

Christmas 2018

Today stands out as the most intense day of the year. Christmas is living at its best and living at its worst. If you're happy, you're really happy. If you're sad, you're really sad. As we come together as a parish family in this church we bring with us the most extremes of life. We are in high gear and it is all because of one thing. God is with us. Even for those who are oblivious to the working of God in their lives, even for those who are cynical to the presence of God, the fact is that the birth of God, in the flesh, took place over 2000 years ago and it profoundly affects our lives today.

Christmas is the thermometer of our level of happiness. How do you measure the quality of your life? How deep, how true, how authentic is it? How can we enhance the quality of our life? We all aspire to hope, joy, and happiness. Lord knows we surely need His help. Some of us have chronic physical pain or maybe very serious health problems, some experience extreme divisiveness in their relationships or perhaps there is exploitation or meanness or abuse. Maybe there is a bully at school. Or maybe we are simply numb and don't feel anything at all. Maybe our dreams have been dashed. There are scandals around us, betrayal by people we trust. Maybe it's an all pervasive malaise and life is just not interesting. Maybe I'm not connecting with anything or anybody. We can find a lot of reasons to be discouraged. The drug crisis or suicide and depression all scream out how desperate we need to be reinvigorated.

Don't be content with jingle bells and Santa Claus. All the gifts and Christmas customs and traditions that we have are wonderful. Our children help us in a particular way with their innocent enthusiasm and delight. Christmas gets to the core of things. It is Christmas that addresses the root cause of our happiness or unhappiness. We have every reason to be filled with hope and joy. God is proud and happy with you. If you don't think so, it is important that you realize that that is why he came to this earth. Our God is a happy God. He is happy with you. Use that as an anchor point from which you discover the God-given goodness within you.

What do I want for Christmas? First and foremost I want to want what I really want. I don't want to be sucked into a whimsical and wishy-washy Christmas. I know I cannot go wrong if I go to the source of my being, my creator. The wonder and awe

of Christmas is not wishful thinking or desperate grasping for straw. Christmas is truly glorious, into the depth of my being.

Christmas is the thermometer of our level of happiness. It is also the opportunity to passionately rediscover the cause of our joy. Here at Sacred Heart and St. Alexander's I always brag about our music. I love the way you sing. I think we have the best choir around. Music has a wonderful way to connect us with God. This year the Christmas song, Silent Night, has its 200th anniversary. It was composed and first sung in the year 1818. When I go to some of the stores and restaurants these days I so often hear some screaming, yelling in-your-face, that is meant to be music. It often sounds like some sort of insane asylum. Silent Night stands in sharp contrast. It seems that this is true not only with music but with all of life. I invite you to find a time of silence during this Christmas season during which our newborn King can speak to you in the deepest part of your being. Listen to him and let the hope and joy and peace that can only come from God fill your heart and your soul.