

## THE LEGENDS OF CHRISTMAS

Our seeds and how they grew.

### FAITH

Flute duet, “In the Bleak Midwinter” – 4<sup>th</sup> verse  
 What can I give Him, poor as I am?  
 If I were a shepherd, I would give Him a lamb.  
 If I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
 Yet what I can I give Him—Give my Heart.

#### “The Poinsettia Legend”

It was Christmas Eve in Monterrey, Mexico. Maria was a little girl with big, solemn, dark eyes. She passed the Plaza with its gay music and it seemed like a fairyland. From every direction people were hurrying with their gifts. Many were going to the church and the chimes were beginning to ring clear and sweet.

Someone called to her and she saw her friend Anita carrying a basket filled with gay paper flowers, and Dolores with a crimson candle.

“Aren’t you coming to the cathedral, Maria?” They asked. Maria answered sadly, “I have no gift.” “Think hard,” they urged her, “and you will think of something that will please the Christ Child.” And Maria remembered her little pottery cup, brilliantly painted in rose and blue. Happily she ran to join her friends, but as she ran out of her hut, she stumbled and dropped the cup. Now she had nothing to take for the Christ Child. Sadly she told her friends to go on without her.

But her friends told her, “Have faith, Maria, and come with us. We will surely find something along the way. Even the humblest gift given with love is precious in His sight.”

Just before entering the cathedral, Maria was in despair because she still had nothing to give the Christ Child. Then she spied a simple plant blooming beside the road and picked it. When she knelt before the altar, she placed the simple plant before the crib and murmured, “With all my love, dear Christ Child.”

As she turned to go, she stopped in amazement. The dry stalks were turning green and the small bloom grew into a beautiful red flower. Reverently, all the people knelt when they saw the miracle of the flower. The humble offering that was given by a little child had been transformed into the Flor de la Noche Buena as it is called in Mexico, or Flower of the Nativity—The Poinsettia.

Christmas Facts and Fancies by Alfred Carl Hottes

LOVE

Flute duet, "Love Came Down at Christmas" – 1<sup>st</sup> verse  
 Love Came Down at Christmas,  
 Love all lovely, Love Divine;  
 Love was born at Christmas,  
 Star and angels gave the sign.

"The Storke" – a Christmas Ballad from the flyleaf of an Edward VI prayer book, 1549.

The Storke she rose on Christmas Eve  
 And sayed unto her broode,  
 I now must fare to Bethlehem  
 To view the Sonne of God.

She gave to eche his dole of mete,  
 She stowed them fayrlie in,  
 And faire she flew and faste she flew,  
 And came to Bethlehem.

Now where is He of David's line?  
 She asked at House and Halle,  
 He is not here, they spake hardlye,  
 But in the maungier stalle.

She found Him in the maungier stalle  
 With that most Hoyle Mayde.  
 The gentyle Storke she wept to see  
 The Lord so rudelye layde.

Then from her panntyng brest she plucked  
 The fethers whyte and warm;  
 She strawed them in the maungier bed  
 To keep the Lord from harm.

Now blessed bee the gentyle Storke,  
 Forever more quothe Hee,  
 For that she saw My sadde estate,  
 And showed Pytye.

Full welcome shall she ever bee  
 In hamlet and in halle,  
 And called henceforth the blessed Byrd  
 And friend of babyes all.

The Book of Christmas by Marguerite Ickis

PURITY

Flute duet, "As With Gladness Men of Old" – 3<sup>rd</sup> verse

As they offered gifts most rare,  
 At that manger rude and bare,  
 So may we with holy joy, pure,  
 And free from sin's alloy,  
 All our costliest treasures bring,  
 Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.

"Legends of Christmas"

On Christmas Eve while hamlets sleep,  
 The wild bees wake and sing.  
 Above the frosty field they sweep,  
 To praise the newborn King.  
 But none except the pure of heart,  
 With insight where to go,  
 But none except the pure of heart  
 may know.

On Christmas, at the quiet hours,  
 The valley and the hill,  
 Turn blue with hosts of starry flowers,  
 That out of heaven spill.  
 But none except the pure of heart,  
 With eyes of clarity,  
 But none except the pure of heart  
 may see.

On Christmas Eve at twelve o'clock,  
 The cattle kneel to pray,  
 And lamb and ox and crowing cock,  
 Have human words to say.  
 But none except the pure of heart,  
 Who have an inner ear,  
 But none except the pure of heart  
 may hear.

Christmas Bells are Ringing by Sara and John E. Brewton

## JUSTICE

Flute duet, “Hail to the Lord’s Anointed” – 3<sup>rd</sup> verse

He shall come down like showers,  
Upon the fruitful earth.  
Love, joy and hope, like flowers  
Spring in his path to birth.  
Before him, on the mountains  
Shall Peace, the herald, go  
And righteousness, in fountains,  
From hill to valley flow.

“The Animals in the Stable”

The Horse, the Ox, the Mule and the Goat stood near the manger in which Mary laid her Babe. She gathered the hay from the corners of the stable to make a comfortable bed for the Infant Jesus. When the selfish Horse saw his food being used for bedding, he was greatly displeased. As soon as Mary deposited her handfuls of hay, he ate them until the Christ Child was almost lying on the bare boards. Finally, Mary said, “You never-satisfied Horse, you and all your progeny will always be hungry and you will forevermore serve and help mankind as he goes about his daily tasks.”

The Ox heard Mary’s words and picked up a huge mouthful of hay which he deposited in the manger and blew his warm breath upon the Christ Child. He leaned his big head toward Mary and whispered that the Cow had expected to come but she asked to be excused because she also had become a mother that day and desired to present the Calf to the Babe in good time. Mary blessed the good creature and said, “You, the patient Ox, and she, the willing Cow, for your unselfishness shall forevermore enjoy your food so much that you will chew it again and again, and tell the Cow she will have a Calf each year.”

The Mule laughed loud over the words of Mary and she asked, “Why are you laughing?” The Mule answered, “I was amused that the Cow was to calf each year.” To which Mary said, “Because you ridiculed the Cow and her baby Calf, you shall never, never know the joy of having young of your own.”

One would have thought that the goat would have learned a good lesson; but no – the Goat bleated in the Christ Child’s ears and gave Him no chance to sleep. Finally he gave such a shrill cry that he frightened the Mother and Child. “From this hour,” Mary calmly said, “your tremulous, pitiful laugh will be irritating to people. Your milk will be insipid and men can use it only for making cheese.”

So this explains why the Horse is a servant of Man, why the Cow chews her cud, why the Mule is sterile, and why the Goat’s voice is so hideous.

Christmas Facts and Fancies by Alfred Carl Hottes

## TRUTH

Flute duet, "Infant Holy" – 2<sup>nd</sup> verse

Flocks were sleeping; shepherds keeping vigil 'til the morning new.  
Saw the glory, heard the story; tidings of a gospel true.  
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:  
Christ the Babe was born for you!

"Superstitions and Old Wives Tales"

There is a Scottish belief that to be born on Christmas is to have the power of "second sight", to see spirits and even to command them.

The French peasants believe that babies born on Christmas have the gift of Prophecy. Daughters especially will be wise, witty, and virtuous.

In ancient Swabia girls formed a circle and let loose a blindfolded goose among them. The girl to whom it went first would be the first bride.

According to the Irish Monthly, the maidens would take four onions, placing one in each corner of her room. Each one was given the name of a man of her acquaintance. The one that would first throw out a shoot before January 6 would be her future husband.

To accept a bunch of edelweiss at Christmas in Switzerland is to also accept the man who proffers it.

According to legend, in honor of the Christ Child, bees hum a carol, and in England they place a spray of holly on the hive to wish them a Merry Christmas.

In Spain, everyone is advised to treat cows very kindly because it is believed that cattle breathed upon the Christ Child to keep Him warm.

At the conclusion of Midnight Mass in the Tyrollean Alps, the congregation often breaks into song, some whistling like birds so that God's choristers may not be forgotten.

In the Netherlands, it is thought that nothing sown on Christmas Day will perish, even though the seed be sown in the snow.

In England, it is said that bread baked on Christmas will never become moldy.

In Scandinavia, some families place all their shoes together as this will cause them to live in harmony throughout the year.

In some sections of Europe, ashes must never be thrown out for fear they will be thrown into the Savior's face.

There is a story in Poland that Jacob's ladder is brought back to earth on Christmas Eve and that the angels ascend and descend bringing luck, peace and goodwill to the earth. Only saints have claimed to be able to see this ladder.

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