

# Christmas Time, Mistletoe and Wine

But how do Catenians around the world celebrate Christmas?

## Rimon, Nazareth Circle

Many good things happened to our small family during 2018. We were very excited to celebrate our eldest girl Cielle's first communion in February. Later on that month, Rimon and the girls, Cielle and Michelle, got their first ski vacation in Austria which was a very exciting experience for them because it was the first time they had travelled without their mother, Suha.

Our typical Christmas Day actually starts one day before Christmas. Early in the morning, Rimon oversees the final preparations for the Christmas March including road blocking, establishment of the central stage, and taking care of organising all the participating groups and their decorated cars. The Christmas March starts at 2.30pm exactly from the shrine of the Virgin Mary in the Arab workers' neighbourhood and ends at the Church of the Annunciation in the centre of town around 5.30pm.

We have never missed the Christmas March in Nazareth, which symbolises the march of the Virgin Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem. After the march, we prepare ourselves for participating in Christmas Eve Holy Mesa. After the Mesa ends we start celebrating Christmas with our extended family and the kids wait for Santa to bring them Christmas gifts. Then we eat the Christmas Eve traditional barbecue dinner.



On Christmas Day we wake up late and the girls run to their Christmas stocking to see what Santa brought them while they were sleeping. We prepare ourselves to go to Rimon's mother, Angel, for the family traditional lunch. After lunch, Rimon's uncles and their families pay the family a visit for Christmas greetings and, in the evening, we go to Suha's parents and greet them for Christmas. At that time, Suha's extended family come to her parents and we all exchange Christmas greetings. At the end of Christmas Day, everyone is very tired and full of food and traditional sweets and seeks a reason for getting home early to get some sleep. This Christmas, the next day will be travelling to Bulgaria for a Christmas and ski holiday with our friends from the young couples' group.

On a personal level, we wish to have more health, faith, relaxation and love for this Christmas, and for the world we wish to enjoy peace, safety and security especially for our Palestinian Brothers and families in Gaza and the West Bank and our neighbours in Syria.

## Dr Walter Mangezi, Harare Circle, Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, we had the inauguration of Harare Circle president, Brother Marshal Pemhahwa and his team. His tenure was graced with a successful clergy night including the Archbishop of Zimbabwe and His Highness Christopher Ndlovu, and the circle was also delighted to welcome life member Gerry Barton.

Harare Circle holds a Christmas party in December for Brothers and their families where we meet to have a meal and drinks. Harare North Circle members are also invited to the function. This marks the end of the Catenian year.

In December, families in Zimbabwe are caught by the Christmas spirit when preparations begin. A lot of families go to the rural areas where family members meet. Families travel from all over the world. We have family members who would have been away abroad for periods of up to ten years. Christmas Day starts with a church service and families then gather for a Christmas meal. The main delicacies include free range chicken and rice. A barbecue and drinks often continue until late on Christmas Day.

Some families go away on holiday to local resorts such as Nyanga, Victoria Falls and Kariba, or international destinations like South Africa, Mauritius, United Arab Emirates, England and USA.

As a family we plan to be local in Harare. The festive celebration will start with the midnight carols and the Christmas Eve Mass. On Christmas Day we start at noon with Christmas lunch at a local hotel, along with fun activities that include raffles and family-type activities. We often then head home with family where we have cake and tea/coffee. We open presents together as a family around the Christmas tree.