help us, we start Him whom we will not live to see, just as our ancestors could not live to see us. And yet they, who passed away long ago, still exist in us, as predisposition, as burden upon our fate, as murmuring blood, and as gesture that rises up from the depths of time.

Is there anything that can deprive you of the hope that in this way you will someday exist in Him, who is the farthest, the outermost limit?

Dear Mr. Kappus, celebrate Christmas in this devout feeling, that perhaps He needs this very anguish of yours in order to begin; these very days of your transition are perhaps the time when everything in you is working at Him, as you once worked at Him in your childhood, breathlessly. Be patient and without bitterness, and realize that the least we can do is to make coming into existence no more difficult for Him than the earth does for spring when it wants to come.

And be glad and confident.”

Yours,

Rainer Maria Rilke

If, as Herod,
we fill our lives with things,
and again with things:
if we consider ourselves
so unimportant
that we must fill every moment of our lives with action,
when we have the time
to make the long, slow journey
across the desert
as did the magi?
or sit and watch the stars, as did the shepherds?
or brood over the coming of the child, as did Mary?
For each one of us
there is a desert to travel
a star to discover—
and a being within ourselves to bring to life.
(submitted by Paula Toner)

ON THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION

It’s when we face for a moment
the worst our kind can do, and shudder to know
the taint in our own selves, that awe
cracks the mind’s shell and enters the heart:
not to a flower, not to a dolphin,
to no innocent form
but to this creature vainly sure
it and no other is god-like. God
(out of our compassion for our ugly
failure to evolve) entrusts
as our guest, as our brother,
the word.

by Denise Lvertov

THE JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

‘A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.’
And the camels galled, sorefooted, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
and running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,

With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the
darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arriving at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you might say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

T.S. Eliot

O ANTIPHONS

Come, Wisdom of our God Most High,
guiding creation with power and love:
teach us to walk in the path of knowledge!

Come, Adonai and leader of Israel, you appeared
to Moses in a burning bush and you gave him the
Law on Sinai. O come and save us with your mighty power.

Come, Root of Jesse, you stand as a signal to the nations;
kings fall silent before you whom the people acclaim.
O come to deliver us and do not delay.

Come, Key of David, opening the gates of God's eternal
Kingdom: free the prisoners of darkness.

Come, Radiant Dawn, splendour of eternal light, sun of
justice: Shine on those lost in the darkness of death.

Come, King of Nations whom all the peoples desire, you
are the cornerstone which makes all one. O Come and
save humankind whom you made from clay.

Come Emmanuel, you are our king and judge, the One
whom the peoples await and their Saviour. O come and
save us, Lord, our God.

In the town of Nazareth there was a young woman named
Miryam.

In prayer Miryam watched.
Eyes of her soul turned inward, she watched.
She watched for her God in the stillness.

In awe Miryam listened
With the ear of her heart she listened.
With the deep sigh of her breath, she listened
She listened for her God in the stillness.

In the stillness Miryam reached out
With the spirit of God she reached out
With the memory of her people she reached out,
Asking her God to teach her.

The Presence filled her being,
Greeting the core of her soul.
Hearing, she stretched for the life source,
Embracing the quickening call.

“How is this?” and “I know not” is what she responded,
Not knowing what God was asking
“But you speak, my God, and it comes together.
I will say Yes, let it be.”

Her life of knowing in faith
Was confirmed in the quieting joy,
Summoning memories and call,
Steeped in God's presence and peace.

Miryam arose and went out,
Knowing the change, went out,
Accepting the newness of life, went out,
Went out to carry God's Word.

Miryam journeyed to Elizabeth
Sharing the mystery unfolding within them both
Words of her people rang out from her spirit
Magnificat – God dwells with us!

from: Ann Johnson, *Miryam of Nazareth*

AN ADAPTATION OF STATIONS OF THE CRIB

by Joseph Nassal

FIRST STATION: WAITING IN HOPE

Luke 1:5 – In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah ...

We should not be surprised Zechariah found himself dumb. Don't we say, "I can't put into words how I feel," or "what I am feeling now is beyond words." When we are dumbfounded, let Zechariah be our interpreter.

The first station is a time to be speechless. It is a time to be dumbfounded, to sit still and be quiet, to walk and talk softly and carry a big heart. Allow God to do the talking. God will speak the Word that will become flesh and dwell among us.

Prayer (All together)

Allowing the Infant Christ to rest in us, let us wait patiently on His own timing of His growth in us and give Him just what He asks – the extremely simple things that are ourselves – our hands and feet, our eyes and ears, our words, our thought, our love.

SECOND STATION – ANNUNCIATION

Luke 1:26-27 – In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

This station celebrates how God, communicating through an angel prepared a place in Mary's body for the Divine Presence to dwell. Mary received God's word made flesh so that the new covenant may dwell within us. We carry the Divine Presence in the ark of our hearts, inside our bodies, provided of course, there is room. Too often there is so much stuff that clutters the ark of our hearts that it is a challenge for God's angels to find enough room to make God's self at home.

Prayer (All together)

God of impossible dreams, awaken in us a childlike spirit of trust to believe that with you at the center of our life, all things are possible. With your life, Mary, our mother, you announced faith in God's dreams for you and the courage to live in hope. Make us, O God, messengers of hope today. As you send your messengers "to light, to guard, to rule and to guide: all our days and all our nights, increase our awareness of your presence. You are with us always, O God and in your presence, all dreams come true.

THIRD STATION – VISITATION

Luke 1:39-40 – In those days, Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country; to a city of Judah and she entered the house of Zechariah and Elizabeth.

At his station, we celebrate the presence of the light in a young woman named Mary. We celebrate the presence of the light in an old woman, Elizabeth. We touch the light that is inside each of us. We take this light into a world so filled with traces of the night, and we commit ourselves to share the light of love, compassion, birth and beauty.

On the way to the manger, we are asked to believe in the light of our own goodness, the light of God's truth growing within us.

Prayer (All together)

Blessed are you O God and blessed are the holy women and men through whom you manifest your Divine Presence. You visit us each day in the holy and humble ones we meet along the way.

O Light of Lights, make us a beacon of hope for someone in need.

FOURTH STATION – NATIVITY

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

This child who is given to us is no longer confined in the womb of his mother but is now let loose upon the world. This child cries for our attention and affection. This child demands our time and our trust. This child beckons us to believe that everyone and everything in our own little worlds now revolve around him so that anything or anyone who is broken or distant or un-forgiven can begin again.

Into our crowded little minds and hearts, full of jagged edges and sharp memories that still cause us to hurt, comes a child who seeks only to heal and give hope.

Prayer (All together)

Loving God, you helped us slip into something more comfortable: the swaddling clothes of our dependence upon you. Wrapped in these swaddling clothes, we come to know that we are not in control. And only when we know that we are not in control will we come to know true freedom and enjoy being a child again.

Help us to see your face in the smile of a friend, in the frown of a coworker, in the wrinkled wisdom lines of a parent, in the smooth features of a child, in the stare of a stranger. Into the streets of our little town, O God, you come looking for a place to lay your head. Lay your head upon our heart, make yourself comfortable, make yourself at home.

FIFTH STATION – ALL ARE WELCOME

Luke 2:8-9 – And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. An angel appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were filled with fear.

These shepherds are out in the field, nameless, faceless folk who become the first to see the light. An “angel of God stood before them, and the glory of God shone around them.” These shepherds were scared to death but the angel of light gave them a birth announcement: “Do not be afraid ... this day in the city of David a Savior is born to you.”

These shepherds symbolize the poor and lowly, the outcasts and aliens, the foreigners and fringe people of society. They are down-to-earth gritty characters, who rolled up their sleeves to work and fight hard. They were not accustomed to falling to their knees for anyone nor had they ever seen a choir of angels singing alleluia before. To them the angel gives a sign “You will find a child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” To find this child, they need only follow a star that will serve as a searchlight.

Prayer (All together)

Gracious God, you are the Good Shepherd, always on the lookout for the one that got away. Teach us to be always on the lookout – to seek out the lost, to welcome the stranger, to clothe the naked and to announce with our life the favor of your forgiving love.

SIXTH STATION – MANIFESTATION

Matthew 2:10-11 – When they saw the star; they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him.

These wise men, astrologers, were humble enough to stop and ask for directions. They trusted their instincts, their intelligence and their knowledge about the star. They also trusted their dreams about the way they should return home. Dreams may take us in a different direction than we had originally planned. Dreams may make us find our way home by using alternative routes.

Prayer (All together)

As we move beyond the manger to the mission it mandates, help us to realize how important it is to trust not only what we know but also what we feel – to trust our knowledge, our thoughts, our prayers, but also our dreams.

As we continue beyond the manger, may we commit ourselves to making our thoughts and all our words count by bringing them to life in the language of love.

At this station God says to us “Don’t worry about the gifts you bring; it is the thought that counts. Trust me.”

Reference Books

Seeing Haloes
John Shea

Reed of God
Caryll Houselander

The Life of the Virgin Mary
Rainer Marie Rilke

Consubstantial, God in Winter
Padraig J Daly

Suggested Songs for *Veillée*

Waiting In Silence

Come, O Come Emmanuel

Welcome to our World

Do You Hear What I Hear

Mary's Boy Child

Long the Ages

The Huron Carol

Long the Ages

Creator of the Stars of Night

Holy Night

What Child is This

Long the Ages

Creator the Stars of Night

This Ancient Love

Birthsong

From Lisa Buscher, RSCJ

DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR BY IDINA MENZEL

I am struck by the communication pattern in which this song is sung – the wind (Spirit) communicates first to creation (the lamb and star), then the children (shepherd boy), then the child goes to the earthly power (king) another reversal of power, as the king humbly proclaims peace to the people everywhere ... Perhaps a genesis of sorts ...

Creation speaks, what is it saying that we need to hear?

WELCOME TO OUR WORLD BY AMY GRANT

Welcome to our World by Amy Grant - not your typical Christmas song, but in a world that is struggling with so many trying to simply exist, it is a great reminder of God's selfless loving act.

From Mary Kay Hunyady, RSCJ

The Harry Belafonte song, *Mary's Boy Child*, is something I love to bring to *Veillée*. It speaks to me for several reasons. The lyrics, of course: a simple telling of the story of Jesus' birth into his family. The melody and accompaniment: the melody is simple and beautiful, and the accompaniment, a simple guitar. The singer, Harry Belafonte, stands as a representative of a radical commitment to justice and peace, just as we are called to be.

MARY'S BOY CHILD BY HARRY BELAFONTE

Long time ago in Bethlehem
So the Holy Bible say
Mary's boy child, Jesus Christ
Was born on Christmas day

Hark, now hear the angels sing
A new King born today
And [we] will live forever more
Because of Christmas day

While shepherds watched their flock by night
And see a bright new shining star
And hear a choir sing
The music seem to come from afar

Now Joseph and his wife Mary
Come to Bethlehem that night
And find no place to borne she child
Not a single room was in sight

Hark, now hear the angels sing
A new King born today
And [we] will live forever more
Because of Christmas day

By and by they find a little nook
In a stable all forlorn
And in a manger cold and dark
Mary's little boy was born

Hark, now hear the angels sing
A new King born today
And [we] will live forever more
Because of Christmas day

THE HURON CAROL

1. 'Twas in the moon of winter-time
When all the birds had fled,
That mighty Gitchi Manitou
Sent angel choirs instead;
Before their light the stars grew dim,
And wandering hunters heard the hymn:

Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born,
In excelsis gloria.

2. Within a lodge of broken bark
The tender Babe was found,
A ragged robe of rabbit skin
Enwrapp'd His beauty round;
But as the hunter braves drew nigh,
The angel song rang loud and high ...

3. The earliest moon of wintertime
Is not so round and fair
As was the ring of glory
On the helpless infant there.
The chiefs from far before him knelt
With gifts of fox and beaver pelt.

4. O children of the forest free,
O sons of Manitou,
The Holy Child of earth and heaven
Is born today for you.
Come kneel before the radiant Boy
Who brings you beauty, peace and joy.

From Eve Kavanagh, RSCJ

BIRTHSONG BY BRIAN WREN

on the disc *I Shall See God* by David Haas

Her baby, newly breathing,
with wailing needful cry,
by Mary kissed and cradled,
is lulled in lullaby.
Long months of hope and waiting,
the thrill and fear of birth,
are crowned with exultation,
and God is on the earth.

Then eyes that gaze at Mary
have yet to name or trace
the world of shape or color;
or recognize a face;
yet Holiness Eternal
is perfectly expressed
in hands that clutch unthinking,
and lips that tug the breasts.

The milk of life is flowing
as Mary guides and feeds,
her wordless Word, embodied
in infant joys and needs.
Enormous, formless striving,

and yearnings deep and wide,
becradled in communion,
are fed and satisfied.

How mother-like the wisdom
that carried and gave birth
to all things, seen and unseen,
and nurtured infant earth;
unstinting, unprotected
prepared for nail and thorn,
constricted into maleness,
and of a woman born.

LONG THE AGES

(Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ)

1. Long the ages rolled and slowly to the coming of the
word,
Fervent longings grew more fervent, undismayed by
hopes deferred.
Weaker spirits sighed and whispered, "Could the Lord of
all forget?"
While the prophets scanned the portents, and in
patience said, "Not yet."

2. Slowly passed the long procession, type and figure,
saint and sage,
Seers with inspired voices, chanting from prophetic page.
Kings with crown and sceptre carried, not their own but
his by right,
Priests with incense, fire and victim, calling him from
Heaven's height.

4. So they prayed and through the ages so the faithful
singers sang,
Sighing for the great appearing, sighs that like their harp-
strings rang,
Dreaming that they heard the music of the High Priest's
bells of gold
Ring among the silken fringes, in the glory known of old.

5. Dreaming that they felt his coming, that the blessed
time was near,
Counting out the weeks prophetic, gathering hope from
everywhere;
Till at length the long procession halted – bade the
singing cease –
Armies leaned upon their weapons ... and the King was
born in peace.

Suggested Prayers for *Veillée*

Prayers included in favorite "Veillée" Celebrations

God, enlarge my heart
That it may be big enough to receive the greatness of
your love.
Stretch my heart
That it may take into it all people around the world who
Long for God.
Stretch it
That it may take into it all those who are suffering, alone,
despairing
Or lost without hope.
And stretch it that it may grow to contain all that your
heart contains,
That I may become the heart of God in the world.
Amen

O Unknown God
Whose presence is announced
Not among the impressive
But in obscurity;
Come, overshadow us now,
And speak to our hidden places,
That entering your darkness with joy,
We may encounter you in Christ our Light.
Amen

It is the sound of a Virgin's heart,
Beating in the solitude of adoration;
It is a girl's voice
Speaking to an angel
Answering for the whole world!

It is the sound of the Heart of Christ
Beating within the young woman's heart
It is the pulse of God
Timed by the breath of a child
The circle of a young mother's arms
Has changed the world
Into a cradle for God

Christ of the cosmos, living Word
Come to heal and save.
Come from the depths of eternity,
Unfolding the purposes of God.

Come from the dawn of time,
Shaping the universe:
Divine expression,
Mystery made known.

In your quiet way,
Come to heal and save.
Incognito, in our streets,
Beneath the concrete, between the cracks,
Behind the curtains, within the dreams,

In aging memories, in childhood wonder,
In secret ponds, in broken hearts,
In Bethlehem stable, still small voice,
Word of God, amongst us.

Come to our divided world;
Come to our fragmented lives;
Come to heal and save.

In you our life is one again,
And all things come together;
Each connected to the other,
Each reflected in the other,
Ourselves and all things living;
Heaven and earth,
Time and space,
The whole created universe,
In you.

Christ of the Cosmos, living Word,
Come to heal and save. Amen.

Intercessions:

Christ of the Cosmos, living Word,
Come to heal and save.
Come to our world this day and ...

Come, and do not delay!
Come into our lives; come into our relationships;
come into the pain and suffering of these days within us
and across our troubled world;
come to bring light to the darkness of our minds and
hearts
so that our lives are more transparent and
honest;
come to free us from every compulsion and addiction
which keeps us captive;
come to reveal your deepest desires for us, here and now;
come to transform us so profoundly
that we will embrace your desires for all your
people as our own.
So purify our longings and animate our choices, that we,
by our very living of the Advent Mystery,
will hasten the day when your promises will all
have been fulfilled.

You wait for us, O God, until we are open to You.
We wait for Your word to make us receptive.
Attune us to Your voice.
In the silence of our hearts,
from Your own deep silence,
speak and bring us Your Word,
the Christ, who is our Peace. Amen

THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION (and sharing if you wish)

These can be placed at any time during the time of
prayer:

- How is God enlarging my heart? Stretching it?
- Who, what am I being invited to “take into my heart”
this year?
- What is the grace I ask to be able to say “Yes” to this
invitation?
- Think of the times God has “overshadowed” you.
Rejoice in that memory
- In our year of prayer in the Society we are in Phase
II – the period to re-member in the sense of putting
back together. How does the acceptance of the word
of God into my life help me to be a woman or man of
reconciliation and forgiveness?
- Other reflections ...

May we give and receive love generously. May this love
echo in our hearts like the joy of Christmas night.

May each person who comes into our life be greeted
as another Christ. May the honor given the Babe of
Bethlehem be that which we extend to every guest who
enters our presence.

May the hope of this sacred season settle in our soul.
May it be a foundation of courage for us when times of
distress occupy our inner land.

May the wonder and awe that fills the eyes of children
be awakened within us. May it lead us to renewed
awareness and appreciation of whatever we too easily
take for granted.

May we open the gift of our life and be grateful for the
hidden treasures it contains.

May we keep our eye on the Star within us and trust this
Luminescent Presence to guide and direct us each day.

May we go often to the Bethlehem of our heart and visit
the One who offers us peace. May we bring this peace
into our world.

Adapted from Joyce Rupp's A Christmas Blessing

JUSTICE AND PEACE SHALL FLOURISH FOREVER

That we may be vessels of hope to a fragmented,
suffering humanity – R.

That we may bring comfort, joy and peace to the poor, the
lonely, the broken – R.

That our love of you, each other and our earth may be
reborn of faith and renewed in life- R.

That we may bring the light that frees from captivity to
those who sit in darkness and despair- R.

All: O Christ, Word made flesh you have entered into
our humanness, becoming one of us to reveal to us
the meaning of life itself. You have come to teach us to
hope and to renew us in hope. May our lives illumined by
the radiance of your life become a gift to others as we
continue to work for peace and justice. Amen.

Veillée 2019

Remembering. Celebrating. Believing.

Before you arrive, invite each person to bring a quote, wish, blessing or prayer written on a bookmark sized slip of paper. Place these on a tray or in the center of the gathering place, with each person choosing one at the end as a way of blessing one another in the Society of the Sacred Heart tradition of *Tirage*. This *Veillée* invites communal prayer, celebration, and sharing moving from the solemn days of Advent to the celebration of new life in the season of Christmas.

Remembering

We remember the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem

We remember our own journeys from dark to light

We remember the invitation to be the stable for birth to arrive

What do you remember this night?

READINGS AND SONGS FOR REMEMBERING

LONG THE AGES

(Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ)

1. Long the ages rolled and slowly to the coming of the word,
Fervent longings grew more fervent, undismayed by hopes deferred.
Weaker spirits sighed and whispered, "Could the Lord of all forget?"
While the prophets scanned the portents, and in patience said, "Not yet."
2. Slowly passed the long procession, type and figure, saint and sage,
Seers with inspired voices, chanting from prophetic page.
Kings with crown and sceptre carried, not their own but his by right,
Priests with incense, fire and victim, calling him from Heaven's height.
4. So they prayed and through the ages so the faithful singers sang,
Sighing for the great appearing, sighs that like their harp-strings rang,
Dreaming that they heard the music of the High Priest's bells of gold
Ring among the silken fringes, in the glory known of old.
5. Dreaming that they felt his coming, that the blessed time was near,
Counting out the weeks prophetic, gathering hope from everywhere;
Till at length the long procession halted – bade the singing cease –
Armies leaned upon their weapons ... and the King was born in peace.

O ANTIPHONS

Come, Wisdom of our God Most High,
guiding creation with power and love:
teach us to walk in the path of knowledge!

Come, Adonai and leader of Israel, you appeared to Moses in a burning bush and you gave him the Law on Sinai. O come and save us with your mighty power.

Come, Root of Jesse, you stand as a signal to the nations; kings fall silent before you whom the people acclaim. O come to deliver us and do not delay.

Come, Key of David, opening the gates of God's eternal Kingdom: free the prisoners of darkness.

Come, Radiant Dawn, splendour of eternal light, sun of justice: Shine on those lost in the darkness of death.

Come, King of Nations whom all the peoples desire, you are the cornerstone which makes all one. O come and save humankind whom you made from clay.

Come Emmanuel, you are our king and judge, the One whom the peoples await and their Saviour.
O come and save us, Lord, our God.

SONG: O COME, O COME EMMANUEL

PROCLAMATION OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST
(adapted from the Roman Martyrology updated)

From before the beginning of time when there was always God;
From the creation of the universe, when God's Being poured itself into time and space;
From the formation of galaxies and the galaxy we call ours, with its sun and moon, stars and circling planets;
From the formation of planet earth and all life forms on it: Seas and rivers, trees, mountains, rocks and deserts, plants and birds, animals, all flowers, sea creatures, and people, male and female;
From the origin of human history, the time of Abraham and the prophets,
Moses, Socrates, Plato and Buddha;
From the era of the Roman Empire ...
When the world was at peace,
Jesus Christ, eternal God and Word from the mouth of God,
Desirous to pour out the endless love of His Heart
By his most merciful coming to be one of us,
Having been conceived of the Holy Spirit
And nine months having elapsed since his conception
Is born in Bethlehem of Juda
Having become human of the Virgin Mary:

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO THE FLESH

Celebrating

READINGS AND SONGS FOR CELEBRATING

We recall that there was celebration in the birth of Jesus, even in the midst of chaos and crisis.

We learned long ago how to celebrate, even in the midst of challenge.

We choose joy in the midst of the darkest of nights.

We listen for the dance of our own hearts.

How do we celebrate our hope this night?

SONG: BIRTHSONG BY BRIAN WREN

If, as Herod,
we fill our lives with things,
and again with things:
if we consider ourselves
so unimportant
that we must fill every moment of our lives with action,
when we have the time
to make the long, slow journey
across the desert
as did the magi?
or sit and watch the stars, as did the shepherds?
or brood over the coming of the child, as did Mary?
For each one of us
there is a desert to travel
a star to discover—
and a being within ourselves to bring to life.

shared by Kathleen Hughes through Paula Toner

SONG: MARY'S BOY CHILD BY HARRY BELAFONTE

On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a Spirit of counsel and of strength, a Spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord.

Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide, but he shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land's afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness, a belt upon his hips.

Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them. The cow and the bear shall be neighbors, together their young shall rest; the lion shall eat hay like the ox. The baby shall play by the cobra's den, and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair. There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the sea.

Isaiah 11:1-9

SONG: JOY TO THE WORLD

Believing

READINGS AND SONGS FOR BELIEVING

We have each had a moment when we first came to believe – in a person, a cause, in Santa, in God.

We have each had times that we worked with others to create something that did not yet exist.

We have each believed in ways that have been visible in our actions.

Where does believing allow your heart to be the Bethlehem for just this present moment?

SONG: WELCOME TO OUR WORLD BY AMY GRANT

“I invite all of us who are part of our Sacred Heart family to pay attention to God’s call to live hope deeply in our lives, to strengthen our commitment in our journey forward as a community, to speak the truth with love as we work together to fulfill the dream of God for all God’s people”

Excerpt from the Letter of Barbara Dawson, RSCJ
on the Feast of the Sacred Heart

ANNICE CALLAHAN, RSCJ

In a long process of
past
present
Future
the Incarnation reveals itself
in the birth of a child born for us all.

Shadows are shattered
The world is aflame
A light shines in the darkness
calling us forth from our limited past
into a future of together-belief

A mother said, “Let it be,”
and God took flesh in our waiting world.
A child is born to us
and peace prevails.

Walk,
wander towards the light
to see
and to rejoice.

Look then,
and go to be a light for others.

Watch,
Wait,
Worship at his feet;
the child born to us
the son given to us.

Wait,
Let yourself be born,
Then grow and be the joy

That gives birth to life
In others’ hearts

Watch,
and touch the gift.
Then reach out
to share the gift you are
with those in need of you!

SONG: O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

“What type of conversion needs to happen inside of us to be able to say honestly the words of Elizabeth to Mary, ‘Blessed is she who believed that the Lord’s promise would be fulfilled?’ It is not too strong to say that we need to be women of hope to live our vocation as Religious of the Sacred Heart.”

Excerpt from the Letter of Barbara Dawson, RSCJ
on the Feast of the Sacred Heart

SONG: HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING (WHERE BE BORN IN ME WAS)

“When I am overwhelmed either by the state of the world or sometimes by the challenges of how to go forward as the Society, I have learned that it helps to stop, to ponder and pray, and to analyze what is real and what is not, and then to look for small, sometimes radical steps that lead me or us forward.

“For me, the most important way into hope is to remember that this is God’s project.”

Excerpt from the Letter of Barbara Dawson, RSCJ
on the Feast of the Sacred Heart

SONG: SILENT NIGHT

Sharing of the gifts of heart we have brought to this night in the bookmark – wishes, prayers and poems

Followed by celebratory sharing of Christmas Gôûter