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## *How Well Does Your Household Travel Together?*

**An article for the *Cathedral Times*  
by Dean Sam Candler**

Are you traveling anywhere this season?

It is a question that I hear often this time of year. Maybe we are standing around at the office. Maybe we are at a party with nothing else to say. Maybe it is simply a question we are asking ourselves! Are you going anywhere this time of year? Are you traveling?

For sure, some of us are not. But also for sure, many of us are. For some of us, we use time between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day to travel. Maybe we drive to the homes of relatives, or friends in other cities. Maybe we visit our children away at school. Some of us use vacation time to plan longer trips.

Many of us are, simply, on the move. So it was that Mary and Joseph, and the soon-to-be-born Jesus, were on the move, too. Of course, our one story of the birth of Jesus is really a collection of various stories. Taken together, however, they tell of a holy family on the move. Joseph and Mary, apparently, lived in Nazareth, but they were required to travel to Bethlehem to meet the requirements of the government census. While in Bethlehem, away from home, the time came for Mary to deliver Jesus. Then, before they could all return to Nazareth, they had to flee to another place, a foreign country, Egypt, in order to escape the impetuous fury of Herod. It was, maybe, after two years in Egypt that the holy family could return safely to Nazareth.

How well does your household travel together? I have no idea how the holy family of Jesus traveled. (A later story will describe how the parents of Jesus actually forgot Jesus when he was twelve years old; apparently, to every parent's horror, they actually left Jesus behind when they left the temple in Jerusalem one year. But that's another story!)

No, I do not know how well the holy family traveled. But I do know that the places they touched during their travels became holy. I have been to present day shrines in the Holy Land that commemorate those places. Somehow, we remember those destinations with holy awe; Jesus was there.

What if we, today, traveled with the intention of making our destinations holy? I know that, for many of us, those destinations are already "holy" to us. Maybe those destinations are where we grew up; or maybe those destinations are where our grandchildren are! They are holy!

But, sometimes, those destinations can seem, or can become, chores and labors for us. We fight along the way. We get bored and tired there. We long to be somewhere else. Even when we stay right where we live, sometimes we long to be somewhere else.

I imagine that not every moment during the holy family's travels was exhilarating. I suppose there were moments when an infant was crying, when a spouse was complaining, when there was too much traffic, or too much confusion, some wrong turns, and some disagreements. But, in the end, something holy was going on.

Let's hope for holiness during whatever traveling, or staying, we do this season. Let's treat our destinations, and our trips,

as if we are treading on holy ground. Even when things go wrong, there can still be something there for us. We might still find something powerful or tender or striking or revealing about the moment; those are the moments we can recall later as holy moments. The holy moments occur when something true or good or loving shows up; those are the moments when God has touched us and that place. May all our traveling be holy!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

The Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler  
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip