

From Fr. Fleming's Desk



This photo takes me to a place deep in my heart where some of my most cherished childhood memories are stored. This was our family creche (we called it "the manger") which sat atop our television, on my mother's hope chest, in the den. It was here that my parents first taught me the story of Jesus' birth.

And do you see on the left, in a grove of four pines, a small church? An interior light gave a warm glow from within and a tiny bell with a clapper hung in the steeple. On the right are four members of a children's choir, each a candle with a wick on top which we never lit: that little choir sang from year to year. Oh, how incredibly well I remember all these!

This photo holds the key to a store house of memories in my heart. Some Christmas memories bring us joy, others bring us tears; some we want to remember forever, some we might want to forget.

Let's pray...

All it takes, Lord, is an old photo,
an ornament on the tree,
or a special song or carol
to open my heart to memories
of Christmas long ago...

When memories make me sad, Lord,
with loss, regret and hurt,
let your healing Christmas touch
mend and heal what's broken in my heart...

And when memories bring me joy
let me revel in and cherish
what my heart has kept for times like these
when I so long to touch once more
what's passed beyond my reach...

Let my joyful memories give me faith
to find within my heart
those I wish were in my arms:
the ones I hold in love, in prayer
in memories dear of Christmas past...

And as this season stirs and opens
treasures in my heart,
help me handle each one gently
and with your gentle hand, Lord,
help me treasure all I find...

Amen.