

By Pat Haggerty

I often watch the Today Show to get my day started. The other morning, a minister was on talking about how to get the joy from the holidays. He noted that this can be a stressful time and that we are often looking for the elusive, perfect Christmas. His message was simple: make memories and don't worry about perfection!

There is something to be said for that message. I had actually been reflecting on the idea of memories and how important they are during this season. So many Christmas books have memories as their main theme. Think about *The Christmas Box* by Richard Paul Evans or *The Christmas Shoes*
by Donna VanLiere. One of my favorites is
Christmas Remembered
by Tomie dePaola. In this collection of essays, dePaola recounts a number of his Christmas experiences ranging from his Christmas as a monk at Weston Priory to his first Christmas at his current residence in New London, New Hampshire. This is Tomie's first book written for all ages. It is a charming collection of remembrances and beautiful memories. I just love it!

It got me thinking about some of my Christmas memories---many of which revolve around the liturgy. As a music minister for many years, music has always been an integral part of my Christmases. It gives meaning to the season and holds a special focus in my life.

Perhaps one of the most memorable Christmas memories for me was when my son played the drums during “The Little Drummer Boy.” I was leading the choir that year and Josh (my son) and his friend had just taken up the drums in school. I thought it would be a great idea to have them play the “rum-pa-pum-pums” during the song. The two ten year-old boys stood near the manger with their drums and came in, on cue, during the song. They stood sharing their gift with the Child in the manger. It was a very special moment. That was almost twenty-eight years ago!

I encourage each of you to reflect on your own Christmas memories. It will surely bring you much joy.

Now, let me share a little gift with you. It is my Christmas prayer:

Dear Child Jesus, help me to find in your crib the grace that allows human frailty to see the true message of Christmas. Allow me to see and grasp the opportunities for newness and growth that come with this awe-inspiring season. Let me not waste a moment. Like the shepherds, I must make haste! Amen.