

Christmas Eve & Day – December 24 & 25

The season of waiting is now over. Christmas, the Feast of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, is here. Much can be said about lighting a Christ candle, blessing the tree and remembering that Christmas is a season that lasts for 12 days. I agree, stretch out the season and save a gift to open on the various feast days of St. Stephen, St. John and Holy Innocents as well as Epiphany. But what can be said about what happens in our kitchens other than a great feast is often prepared?

Few people realize that the word *Bethlehem* means “house of bread”. Christmas Eve is a wonderful time to bake the bread that will be served on Christmas Day. It is easy for Christmas to become too sentimental with sheep that are too white and wooly and hay that is sweet-smelling. The real Bethlehem is more profound. It was at “the house of bread” that God took on flesh and that which was considered commonplace was blessed and transformed. As you gather to bake bread and share that same bread on Christmas day, the story of Christ’s birth can be retold reminding us that Jesus was born in a stable “because there was no room in the inn” and that we in turn are called to remember the poor and nameless travelers in the world.

Christmas Bread

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| ¾ cup whole-wheat flour | 3/8 tsp salt |
| ½ cup white flour | 3/8 cup cold water |
| 3/8 tsp. basing soda | 1 ½ Tbsp. honey |
| 1 heaping Tbsp. shortening | |

Sift flours and mix well with soda and salt. Add shortening and blend well. Add water and honey. Knead for a good texture. Spread the dough in a pan and bake 10 to 12 minutes at 350 degrees.

Jesus, you are the bread of life. We thank you for coming down from heaven and becoming one of us so that we might have life. Bless this bread and help us to see you in the common and ordinary bread, things and people of our daily life. Amen.