

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



J. R. R. Tolkien was not only the author of the best-selling novel ever written, but a fierce Catholic whose Faith was pervasive in his work.

In 2016, two lost poems by the Anglo-Saxon scholar were discovered originally published in an obscure 1936 annual magazine for Our Lady's Abingdon in Oxfordshire. Of the two, one is a Christmas poem entitled *Noel* dedicated to the Virgin Mary:

*Grim was the world and grey last night: The moon and stars were fled,
The hall was dark without song or light, the fires were fallen dead.
The wind in the trees was like to the sea,
And over the mountains' teeth it whistled bitter-cold and free,
As a sword leapt from its sheath.*

*The lord of snows upreared his head; his mantle long and pale,
Upon the bitter blast was spread and hung o'er hill and dale.
The world was blind, the boughs were bent, all ways and paths were wild:
Then the veil of cloud apart was rent, and here was born a Child.*

*The ancient dome of heaven sheer was pricked with distant light;
A star came shining white and clear alone above the night.
In the dale of dark in that hour of birth one voice on a sudden sang:
Then all the bells in Heaven and Earth together at midnight rang.*

*Mary sang in this world below: they heard her song arise
O'er mist and over mountain snow to the walls of paradise,
And the tongue of many bells was stirred,
in Heaven's towers to ring,
When the voice of mortal maid was heard,
That was Mother of Heaven's King.*

*Glad is the world and fair this night with stars about its head,
And the hall is filled with laughter and light, and fires are burning red.
The bells of paradise now ring with bells of Christendom,
And Gloria, Gloria we will sing that God on earth is come.*

Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year,

Fr. Sean