

A Christmas Story

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Christmas is what Christmas was. The commercial extravaganza zips and zings like lightning bolts on the horizon. But in the warmth of home, we nurture family and friendship, traditions and customs, and most of all the religious purpose of the season. Our immediate family is in the sixth decade of celebrating the holy season. It has been a joy to blend the time-honored ways of the families—Nichols, Buechele, Hamilton, and Stanislawski—into a union of those moments we cherish most. Things have changed, but nothing has really changed.

- Missouri snow has given way to Texas dust.
- Mom and dad are gone, but now we are mom and dad.
- The Kodak Brownie has been replaced by the Sony digital camera.
- The drive across town for Christmas dinner is now a plane flight across the country.
- Midnight Mass is celebrated at eight o'clock.
- Milk and cookies are no longer placed on the hearth for Santa, but dad gets an extra sip of wine when he turns out the lights for the night.
- The kids aren't held on our laps while we look to the night sky for Santa, but we take a long look at the star-lit heavens to remember the first Christmas in Bethlehem.
- The all-night ventures of assembling toys are fond memories. Now a goodnight kiss, a warm snuggle, and a soft, "Merry Christmas," bring Christmas Eve to a glorious end.

That's the way it was, and that's the way it is.

Peace.