

Christmas Message from Rector

Greetings in the name of Christ our Savior!

Christmas is a very special time of year, a time for family and friends, for parties and gatherings, for fun and relaxation. It is also a time of traveling icy roads, of long line-ups at stores, of last minute preparations and at least some anxiety and worry. What are we to make of it all? Is the stress, expense and rush worth it all? And what is the desired goal?

As a priest of the Gospel it is my job to point our attention in a different direction. Yes it is about putting Christ before us at Christmas, but this is not all. To assert that Jesus should or must be central has become cliché. It does not address the heart of the problem we share in our confused and distracted world any more than all the giving for the 'less fortunate,' though commendable, addresses the ongoing challenge of the poor in our midst. All the good done for the poor before Christmas, (and much good is done) begs the deeper question of why they are not similarly on our minds come January? So too with having Christ as part of our holiday celebrations. I suggest that Jesus does not want to be a part but deserves to be front and center throughout our celebrations as Christians. After all, God did not take on our nature in show or appearance only but in its fullness. God Almighty embraced the limitations of our creaturely status. Being conceived, born and nursed in the shivering cold of the manger was no mere show but the full truth of entering our reality. Above all, we must recall, His coming was so that He could suffer and eventually die. He came, fully embracing our reality and in order to become our Savior.

How can we work at, (and work is the correct word), making Christ fully real and central to our seasonal celebrations? Worship is essential - public worship with other people sharing in the effort to praise and adore God's love. But also quiet, private, reading. Read the Christmas story in Matthew or Luke's Gospel. Perhaps you can share it with your children, grandchildren or god-children. And pray, pray at worship, pray at home and for Christ's sake, pray at meals - not just Christmas dinner but at every meal - giving thanks for the bounty placed before us and remembering the Child of the manger.

Have a merry Christmas, have a holy Christmas, share the Joy of God's love with friends and family and forget not to 'come and worship the new-born babe'!

May God bless you and yours this holy-day season!

In Christ,

Fr R Hebb