

I King Duncan

The Guinness Book of World Records keeps track of some very unusual records. The 1999 edition contains one entry titled “The longest time living in a tree.” It seems a man in Indonesia named Bungkas went up a tree in 1970 and has been there ever since. He lives in a crude tree house he made from the branches and leaves of the trees.

No one knows exactly why he took up residence in a tree, but 29 years later he was still there. Neighbors, friends and family have repeatedly tried to get him to come down, but he won’t. (1)

I can hear them urging him now. “Come down, Bungkas, come down.” But he doesn’t budge.

That’s an unusual story for this First Sunday of Advent, but it reminds me of today’s lesson from the Old Testament. The prophet Isaiah cries out to God, “Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down . . .”

Isaiah’s desperate plea was the result of a great feeling of helplessness in the face of two troubling phenomena: the suffering and the sinfulness of God’s people.

**The people of Israel have known great suffering throughout their history.** It was true in Isaiah’s time and it was even more true in the twentieth century when Hitler and his Nazi storm troopers put millions of Jews to death. And, to a lesser extent, it is still true today. Jews are still under attack even in the “land of the free and the home of the brave.”

On the one hand the Jewish people believe themselves to be a chosen people with a special relationship with God. On the other hand, there have been times when God seemed very far away from them.

Did you know, by the way, that Columbus took several Jews along on his historic voyages—as interpreters? He assumed that any Indians or Orientals he would encounter would probably be primitive and would therefore speak God’s language—Hebrew.

That was a naïve expectation, of course, but it is true that the Jews had this very special relationship with God. They thought of themselves as God’s chosen people. How is it possible, however, to reconcile the notion “We are God’s chosen people,” with the reality of six million Jews slain under Hitler alone? We can appreciate the difficult dilemma faced by the devout Jew as he or she wrestles with what it means to be a descendant of Abraham in the face of such unmitigated tragedy.

It’s like a story that the great writer and Jewish activist Elie Wiesel [eli vize] used to tell. Wiesel himself was a Holocaust survivor. He would tell about a Jewish rabbi during that terrible time. The rabbi would faithfully come to the synagogue each day and pray, “I have come to inform You, Master of the Universe, that we are here.”

As the toll of slain, deported, missing Jews increased, he still came faithfully and prayed, “You see, Lord, we are still here.” Finally, he is the only Jew left alive. With a heart that is numb with grief he comes to the synagogue once more and prays, “You see, I am still here.” Then sadly he asks, “But You, where are You?”

Which of us in our time of personal grief has not asked that same question? Where were you, God, when my son was in that terrible accident? Where were you, God, when my wife suffered so terribly before succumbing to breast cancer?

Or, as we view the world’s enormous problems such as out-of-control viruses, who has not asked, “Why doesn’t God just come down and straighten the whole mess out? Then there would be no more starvation or war or oppression or sickness and death. Why don’t you come down?” Isaiah, the most sensitive of all the prophets of Israel, was struck to the very core of his being with the suffering of his people.

**Just as troubling, however, was the sinfulness of his people.** Listen as Isaiah prays, “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away. No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and have given us over to our sins.”

More than any other faith on the face of the globe, the Jewish faith is one of doing right. The Jews were called together as a people to give witness to God’s moral law. They had the Law before they had a temple or a homeland. This was their mission, the reason for their election—to maintain that Law.

In the beginning, they believed, God created man and woman to live in perfect harmony with creation and with the Creator. But something was amiss in the very heart of humanity. Something there was that alienated human beings from their environment, from their fellow human beings, and even from the loving God who had created them. That something was humanity’s sinful nature.

It was sin that dug a chasm between God and humanity. It was sin that made humanity unacceptable to God—for the very nature of God is holiness, righteousness. Thus, the Psalmist wrote, “Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god . . .” (Psalms 24:3-5).

The Law was given to bring light to humanity’s dark existence. But here were God’s people who were to witness to His Law, and they were people with dirty hands and impure hearts. That sounds like us today, doesn’t it? We, too, are people with dirty hands and impure hearts.

We are like three young men in the Bible Belt many years ago who were caught red-handed breaking the Sabbath. Guilt-ridden for their sins and fearful of the punishment

they were likely to receive, they stood before their stern pastor. They shook with fear as he asked for an explanation of their behavior.

The first young man, feeling great guilt, said, "Sir, I was absentminded and forgot that yesterday was the Sabbath."

"That could be," replied the pastor. "You are forgiven."

Also very upset, the second young man said he too was absentminded. "I forgot that I was not allowed to gamble on the Sabbath," was his excuse.

"Well, that could also be," said the pastor. "You are forgiven."

Finally, the pastor turned to the young man in whose home these events occurred. "Well, what is your excuse? I suppose you were absentminded, too!"

"I sure was, sir," said the lad, who was a known troublemaker and the instigator of the card game. "I forgot to pull the shades down!" (2)

There is something about that young man's attitude that strikes me as being quite contemporary. There is a rule that we associate with professional basketball, "no harm, no foul." If I don't get caught, it's all right. If no one gets hurt, what's the sweat? It's only myself that I'm hurting, so it is my business, isn't it?

Somehow, we, like ancient Israel, have deluded ourselves into thinking that sin is no big deal. We ignore its power to destroy health and home, to damage our witness and impede spiritual growth. We disregard its power to block our view of God and leave us slaves to our own passions. It was as a warning to us that Jesus taught, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). In other words, there is something about sin that coats the soul with grime and prevents us from seeing God. Rare are those who listen, however, until it is too late.

A policeman watched as a young man backed his car around the block. Then he did it again, and again. Finally the policeman stopped the young man and asked him why he was driving backward. At first the youth didn't want to explain the reasons for his strange behavior, but eventually he admitted that he had borrowed his father's car for the evening and because he had driven farther than he had promised his father that he would drive, he was backing up to try to take some of the miles off the odometer.

Isaiah saw that there was no hope that Israel could save itself from the moral abyss into which it was drifting. The only hope was that God would come down and bring healing to his people. "Why don't you come down and save us not only from our suffering but also from our sin," Isaiah was pleading. It is in this context that he uses a very familiar image to us. "Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand."

Isaiah knew that only God could remove the flaw from the fragile clay of humanity. That is the second reason that Isaiah cried out for God to come down—the sinfulness of God’s people.

**But there is one more thing to say. That is this: God has come down.** That, of course, is what Advent is all about. From beyond time and space, down past the galaxies and all the heavenly firmament, in an event that surpasses our grandest attempt to get our little brains around it, God has come down. In a little obscure town outside of Jerusalem, in a lowly stable, He came as a tiny babe born to a humble couple from a backward village called Nazareth. God has come down. That which Isaiah prayed for has happened. **God has come down in the person of Jesus Christ, and he is the answer to humanity’s suffering and sin.**

There is a story told by the late Dr. John Claypool about a play written in 1945 by a German pastor named Guenter Rutenborn. This story was set at a time when Germany was still reeling from the tragic impact of World War II.

Many people in Germany were agonizing with the question of who was responsible for the terrible agony that the Second World War had brought upon the world. Characters in the play voiced the opinions of those who were looking for answers. Was Hitler alone responsible? How about the munitions manufacturers who financed him? Did an apathetic German population share the blame?

But then a man comes up out of the crowd and says, “Do you want to know who is really to blame for all the suffering we’ve been through? I’ll tell you. God is to blame. He is the one that created this world. He is the one who has let it be what it is.” Soon everyone on stage is echoing the same indictment: “God is to blame. God is to blame.”

And so, God is put on trial for the crime of creating the world . . . and is found guilty. The judge sentences God to what he considers to be the worst of all sentences. He sentences God to live on this earth as a human being. Three archangels are given the task of carrying out the sentence.

The first archangel walks to the end of the stage and says, “I’m going to see to it when God serves His sentence that He knows what it’s like to be obscure and to be poor. He will be borne on the backside of nowhere with a peasant girl for His mother. There will be a suspicion of shame about his birth, and He will have to live as a Jew in a Jew-hating world.”

The second archangel adds to that harsh penalty: “I’m going to see to it when God serves his sentence that He knows what it’s like to fail and to suffer disappointment. No one will ever understand what He is trying to do.”

The third archangel said, “I’m going to see to it when God serves His sentence that He knows what it’s like to suffer. I’m going to see to it that He has all kinds of physical

pain. At the end of His life, He's going to be absolutely executed in as painful a way as possible."

And suddenly the three archangels disappear and the houselights go down. (3) And the audience is left for a few moments in darkness as the reality dawns upon each member of the audience that God has already served his sentence. He knew what it's like to be obscure and to be poor. He knew what it's like to fail and to suffer disappointment. He knew what it's like to suffer an excruciating death. He experienced it all in the life and death of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the answer to humanity's suffering and sin. He has come down, but the world has yet to receive him. For you see, what he offers us is himself alone. We want hope. He is hope. We want peace. He is peace. We want love. He is love. The problem is we want hope, but we don't want him. We want peace, but we don't want him. We want love, but we don't want him. We want to achieve a world without suffering or sin, but we do not want to open our own lives so that he might begin his healing and reconciling work through us. There is no other way, however. Without him there is no hope, no peace, no love available to this world.

Once there was a little girl named Annika, not quite four. Annika was fascinated by a waste basket filled with scraps of fabric left over from one of her mother's recent sewing projects. Annika decided to root through the scraps of fabric and retrieve some brightly colored scraps for herself. She took the scraps out to the back garden. Her mother found her there sitting in the grass with a long pole. Annika was affixing the scraps of cloth to the top of the pole with great sticky wads of tape. "I'm making a banner for a procession," she said. "I need a procession so that God will come down and dance with us."

"With that," says her mother, "she solemnly lifted her banner to flutter in the wind and slowly she began to dance." (4)

That spoke to my imagination—the idea of God coming down to earth to dance with His children.

"Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down . . ." Isaiah prayed. That prayer was answered. He has come down. Now all we have to do is to receive Him and to make Him known to a sin-filled and suffering world. How about you? He has come down. Will you receive him now?

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1. Tom Weller, <https://catapult.co/stories/when-the-most-amazing-marvels-from-every-corner-of-the-globe-came-to-indiana>.

2. Contributed. Source unknown.

3. Rev. Dr. John Claypool, "God Became What We Are," 30 Good Minutes, Chicago Sunday Evening Club, 1994, [http://www.csec.org/csec/sermon/claypool\\_3812.htm](http://www.csec.org/csec/sermon/claypool_3812.htm). (Adapted).

4. Gertrud Mueller Nelson, *To Dance with God: Family Ritual and Community Celebration*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), p. 3.

II Fr Joseph Pellegrino

We begin Advent with the simple word: Watch. Next week we will be told: Stay Awake. The third week we have: Rejoice, and for the fourth week we have: Behold!

Watch! There are three ways that we need to watch. The first is to watch for those moments when the Lord is calling on us to reach out to others. St Teresa of Avila teaches us:

*Christ has no body now on earth, but yours; no feet, but yours. It is your eyes through which Christ's compassion looks out to the world; your feet with which he must walk about doing good; your hands with which he blesses humanity; your voice with which his forgiveness is spoken; your heart with which he now loves.*

Jesus is calling upon us to bring his presence to others. Sometimes this might be obvious like a proclamation of our faith when we stand up for what is right regardless of what the crowd around us is saying or doing. Or we might defend the faith when someone comes out with anti-Catholic bigotry such as "You Catholics don't read the Bible" (we do), or "You Catholics worship Mary" (we don't; we honor her, we pray for her intercession for us with her Son, but we don't worship her.) We have to watch for those times that the Lord calls on us to bring His Presence to others by going out of our way to be kind to them. Sometimes even a smile can pick up someone who is having a bad day. We need to watch for those times we can be Jesus' hands and feet and voice. Of course, we cannot do that if we are so full of ourselves that we do not even notice the plight of others. If our basic outlook in life is "It's all about me," then we are going to miss the times that it is all about Him. So you and I need to Watch

There is a second way that we need to watch. We need to watch for those seemingly minor changes or additions to our lives that might change the very direction of our lives. I know a young lady who had just finished college and needed to continue her education, but who also wanted to take a gap year in her education, just to get a break from school. She promised her parents that she would definitely be back in school in a year. Her parents agreed with her. She thought about getting a job for a year. Then, just on a quirk, she decided to check Google for what volunteer services were available. She was shocked at all the possibilities. She then started looking into them, with her mind set on doing something that was run by a Catholic

organization. She found many possibilities. She settled on one where she would live with other people her age, pray together, and spend time caring for poor people in the big cities. She loved it and had a wonderful year. She went to grad school with two great gifts: she was more determined than ever to be a Woman if of God, that and, well, during her gap year she met on the mission a young man with whom she could grow closer to God. Now he's her husband, the father of her children, and the love of her life, at least this side of heaven. You see, she watched, saw what appeared to be a minor change in the direction of her life, a direction more towards God, and now her whole life took a wonderful turn for the better. If we watch, sometimes things that might seem to be a good idea, might be the Lord giving us a great idea.

The third way we need to watch might appear a bit scary, but it is realistic. The third way we need to watch is for the time that the Lord is calling us to leave this world and be fully united to Him. We always need to be ready to come before the Lord. Actually, we need to live as though every day might be both the best day and even the last day of our lives. This might seem to be a rather morbid thought, but, you know, it is not morbid. It's realistic. We all like to think that we are going to live to be a hundred, but what if we don't live that long? Will we be ready for Him when we are 80? How about 50? How about 25? We always need to be ready for the Lord. No matter how old we are, our lives on earth will end much sooner than we expect. We always need to be ready to hear the Lord say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of the Father."

Watch. Watch for the times to bring Jesus to others. Watch for the quiet call from the Lord to refine the direction of our lives more towards Him. And watch for the time when we are called to present our lives to our God. Watch! For the Lord has marvelous things in store for us all.

### III

For more than twenty years, the television show Saturday Night Live has been known for its irreverent, sometimes outrageous humor. A recurring segment on Saturday Night Live is called "Deep Thoughts by Jack Handley." The deep thoughts consist of nothing more than touchy-feely psychobabble that sounds pretty good, but actually makes no sense. Here is a sample:

"To me, it's a good idea," says Jack Handley, "to always carry two sacks of something when you walk around. That way, if anybody says, 'Hey, can you give me a hand?' you can say 'Sorry, got these sacks.'"

Here's another: "If a kid asks where rain comes from, I think a cute thing to tell him is, 'God is crying.' And if he asks why God is crying, another cute thing to tell him is, 'Probably because of something you did.'"

That IS deep. "If a kid asks where rain comes from . . . tell him, 'God is crying.' And if he asks why God is crying . . . tell him, 'Probably because of something you did.'" Seriously, can you imagine a parent laying a guilt trip like that on a child? Of course you can!

A man named John Hakel says his three-year-old daughter looked at a calendar and asked him, "Daddy, how many BE GOOD days until Christmas?" (1) Why would a three-year-old be asking that? "How many BE

GOOD days . . ." I wonder.

Supermodel Christie Brinkley has fond memories of her grandmother Mamie Cecil Bowling. Her grandmother often took care of Christie and her brother, Greg. But when the children became too much for her, Christie's grandmother had a unique way of taking a break. She would put little Christie and Greg on the kitchen floor, then put her false teeth down in front of them. Grandmother would warn them not to move, or the false teeth might bite them. Christie reports that she and her brother always stayed perfectly still until their grandmother came back and retrieved her teeth. (2)

We can appreciate that grandmother's concern. Taking care of kids is a demanding task. I suspect that every parent dreams of a harmless weapon that they can use to enforce discipline.

MY CONCERN IS WHEN WE USE RELIGION AS SUCH A WEAPON.

Our lesson from Mark's Gospel says, "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back--whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: "Watch!" (NIV)

Advent is a season for watching. But watching for what? Our children are watching for Santa, but how about us adults? The biblical answer is that we are watching for Christ's return. How should we feel about that return? Apprehensive? Fearful? Should we be on our best behavior? You may have seen a bumper sticker that reads something like this: Jesus is coming back--and boy, is he angry! Some people would be very apprehensive if they thought Christ really was going to return.

It's like two boys who spent a delightful afternoon just outside of town. They gathered up all the nuts underneath the huge walnut tree at the edge of the town cemetery. When they were done, they sat down under the tree, out of sight of the road, to divide the walnuts. One boy kept chanting, "One for you, one for me, one for you, one for me . . ." as they divided the nuts evenly. There were so many nuts, that a few fell out of the sack and rolled down the hill and ended up next to the cemetery fence. "We'll get those later," said the other boy.

A young girl was cycling down the road outside the cemetery. As she got nearer, she heard the voices, so she stopped and listened to the voice, "One for you, one for me, one for you, one for me . . ." She shuddered as she imagined some awful truth. She thought to herself, "God and Satan must be dividing the souls at the cemetery."

She cycled back to town as fast as she could and found an old man hobbling down the road, leaning heavily on his cane with each step. She said, "You've got to come with me. You won't believe what I heard. God and Satan are down at the cemetery dividing the souls."

The old man didn't believe her, "Shoo, you brat, can't you see I'm finding it hard to walk as it is." She kept pleading, and he eventually gave in and hobbled after her back to the cemetery. When they got to the fence, they stood quietly and heard, "One for you, one for me, one for you, one for me . . ."

The old man whispered, "Man alive, you've been tellin' me the truth, girl. Let's see if we can get closer and see them."

Shivering with fear, they got as close to the wall as they could and peered through the fence. Unfortunately,



they still couldn't see a thing. The old man and the young girl clung to the fence as they heard the same words, "One for you, one for me, one for you, one for me . . ." Then, after another minute, they heard, "One for you, one for me, and one last one for you. Okay, that's all. Now," said the voice of the one doing the counting, "let's go get those nuts by the fence, and we'll be done."

The boys found a cane lying on the ground near the last few remaining walnuts. And, oh yes, the punch line . . . The old man got back to town five minutes before the girl did. (3)

Is that what you expect from Christ's return--that you and I had better be on our best behavior because Christ and the Devil are going to divide up souls on the basis of merit, and we don't want to come up short? Then you need to take a second look at the Gospel.

We titled this message: the difference between God and Santa. Here is that difference: According to what we tell our children, Santa loves us only when we are good, but the Gospel tells us that God loves us unconditionally. If you are being good because you're worried that one of these days Christ is going to return and turn you over to Satan, it's time for you to relax. The love of God for His children is an eternal love. It never ends. And it covers all the bases--including all of our sins. We do not need dread Satan's domain. Christ has paid it all.

**BESIDES, AS EVERY GOOD PSYCHOLOGIST KNOWS, VIRTUE BASED ON FEAR OF PUNISHMENT WILL NOT LAST.**

In fact, when virtue is fear-based, that which is forbidden somehow becomes more attractive. We want it more simply because we can't have it. The lure of the forbidden fruit! But virtue that is based on love will last forever.

Walter Wangerin, Jr., tells of the time that he deliberately disobeyed his father. Walter was throwing stones at the powerful floodlights that ringed the hockey rink at the college where his father was president. And always he missed. He was such a poor shot. Till one time, the tinkle of glass showered from one of those exploding six-thousand-watt light bulbs. Young Walter was stunned. He didn't know what to do. He made his friends swear they'd never tell. And then he went home with his secret festering in his heart.

He kept his secret, he says. Or rather, it kept him. It kept him from looking his father in the face. It kept him from the conversations around the meal table. It kept him even from wanting to hear his father call his name. They had a special name for him, between the two of them. He was Ah-vee, to his dad. But now, when his father came to his bedroom to say goodnight, the sound of that name was like blasphemy.

"Goodnight, Ah-vee!" his dad said. And young Walter turned his face to his pillow. And he said to his father, "Don't call me that!" And when his father asked him why not, he just broke down in sobs. It was the next day that he knew he had to do it. He had to come clean. He had to make his confession. He had to bare his soul, and take his punishment.

So he crept from their house to the large and imposing Administration Building on the campus of the college. The place reeked with power and authority. And so did the hallways that led to his father's office. The door itself was huge. And dark. And foreboding. And when he entered, his father was seated importantly behind a giant's desk.

"Well?" said his father,

"Y-e-s . . ." he said slowly, as he inched forward toward the desk. "Uh . . . I , I . . . Well, you know those 6000-watt light bulbs at the rink?" Walter said slowly. "Well, I guess I sort of broke one . . ." And then the story rolled out. And when it was finished, with Walter hanging his head next to the floor, his father slowly rose from his chair. And he stepped with dignity around the desk. And the world grew small and silent: only those two lived in it. And Walter knew the spanking that was coming. He knew he deserved it. He knew the world needed it, in order to be right once again. So he was totally unprepared for what happened next. His father knelt in front of him. And he took Walter in his arms. And he hugged him like a precious treasure. And he whispered the name. Over and over again he whispered the name: "Ah-vee, Ah-vee, Ah-vee."

"And in that moment," said Walter, "I saw the face of God." (4)

Do you think that unforgettable scene had anything to do with the kind of man Walter Wangerin became? Did his father beat him, humiliate him, threaten him with eternal fire? Of course not. His father loved him--and love will change a life. Love will take a corrupt person and turn him around. And that is what Christmas is about. "God so loved the world that God gave His Son . . ." God seeks to love us unto salvation. That's God's secret weapon. He will love us beyond any love which we can imagine. And what does God ask of us in return? Certainly right living. But many people live moral lives who have no concept that God loves them. Isaiah says that our righteousness is as filthy rags. It is not our righteousness that makes us acceptable to God. Only one thing does that--and that is God's love. No, right living is not what God asks from us.

WHAT GOD WANTS IS THAT WE PASS ON HIS LOVE TO OTHERS.

From 1979 to 1981, the Maze Prison in Belfast, Northern Ireland, was a hotbed of inmate protests. One of these, which was dubbed, "the dirty protest," was particularly distasteful. Prisoners refused to bathe, change their clothes, or use the bathroom facilities. The stench in the prison was so overwhelming that some guards fainted from it. No one from the outside world dared visit the prison.

On Christmas Eve 1980, a retired schoolteacher named Gladys Blackburne was wondering how she might spread the message of Christ in her town. She pondered Christ's humility in being born in a stable. At that moment, Gladys felt God calling her to visit a different kind of stable--the Maze Prison. When Gladys arrived at the prison, an official sent her to a young inmate named Chips. That night, Gladys Blackburne told Chips about the love of Jesus Christ. Today, as a free man, Chips leads a prison ministry. (5)

And that is the difference between Santa and God. Santa loves us when we are good. But Santa's love is not enough for God. "While we were yet sinners," writes St. Paul, "Christ died for us." Our righteousness is as filthy rags, says Isaiah. Clean living has its reward, but it will never make us right with God. Only one thing can do that and that is the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

So, let our children watch for Santa. You and I will look for the return of Christ. As we begin our Advent celebration we would do well to ponder the words of an unknown author titled

'Why Jesus Is Better Than Santa Clause.' Listen to these simple but memorable words:

- Santa lives at the North Pole . . . JESUS is everywhere.
- Santa comes but once a year . . . JESUS is an ever present help.

- Santa fills your stockings with goodies . . . JESUS supplies all your needs.
- Santa comes down your chimney uninvited . . . JESUS stands at your door and knocks, and then enters your heart.
- You have to wait in line to see Santa . . . JESUS is as close as the mention of His name.
- Santa doesn't know your name, all he can say is "Hi little boy or girl, what's your name?". . . JESUS knew our name before we did. Not only does He know our name, He knows our address too. He knows our history and future and He even knows how many hairs are on our heads.
- All Santa says "You better not cry." JESUS says "Cast all your cares on me for I care for you."
- Santa's little helpers make toys . . . JESUS makes new lives, mends wounded hearts, repairs broken homes and builds mansions.
- Santa may make you chuckle but . . . JESUS gives you joy that is your strength.
- While Santa puts gifts under your tree . . . JESUS became our gift and died ON the tree. It's obvious there is really no comparison. We need to remember WHO Christmas is all about. We need to put Christ back in Christmas, Jesus is still the reason for the season. Yes, Jesus is better, he is even better than Santa Claus. (6) So let's watch joyfully for Christ.

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1. Adam Christing, COMEDY COMES CLEAN (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1996).
  2. PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM GRANDMA , edited by Jennifer Gates Hayes. (New York: Regan Books, 1997), p. 14.
  3. THEMАЗEMAN@aol.com cited on THE JEWISH HUMOR LIST.
  4. From a sermon by Wayne Brouwer.
  5. Colson, Charles. THE GOD OF STONES AND SPIDERS (Wheaton, IL.: Tyndale House Publishers ), pp. 307-311.
  6. MONDAY FODDER .