

TOPIC OF THE MONTH - DECEMBER 2015

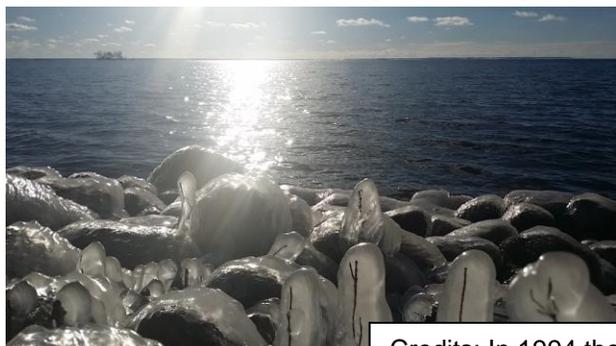
Why the Chimes Rang

At this time of the year our thoughts often return to when we were small and all else seemed so big, so grand, and so wonderful. We all grew up listening to the “Christmas Story”, and “The Night Before Christmas”. I grew up to those stories plus another. It went kinda like this—

In a country far away was a great cathedral with a bell tower that was so high you could not see the top on cloudy days. Each Christmas Eve a grand service was held and gifts were offered to honor the Christ Child. It was said that within the bell tower were magnificent chimes that would ring true and pure if a worthy gift to the Christ Child was placed on the alter. It had been so long since the chimes had rang that no living person had ever heard them. Many thought it only a fable.

Some distance away lived two small boys, Pedro and Little Brother. Pedro decided that he and Little Brother would go to see the grand Christmas Eve service. That afternoon Pedro stuffed a couple pieces of bread in his pocket and they started walking toward the Cathedral. After several miles it started snowing and got dark. As they walked huddled together Pedro suddenly saw a dark shape in the snow next to the path. It was an old woman who had fallen and could go no further even though the great gate to the city loomed ahead. Pedro made Little Brother go on alone and told him to look twice at all he would see. Pedro reached in his pocket for some bread for the old woman and also pulled out a tiny piece of silver. He told Little Brother to put the silver on the alter and to bring someone back with him to help the old woman.

Little Brother went to the cathedral and could hardly believe how big and magnificent it was. The music was wonderful and he watched as many people in fine clothes laid their gifts on the alter. The chimes remained silent. Finally the King came down the center aisle, took from his head the crown of the kingdom, and laid it on the alter—still no sound from high above. As the service was ending the organist suddenly stopped playing and from high above came the sweetest music ever heard. The crowd hushed and looked at the alter. All they saw was Little Brother placing a small object next to the kings crown on the alter.



At this time of year it is easy with all the hustle & bustle to not see the gray shape in the snow and to not give help where it is needed. We must slow down so that we do not miss the music from the chimes high above. Take a moment and appreciate the beauty of our natural resources. Also consider how your small gifts could make a difference in protecting our precious lakes and rivers.