West Wagga Wagga Catholic Parish Ashmont, Collingullie, Glenfield, Lloyd, San Isidore

The West Wagga Wag

Issue 142 December 2014

Coming Events

Solemnity Mary's Immaculate Conception Mon 8 Prayer Vigils for Peace Each Thurs Solemn Anniversary of **Dedication of Holy Trinity**Tues16 Christmas Novena begins Wed17 Bethlehem Set Up Wed17 **2nd Rite of Penance** Fri 19 Come to Bethlehem Mon22-Wed **Christmas Vigil Mass** Wed 24 Bethlehem-Pack Up Fri 26 Sun 28 **Holy Family** Mary, Mother of God Jan 1

Do I pray for my enemies? Do
I pray for those who do not
not love me? 'If we say' yes', I
will say, 'Go on, pray more, you
are on the right path! If the
answer is' no ', the Lord says:'
Poor thing. You too are an
enemy of others!

Pope Francis

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Wag Contacts

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The date for submissions for the next Wag is: Sunday December 28th.

African Community Honours Refugee Committee

On Saturday 29 November WAFRICA, Wagga's African community organization held a wonderful Community Achievement Awards Night at the Commercial Club. This event was arranged to celebrate and promote the benefits of diversity and social cohesion in the community.

The happy evening included a delicious meal and performances by talented local African musicians. Ten Wagga organizations and ten individuals were



presented with Recognition Awards for their contribution to the community. The West Wagga San Isidore Refugee Committee received the Outstanding Contribution Award for an organization. Greg Lowe from Centacare received the Outstanding Contribution Award for an individual. Others recognised included Bleinda Crain and Deirdre Moulden from St Vincent de Paul Society.

It was wonderful to see how Wagga's African community has flourished since the first refugee arrivals at San Isidore in 1991, and how many people in the community have worked together to support them. Some have come as refugees, with lives disrupted by war, brought to Australia by our Government's Humanitarian Settlement Programme, others have come as professional migrants, bringing needed skills and qualifications to our region. Many African countries are represented ... Sudan, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Burundi, Congo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Liberia ... bringing a rich diversity of culture.



The award to the West Wagga San Isidore Refugee Committee is a recognition of all the support given within the West Wagga Parish. The wonderful Soirees Musicale which raised funds to reunite many African families torn apart by war, the generous response to appeals for household goods, the friendly welcome to African families living in Ashmont, and so much more. We have the unwavering support of our Parish, Fr Gerard, and of our Bishop Gerard. Our hearts have been touched by this generous recognition of our efforts.

Peggy Adamson

Christmas Mass Times

Fri Dec 19 Reconciliation Ho.T 2nd Rite of Reconciliation 7.30pm

Saturday Dec 22 Ho.T Reconciliation 11am-12 noon Mon Dec 24 Christmas Vigil 6.45pm Ho. T School Hall

Tues Dec 25 Christmas Day
8am San Isidore Church
9am Holy Trinity Church,
9.30am St Michael's Collingullie
10.30am Home of Compassion
[No evening Mass Christmas Day]

<u>Come to</u> Bethlehem

Volunteers Needed! Set Up: Dec 17-19, 9am Nightly 7.30 -10pm



Display Open Monday ~ Dec 22, 8-9.30pm Tuesday ~ De c 23, 8-9.30pm Wednesday ~ Dec 24, 8-9.30pm

Come and make a difference, contribute! Pack up: Fri Dec 26, 8.30am

pastor's page

During advent we use the antiphon, 'Come Lord Jesus, and do not delay'. What do we mean by come Lord Jesus? This is not some type of command which we give to the Son of God. For we as human beings, can only seek him, beseech him to come to us and fill us with his love. To take us to himself, and into himself.

Notice that we are asking Jesus to come to us, for it is impossible for us to go to him without his grace. It is God who invites us. It is Jesus who came to us first. It is Jesus who called to us initially. It is we who hearing that call respond, and in like way we call back to him, 'Come!' We need only correspond. When we do call on him, as in prayer and sacrament; he comes to us. Indeed, he makes his home within us.

'Do not delay!' When we truly understand who Jesus is, when we realise his love for us, when we can comprehend all that he wants to do for us and to give to us; we naturally become impatient. For goodness is that which attracts, calls to the depths of our heart, and for which we long. Happiness, is the conscious possession of the desired good. To be fully aware, to acknowledge, to realise that we possess in Christ, the greatest and ultimate good, we will feel a profound longing for Beatitude; the happy vision of God face to face.

God doesn't ask much of us. He knows we cannot travel towards him in heaven without his glory. We cannot enter into a spiritual Communion with him, without him. In the penitential rite of Mass, we pause to think about our sins and how they have offended God and our neighbour. We ask God to forgive us. The priest says, 'Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations into the peace of God's Kingdom:' to which we respond, 'Lord, have mercy.'

This thought brings to mind immediately the child of Bethlehem who comes to us at Christmas. He is the Prince of peace, he is the King of Kings, he is the Lord of lords and he is the God of Gods.

The priest continues; 'You come in

word and in sacrament to strengthen us and make us holy'; we say, 'Christ, have mercy' because God alone can free us from our weaknesses. Here the Church is reminding us that to come to Jesus we need to know his word in the Gospel and the Grace in the sacraments which strengthen us and make us holy. The Sunday Mass is the ordinary means by which this statement is fulfilled. Fortunately, in Australia we are always free to talk to Jesus and to go to him through the sacraments of the Church. This is not so for many millions of people around the world. It is something for which we ought to be daily grateful.



Finally, the priest says 'You will come again in glory with salvation for your people'; to which we respond, 'Lord, have mercy.' In the weeks leading up to Advent, we heard in the Mass readings, all that will transpire before Jesus Christ comes in glory with the angels and the saints. Christ, his Father and the Holy Spirit will judge the world and bring it to perfection. Eventually, at God's command there will be a new heavens and a new earth in which all who follow Christ will rejoice in profound happiness.

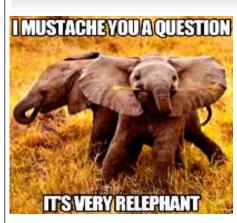
Again in the Mass we pray, 'Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.' This is meant to be a regular reminder to all of us of the threefold *adventus* of Christ; who truly came to us as an infant, died as a courageous man, rose as a loving God and will come again in glory. We profess in the Creed that he will come on the last day in glory with the angels to bring to completion the earth and the fullness of its purpose. All people are invited to

his heavenly kingdom. Indeed, God longs for us to be with him in heavenly joy.

It is St Bernard who reminds us of the threefold coming of Jesus Christ who loves us. He wrote; 'we have come to know a threefold coming of the Lord. The third coming takes place between the other two. They are clearly manifest, but the third is not. In the first coming the Lord was seen on earth and lived among men in the days when, as he himself bears witness, they saw him and hated him. It is last coming "all flesh shall see the salvation of our God', and 'they shall look on him who may have pierced." The other coming is hidden. In it, only the chosen see Christ within themselves and their souls are saved. In brief, his first coming was in the flesh and in weakness, this intermediary coming is in the spirit and in power, the last coming will be in glory and majesty. This intermediary coming is like a road leading from the first to the last coming. In the first coming Christ was our redemption, in the last he will appear as our life, in this intermediary coming he is our rest and our consolation. Just as Christ comes to us at Bethlehem; daily comes to us anew through the Gospel and the sacraments; and will come again in glory to bring us peace and joy; we are given the opportunity daily to be Christlike. We do this by going out in charity towards others often and throughout the day; by taking Christ's gospel to those who do not know the profound love that Christ has for them; by inviting others to the sacraments and helping them to receive them through transport, through encouragement, by caring for their salvation. And only in this life are we given the opportunity to be servants of the Lord and benefactors through charity. In this way, when Christ comes in glory he will say to us 'well done good and faithful servant, for what you did to the least of my brothers and sisters you did on to me.'

Fr Gerard

December Jokes



18 things Attorneys at Law actually said to witnesses while in court.

Attorney: Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?

Witness: Did you actually pass the bar exam?

Attorney: The youngest son, the twenty-year-old, how old was he? Witness: Uh, he's twenty.

Attorney: Were you present when your picture was taken? Witness: Are you for real?

Attorney: She had three children, right?

Witness: Yes.

Attorney: How many were boys?

Witness: None.

Attorney: Were there any girls? Witness: Your honor, I think I need a different attorney. Can I get a new attorney?

Attorney: How was your first marriage terminated?

Witness: By death.

Attorney: And by whose death was

it terminated?

Witness: Now whose death do you suppose terminated it?

Attorney: Can you describe the individual?

Witness: He was about medium height and had a beard.

Attorney: Was this a male or a

female?

Witness: Guess.

Attorney: ALL your responses MUST be oral, OK? What school

did you go to? Witness: Oral.

Attorney: Doctor, how many of your autopsies have you performed on dead people?

Witness: All my autopsies are performed on dead people. Would you like to rephrase that?

Attorney: Do you recall the time you examined the body?

Winess: The autopsy started around 8.30 pm

Attorney: And Mr Denton was dead at the time?

Winess: No, he was sitting on the table wondering why I was doing an autopsy on him!

Attorney: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse? Witness: No. Attorney: Did you check for blood

pressure? Witness: No.

Attorney: So, then is it possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy? Witness: No. Attorney: How can you be so sure, Doctor?

Witness: Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.

Attorney: I see, but could the patient have still been alive, nevertheless? Witness: Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law

What school subject do snakes love best? Hisssss-story

Those wonderful Church Bulletins are Back! These actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced at church services.

- —Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.
- —Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.
- —Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.
- —For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

- —Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.
- —Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.
- —A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.
- —At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.
- —Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.
- —Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered..
- —The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.
- —Pot-luck supper Sunday at 5 PM prayer & medication to follow.
- —Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.
- —The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 PM. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.
- —Don't let worry kill you off let the Church help.
- —Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the Church hall. Please use large double door at the side entrance.



THE WOODPECKER
MIGHT HAVE TO GO

The Christmas Truce - December 24, 1914

by David G. Stratman; From his book We Can Change the World

It was December 24, 1914, only 5 months into World War I, German, British, and French soldiers, already sick and tired of the senseless killing, disobeyed their superiors and fraternized with "the enemy" along two-thirds of the Western Front (a crime punishable by death in times of war). German troops held Christmas trees up out of the trenches with signs, "Merry Christmas."

"You no shoot, we no shoot."
Thousands of troops streamed across a no-man's land strewn with rotting corpses. They sang
Christmas carols, exchanged photographs of loved ones back home, shared rations, played football, even roasted some pigs. Soldiers embraced men they had been trying to kill a few short hours before. They agreed to warn each other if the top brass forced them to fire their weapons, and to aim high.

A shudder ran through the high command on either side. Here was disaster in the making: soldiers declaring their brotherhood with each other and refusing to fight. Generals on both sides declared this spontaneous peacemaking to be treasonous and subject to court martial. By March 1915 the fraternization movement had been eradicated and the killing machine

put back in full operation. By the time of the armistice in 1918, fifteen million would be slaughtered.

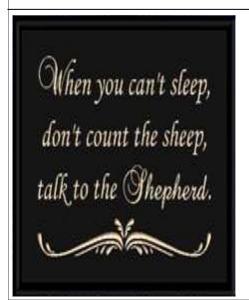


Not many people have heard the story of the Christmas Truce. On Christmas Day, 1988, a story in the Boston Globe mentioned that a local FM radio host played "Christmas in the Trenches," a ballad about the Christmas Truce, several times and was startled by the effect. The song became the most requested recording during the holidays in Boston on several FM stations. "Even more startling than the number of requests I get is the

reaction to the ballad afterward by callers who hadn't heard it before," said the radio host. "They telephone me deeply moved, sometimes in tears, asking, 'What the heck did I just hear?' "

You can probably guess why the callers were in tears. The Christmas Truce story goes against most of what we have been taught about people. It gives us a glimpse of the world as we wish it could be and says, "This really happened once." It reminds us of those thoughts we keep hidden away, out of range of the TV and newspaper stories that tell us how trivial and mean human life is. It is like hearing that our deepest wishes really are true: the world really could be different.

For an engaging movie based on this inspirational Christmas story: see Joyeux Noel (2005); http:// www.imdb.com/title/tt0424205/ Available on YouTube: https:// www.youtube.com/watch? v=X1ClC7SllRw For an article in a leading U.K. newspaper on one of the last survivors of the Christmas Truce: http://www.theguardian.com/ uk/2004/dec/19/ christmas.lornamartin For more on the history of the Christmas Truce: http:// history1900s.about.com/od/1910s/a/ christmastruce.htm



Only JESUS

can turn ...

A mess into a message;
A test into a testimony;
A trial into a triumph;
A victim into a victory.
He is worthy to be
PRAISED!:)



FAN OF ONLINE BANKING? MAY I RECOMMEND LAYING UP ALL YOUR ASSETS IN THE CLOUP?

Christmas in the Trenches - The Song



This song is based on a true story (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Christmas truce) from the front lines of World War I that I've heard many times. Ian Calhoun, a Scot, was the commanding officer of the British forces involved in the story. He was subsequently court-

martialled for 'consorting with the enemy' and sentenced to death. Only King George V spared him from that fate. --John McCutcheon

My name is Francis Toliver, I come from Liverpool.

Two years ago the war was waiting for me after school.

To Belgium and to Flanders, to Germany to here,

I fought for King and country I love dear.

'Twas Christmas in the trenches, where the frost so bitter hung. The frozen fields of France were still, no Christmas song was sung. Our families back in England were toasting us that day,

Their brave and glorious lads so far away.

I was lying with my messmate on the cold and rocky ground, When across the lines of battle came a most peculiar sound. Says I, "Now listen up, me boys!" each soldier strained to hear, As one young German voice sang out so clear.

"He's singing bloody well, you

know!" my partner says to me. Soon, one by one, each German voice joined in harmony. The cannons rested silent, the gas clouds rolled no more, As Christmas brought us respite from the war.

As soon as they were finished and a reverent pause was spent, "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" struck up some lads from Kent. The next they sang was "Stille Nacht," "'Tis 'Silent Night," says I, And in two tongues one song filled up that sky.

"There's someone coming towards us!" the front line sentry cried. All sights were fixed on one lone figure trudging from their side. His truce flag, like a Christmas star, shone on that plain so bright, As he bravely strode unarmed into the night.

Then one by one on either side walked into No Man's Land, With neither gun nor bayonet we met there hand to hand. We shared some secret brandy and

wished each other well, And in a flare lit soccer game we gave 'em hell.

We traded chocolates, cigarettes, and photographs from home. These sons and fathers far away from families of their own. Young Sanders played his squeezebox and they had a violin, This curious and unlikely band of men.

Soon daylight stole upon us and France was France once more. With sad farewells we each began to settle back to war. But the question haunted every heart that lived that wondrous night:

"Whose family have I fixed within

'Twas Christmas in the trenches where the frost so bitter hung. The frozen fields of France were warmed as songs of peace were sung.

For the walls they'd kept between us to exact the work of war,

Had been crumbled and were gone

forevermore.

my sights?"

My name is Francis Toliver, in Liverpool I dwell, Each Christmas come since World War I, I've learned its lessons well.

That the ones who call the shots won't be among the dead and lame,

And on each end of the rifle we're the same.

To listen to this inspirational Christmas story in song: www.personalgrowthcourses.net/ audio/ christmas truce in the trenches Words & Music by John McCutcheon, c. 1984. Or on YouTube; www.youtube.com/ watch?v=sJi41RWaTCs



ANYWAY

(Blessed Teresa of Calcutta had the following words enlarged, framed and hung in the front lobby of her orphanage. The original wording comes from the "Paradoxical

Commandments" written in 1968 by Kent Keith')

People are unreasonable, illogical, self-centered ...love them <u>anyway</u>. If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives

...do good anyway. If you are successful, you win false friends and true enemies ...be successful anyway. The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow ...do good anyway.

Christmas Story: The White Envelope

By Nancy W. Gavin

It's just a small, white envelope stuck among the branches of our Christmas tree. No name, no identification, no inscription. It has peeked through the branches of our tree for the past ten years.

It all began because my husband Mike hated Christmas. Oh, not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspects of it overspending and the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and the dusting powder for Grandma – the gifts given in desperation because you couldn't think of anything else.

Knowing he felt this way, I decided one year to bypass the usual shirts, sweaters, ties and so forth. I reached for something special just for Mike. The inspiration came in an unusual way.

Our son Kevin, who was 12 that year, was on the wrestling team at the school he attended. Shortly before Christmas, there was a nonleague match against a team sponsored by an inner-city church. These youngsters, dressed in sneakers so ragged that shoestrings seemed to be the only thing holding them together, presented a sharp contrast to our boys in their spiffy blue and gold uniforms and sparkling new wrestling shoes.

As the match began, I was alarmed



to see that the other team was wrestling without headgear, a kind of light helmet designed to protect a wrestler's ears. It was a luxury the ragtag team obviously could not afford.

Well, we ended up walloping them. We took every weight class. Mike, seated beside me, shook his head sadly, "I wish just one of them could have won," he said. "They have a lot of potential, but losing like this could take the heart right out of them." Mike loved kids - all kids. He so enjoyed coaching little league football, baseball and lacrosse. That's when the idea for his present came.

That afternoon, I went to a local sporting goods store and bought an assortment of wrestling headgear and shoes, and sent them anonymously to the inner-city church. On Christmas Eve, I placed a small, white envelope on the tree, the note inside telling Mike what I had done, and that this was his gift from me.

Mike's smile was the brightest thing about Christmas that year. And that same bright smile lit up succeeding years. For each Christmas, I

followed the tradition – one year sending a group of mentally handicapped youngsters to a hockey game, another year a check to a pair of elderly brothers whose home had burned to the ground the week before Christmas, and

on and on.

The white envelope became the highlight of our Christmas. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning, and our children – ignoring their new toys – would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents. As the children grew, the toys gave way to more practical presents, but the small, white envelope never lost its allure.

The story doesn't end there. You see, we lost Mike last year due to dreaded cancer. When Christmas rolled around, I was still so wrapped in grief that I barely got the tree up. But Christmas Eve found me placing an envelope on the tree. And the next morning, I found it was magically joined by three more. Unbeknownst to the others, each of our three children had for the first time placed a white envelope on the tree for their dad. The tradition has grown and someday will expand even further with our grandchildren standing to take down that special envelope.

Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit will always be with us.

Pope Francis on Marriage and Family, 2014

July 26 - Angelus:

"How precious is the family as the privileged place for transmitting the faith!

July 27, Interview on Radio Catedral:

"The family is important, and it is necessary for the survival of humanity."

July 28, Address to the World Youth Day Volunteers:

"Today, there are those who say

that marriage is out of fashion.

...They say that it is not worth making a life-long commitment, making a definitive decision, 'for ever', ... I ask you, instead, to be revolutionaries, I ask you to swim against the tide; yes, I am asking you to rebel against this culture that sees everything as temporary and that ultimately believes you are incapable of responsibility, that believes you are incapable of true love."

November 17 - International & Interreligious gathering on "The Complementarity of Man and Woman in Marriage":

"Children have a right to grow up in a family with a father and a mother capable of creating a suitable environment for the child's development and emotional maturity. ... the contribution of marriage to society is indispensable; ... it transcends the feelings and momentary needs of the couple.

Expensive Golden Paper on an Empty Shoe Box

Once upon a time, there was a man who worked very hard just to keep food on the table for his family. This particular year a few days before Christmas, he punished his little five-year-old daughter after learning that she had used up the family's only roll of expensive gold wrapping paper.

As money was tight, he became even more upset when on Christmas Eve he saw that the child had used all of the expensive gold paper to decorate one shoebox she had put under the Christmas tree. He also was concerned about where she had gotten money to buy what was in the shoebox.

Nevertheless, the next morning the little girl, filled with excitement, brought the gift box to her father and said, "This is for you, Daddy!"

As he opened the box, the father was embarrassed by his earlier



overreaction, now regretting how he had punished her.

But when he opened the shoebox, he found it was empty and again his anger flared. "Don't you know, young lady," he said harshly, "when you give someone a present, there's supposed to be something inside the package!"

The little girl looked up at him with sad tears rolling from her eyes and whispered: "Daddy, it's not empty. I blew kisses into it until it was all full."

The father was crushed. He fell on his knees and put his arms around his precious little girl. He begged her to forgive him for his unnecessary anger.

An accident took the life of the child only a short time later. It is told that the father kept this little gold box by his bed for all the years of his life. Whenever he was discouraged or faced difficult problems, he would open the box, take out an imaginary kiss, and remember the love of this beautiful child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us has been given an invisible golden box filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children, family, friends and God. There is no more precious possession anyone could hold.

Socrates' Triple Filter Test

In ancient Greece, Socrates was reputed to hold knowledge in high esteem. One day an acquaintance met the great philosopher and said, "Socrates, do you know what I just heard about your friend?" "Hold on a minute," Socrates replied. "Before telling me anything I'd like you to pass a test. It's called the Triple Filter Test."

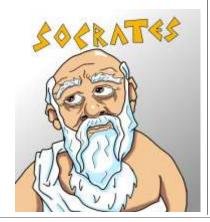
"Triple filter?"

"That's right," Socrates continued. "Before you talk to me about my friend, it might be a good idea to take a moment and filter what you're going to say. The first filter is **Truth**. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?" "No," the man said, "actually I just heard about it and..." "All right," said Socrates. "So you don't really know if it's true or not. Now let's try the second filter, the filter of Goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about my friend something good?" "No, on the contrary..."

"So," Socrates continued,
"you want to tell me
something bad about him, but
you're not certain it's true.
You may still pass the test
though, because there's one
filter left: the filter of
Usefulness. Is what you
want to tell me about my
friend going to be useful to
me?"
"No not really."

"No, not really."

"Well," concluded Socrates,
"if what you want to tell me is
neither true nor good nor
even useful, why tell it to me
at all?"



You say, God says...

You Say God Says

I can't figure it out.

I will direct your steps - Proverbs 3:5-6

I'm too tired.

I will give you rest - Matthew 11:28

It's impossible.

All things are possible

Nobody loves

I love you

- Luke 18:27

me.

- John 3:16

I'm not smart enough.

I will give you wisdom - 1 Corinthians 1:30

I can't go on.

My grace is sufficient

т 24

- 2 Corinthians 12:9

I can't manage.

I will supply all your

- Philippians 4:19

I'm afraid.

I have not given you

fear

- 2Timothy 1:7

I feel all alone.

I will never leave you - Hebrews 13:5

It's not worth it.

It will be - Rom 8:28

The West Wagga Wag

West Wagga Parish



Serving: Ashmont, Collingullie, Glenfield, Lloyd, and San Isidore



A voice calling in the wilderness, "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him." Mark 1:3



Jesus is Coming! Colour the manger scene, then each day color one star beginning with number one. (You could also use star stickers instead of colouring the stars.)



