

Reflection 3: Christmas is full of traditions.

Un Flambeau, Jeannette, Isabelle (Bring A Torch) - French Carol

This is a traditional French carol from Provence. Torchlight processions on Christmas Eve are a French tradition dating back to the 17th Century. Children dressed as shepherds carry torches or candles as they go to church for Midnight Mass while singing this and other carols along the way, culminating in a reenactment of the Bethlehem stable scene.

Translation, v. 1: Bring a torch, Jeannette, Isabelle, bring a torch, to the cradle run!
It is Jesus, good folk of the village; Christ is born and Mary's calling, Ah! Ah!
Beautiful is the Mother, Ah! Ah! Beautiful is her son!

Translation v. 2: It is wrong when the child is sleeping, it is wrong to talk so loud.
Silence, all as you gather around, lest your noise should waken Jesus, Hush! Hush!
See how fast he slumbers, Hush! Hush! See how fast He sleeps!

Translation v. 3: Softly to the little stable, softly for a moment come; look and see
how charming is Jesus, how He is soft, His cheeks are rosy! Hush! Hush! See
how the Child is sleeping; Hush! Hush! See how He smiles in dreams.

Reflection 4: Christmas is an opportunity to proclaim.

"When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.' So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them." Luke 2:15-18

Go Tell It on the Mountain - African-American Spiritual

This is an African-American spiritual dating back to at least 1865 that has been sung and recorded by many gospel and secular performers. African-American spirituals are often characterized by the enslaved crying out for the Lord's deliverance of their plight. While its lyrics in verses 2 and 4 celebrates the Nativity, verses 1 and 3 are a personal proclamation of the hope in the Christmas child, Messiah.



Redeeming Notes

Pastor Sean Kelly December 24, 2006

"Four Reflections on Christmas"

Reflection 1: Christmas is pensive.

"But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart." Luke 2:19

I Wonder As I Wander - Appalachian Carol, John Jacob Niles

John Jacob Niles, the singer and collector of folk songs, said that he based his "I Wonder As I Wander" on a line or two of haunting music that he heard sung by a young girl in a small North Carolina town. He asked her to sing the few notes over and over, paying her a few pennies each time, until he had jotted it all down in his notebook. So close was the finished song to its Appalachian inspiration that Niles is often cited as arranger of the tune rather than its creator. The melody's minor key, minor intervals and unfinished cadences, as well as the poem's questioning pensiveness, make this one of the most plaintive of carols.

Reflection 2: Christmas is festive.

"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?' We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." Matthew 2:1-2

I saw Three Ships - Irish Carol

The words of this carol were first published in 1666. The wonderfully bouncy tune in 6/8 is thought to be a traditional English melody, although some believe it to have originated in Ireland. (This Irishman chooses to camp with the latter). The three ships were originally meant to represent the three wise men, but later they came to symbolize the Holy Family. No matter the interpretation, it is one of the most delightful and enduring Christmas carols of all time.