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Of Christmas

Everywhere, There Is Fellowship, With Faith, Feasting, Fun

Enters Now

Christmas Greeting Section

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"Oh Come, All Ye Faithful, Joyful and Triumphant" **Smiling Spirit**



Telling Story Of Nativity

"And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. "And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger." Luke 2:15-16.

As even little children know, the words of St. Luke tell the story of the Miracle in a manger. Shepherds watching in the fields, herald angels singing—these things Christians can picture today because of St. Luke, the physician who became Christ's disciple.

Traditionally, St. Luke did still more to preserve the spiritual treasures of the Christmas story. He literally pictured

According to this tradition, St. Luke was an iconographer physician, and as such he created the first image of the Madonna, a painting that became the guide for many icons in later centuries. As legend has it, St. Luke's icon of the Madonna and his

other paintings were the forerunners of the style of artistic

expression known as Byzantine art. Oppressed and suppressed in some eras, Byzantine reli-

rious art has so original and distinctive a style that it reurned again and again, to thrive throughout 12 centuries. Today, it is enjoying a rebirth, through the efforts of dedicated iconographers. Iconoclastic Age had been

Showing Images

Iconography is a system for representing Christian subjects by means of pictures or images. Originally, the term meant "portrayal," and applied especially to panels portraying the figure of Christ, the Madonna, a saint or some scene from the Bible, according to the Grolier Book of Art.

In the Greek Orthodox Church icon technically means a movable religious painting. However, iconography often refers, more broadly, to wall paintings and mosaics as well as portable

Going Iconoclastic

The art of the Byzantine or Eastern Roman — empire first flourished under the rule of Justinian, in the 6th century A.D.

But trouble loomed ahead When Emperor Leo III came to power, he brought with him a deep hatred of all mages, especially icons, say the editors of the Encyclo-

pedia Americana.
As an Iconoclast—hater of icons - Leo forbade the creation of religious figures and images, and the Iconoclastic

Age began in 726. Paintings on church walls were whitewashed, ivories and mosaics removed, countless works of art destroyed

Comics Get Help

When icons returned to favor in the 9th century, the Of Today The ancient Byzantine art of iconography is a

contemporary art, too, and very much a part of today. So declares John Papaspiliopoulos, leading icon-ographer and owner-cre-

and flattening of perspective are typical.

centuries past, Mr. Papas-

He makes extensive use of gold leaf, another traditional element in Byzanpure Byzantine style.

Symbolism Rules

series of drawings.

Surviving wars, crusades and conquests, Byzantine art flourished till the middle of the 15th century.

responsible for the loss of

much religious art — but it

Secular art gained by it, as artists of the monastic

schools began to work under

the patronage of the nobility.

owe something to the Icono-

clasts. The monastic artists

who turned to secular work

brought with them the By-

zantine method of telling a

story through a continuous

Even modern comic strips

had some benefits.

artists influenced others, but were rarely influenced by others. Though the early Renaissance brought realism. the colorful, decorative and formal qualities of the Byzantine style remained virtually unchanged.

In Byzantine art, highly stylized figures appear, with little or no three-dimensional effect. Gold backgrounds suggest almost no sense of space.

Familiar scenes such as the Nativity show painted figures that are allegorical, mystical, symbolic but never realistic in color or

form. For believers of the Greek Orthodox faith and other Eastern churches, the symbolic nature of Byzantine art

Iconography? It's Part

ator of the Byzantine Icons Studio, New York. He points out that the turn of the century Art Nouveau technique, which has influenced much contemporary art, is related to Byzantine religious art. A non-realistic use of color

As an iconographer, Mr. Papaspiliopoulos leads the development of a "Byzantine art of the 20th cen-

Assisted by the artists of his studio, he has decorated some 30 churches in the United States. In his native Greece, he has dec-orated 19 Athens churches

Like Byzantine artists of piliopoulos works with traditionally authentic egg tempera. He makes his own tempera from egg, vinegar and ammonia. To this emulsion, coloring agents are added.

tine art. His work shows his own personal touch but always follows the

has a deep religious significance. Considered solely as an art

form, the Byzantine technique is renowned for its beauty and decorative character. In its symbolic ap-Over the years, Byzantine proach, this ancient art is closer to the art of today than the representational works of more recent cen-

There's Inspiration

As in all forms of art, the story of the Nativity has been a source of inspiration to iconographers through the

The Madonna and Child have long been favorite subjects for icons, while Byzan-tine triptychs often showed Christ, Mary His Mother and John the Baptist.

Other early iconographers urned to St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra, as a subject worthy of attention. The good bishop is known in legend as the forefather of Santa Claus.



Holiday Blends **Many Customs**

"Anybody found feasting or observing Christmas day in any way shall pay a fine of five shillings."

And so, throughout New England Pilgrim settlers had to treat Christmas as just another working day. Governor Bradford noted that "no all day" on cember 25, 1620, say the editors of Encyclopedia Americana.

Today, in the United States and Canada, Christmas celebrations are a colorful blend of customs from many lands. The main features of the holiday festivities are much the same everywhere—Santa Claus, Christmas trees, gifts, greetings, feasting, family visits, carol singing.

Each of these customs has its own history, and for the student of holiday lore and legend, the fascination lies in the variety of traditions brought by settlers from other lands and assimilated into what is now a truly American, or truly Canadian Christmas.

Displaying Tree

The custom of the Community Christmas Tree began in the early 1900's with the people of Pasadena, Calif., who decorated a tall evergreen on Mount Wilson

with lights and tinsel. Madison Square in New York and the Common in Boston were the scene of trees set up in 1912. In 1914 Independence Square in Philadelphia had its first holiday tree.

Around each of these trees choirs gathered and sang carols.

The custom of lighting the National Community Christmas Tree in Washington, D.C. began in 1923 when the University of Vermont sent a large tree to President Calvin

Add Special Touch

In Quebec, customs from France lend their special touch to a Canadian Christ-

France gave Canada the "creche," gatherings after midnight Mass with family and friends, savory pork pies

gifts from door to door for the less privileged persons of

the community. After mass on Christmas Eve, the people of Quebec gather at homes of loved ones to participate in a night-long feast called "ré-

Performing Pageant

From Germany came the Nativity pageant, and the first play of this sort in the U.S. was performed at the German Catholic Church of the Holy Trinity in Boston, in 1851. Children dressed as Oriental shepherds offered gifts to the Christ Child at the altar, singing carols at the same time. The gifts were later distributed to the poor of the parish.

Play Delights

A hybrid Spanish-Indian play, called "Los Pastores," introduced by Spanish monks, may still take place in the backyards of San Antonio Tex. at Christmastime With no props, curtains and a cast of amateurs, it yearly delights with its spiritual in-

It runs from Christmas to Candlemas, in homes located in out-of-way places so only the initiated can find it. The object is to prevent the merely curious observer from watching this spritual mira-

Decorating with Cards Can Be Yule Project

When children need a change from the toys on Christmas day, a promising project could be to let them see what they can do with the family greeting cards.

Here are some suggestions from Jeannette Lee, art director for Hallmark.

Tape or staple cards to lengths of ribbon and hang them on walls or doors. Make a Christmas wreath by attaching cards to a circle

of cardboard. "Frame" cards with construction paper.

Decorate a screen with

Sacred Message Lives Anew

YESTERDAY AND TODAY, Byzantine icons tell the Christ-mas story. Like that sacred story, the style of Byzantine art is unchanging through the centuries, as these paintings illus-

BYZANTINE ART of yesteryear appears in the painting (far left), "Virgin and Child Enthroned with Angels." By an unknown Byzantine painter, it is executed in tempera on wood with a gold ground. From the Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Lizzie Bliss, 1931.

NATIVITY SCENE (near left) shows how iconography continues the ancient Byzantine style, with symbolic feeling. The Madonna and Child are central figures, Joseph and a shepherd appear at the left and the manger is shown, with historical accuracy, as a cave in a rocky hillside. This icon is the work of John Papaspiliopoulos of the Byzantine Icons Studio.

PAST AND PRESENT meet as it's by an unknown Russian

ABOUT WISE MEN

Except for the words of St.

Paintings Show

artists turn to a beloved subject, the Madonna and Child. Out of the past comes the painting at top left. In a Byzantine style, painter in tempera on wood and is inscribed in Slavonic. "Our Lady of Kaza." (From the Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Mrs. Henry Morgenthau, 1933). How the Byzantine style continues today is shown in the icon at top right, created in tempera by the contemporary iconographer, John Papaspiliopoulos.

Matthew, legend accounts for the little that is known about the wise men. One of the legends says that the star appeared to them once more, near the end of their lives.

Christmas is: For everyone — for those of Christian faith who celebrate the Day as a holy time of highest importance, and for those of other faiths, who love and observe the Yule-

nity, plans and preparations reach their peak. Every joyous surprise is at the point of revelation. The tree lights go on, the carols ring out, the gaily-wrapped gifts are delivered. With gleeful smiles, the children welcome Santa's bounty, while the grown-ups greet one another, and talk and laugh

and even shed a happy tear or two, rejoicing in the deep and tender meaning of the Christmas spirit.

If there was a bit of hustle — and even some hassle — about the getting-ready process, all is now forgotten in the glow

and glory of Christmas. The quickened pace of modern living seems to make it almost impossible to prepare for the

It's Traditional

Naming Santa

Santa Claus is a tradition — a pleasant one, indeed. And, traditionally, he owes his name to a gift-giver of the past.

St. Nicholas, a fourth century bishop who became the patron saint of children, was noted for his generosity. His Dutch name was "Sinter which gradually Niklass." changed to Santa Claus. Even today, Santa is also known as "St. Nick."

Sending Greetings

Christmas."

By ANNA MANG Christmas is: A time for sharing and surprises, a time for magic and merriment, and a time to say, "Glad greetings and all" Christmas is: The season of song and celebration, the season of little children and love and laughter, and the season of worship and rejoicing. Christmas is: For fellowship and feasting, for family and friends, for home and happiness. But Christmas, too, is for

remembering the stranger within the gates, for cheering the lonely, comforting the sorrowful, befriending the needy.

tide as a holiday dedicated to good will and good cheer.

Best of all, Christmas is: Here! Throughout this commu-

holiday without setting, at times, a somewhat hectic pace. Be that as it may, the glad, true spirit of the season inspires this Christmas planning, and Christmas realities, in all their wonder and warmth, more than make up for the pre-holiday hurry and scurry. Perhaps the most enduring of holiday traditions is that

America.

itself.

tion to all.

of exchanging greetings.

Christmas cards are a rela-

tively new part of a holiday that has been celebrated for

centuries. In fact, this year

marks only the 95th anniver-sary of Christmas cards in

friends and neighbors and wishing them good cheer is

as old as the holiday season

Today brings a special kind f "Christmas card." This

edition of this newspaper

is a community greeting card,

with special greetings from businessmen of the commu-

nity who offer their good

wishes and their apprecia-

The first Christmas tree

was a palm from Egypt. Or

it was a huge tree in a forest.

symbolic of mankind. Or it

was the Paradise Tree of

lore offers many an explana-

tion for the origin of the

Christmas tree, nobody

knows for sure exactly when

and where the first decorated

Though holiday legend and

medieval miracle plays.

Where Tree Grew

But the custom of greeting

The tree may be aluminum instead of spruce or fir. Santa may arrive by helicopter instead of reindeer-drawn sleigh. And the children's gifts will probably reflect the space age and the wonders

of electronics. No matter, However modern the celebration of Christmas may seem to be, its spirit is still old-fashioned, and though customs may appear in contemporary guise, they are still the cherished tradi-tions from the past.

These treasured customs are the heart of Christmas, growing dearer year by year, as memories of "what we did last Christmas" add to every family's own special, traditional way of celebrating Christmas.

"We wish you a merry

And who cares? It's fun to hear the legends of the past, with all their mystery and magic, but the thing that matters most is that the tradition of the tree is here,

adding joy to Christmas.

Britain. In 1966 the Abbey cele-

brated its 900th anniversary,

and thousands of people from

all over the world visited the

church where both common-

ers and royalty have wor-

was on Christmas day

tree appeared.

Grace Greeting Cards hurches

As jubilant bells ring out the good news of Christmas. churches of this community stand as symbols of the true spirit of the season.

Landmarks in the history of Christendom, these churches are the living center of current activities, especially at Christmas, when choral programs, pageants and other special services express holiday joy.

Across the country, and in other lands, soaring steeples and ringing bells beckon worshipers to "Come to Church on Christmas."

Small wonder, then, that churches are a favorite subject for Christmas greeting cards. This year, the 95th anniversary of Christmas cards in the United States, is no exception.

A look into the past shows three well-known churches which were favorite Christmas card features. The Little Church around the Corner and Trinity Church, both in New York City, and West-minster Abbey in London are pictured on cards dated around 1925 and now in the Norcross historical collection.



CHURCHES, LONG a symbol of the Christmas season, have appeared in innumerable ways on Christmas cards. Pictured here is Westminster Abbey, subject of a card from the Norcross Historical Collection.

The oldest of these church buildings is Westminster Abbey, a national shrine and the Mother Church of the Commonwealth of Great

shipped for centuries. In commemoration of the event, Westminster under-went a 10-year program of cleaning and repairs that cost \$1,120,000. that William the Conqueror was crowned at Westminster, and buried there are Newton, Darwin, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, and royal personages such as Queen Elizabeth I and her rival for the throne. Mary Queen of Scots, Rich-

ard II, Henry VII and St. Edward, whose shrine is the most sacred spot in the Abbev. In September 1965, a tablet was added in memory of Winston Churchill.

In Japan

East meets West in giftexchanging customs. Japanese exchange "Oseibo," or year end-gifts, beginning about mid-December

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