



My Dear Parishioners,

Praised Be Jesus Christ and Merry Christmas! I once heard it said that “it’s wise to thank God in advance.” In advance of answered prayers and favors; in advance of His goodness and kindness; in advance of His Mercy and Love. This is Good because in doing this, our thanks becomes an act of faith, an act of trust, an act of hope. More than just an appropriate response after something has been done for us, our “advanced thanks” takes on a whole different character, indeed it can help us grow in faith.

As I write this column in advance of Christmas, i.e. this bulletin is due on 12/19, I’d like to offer my advanced thanks to all who made our Christmas Masses so beautiful. From the music to the decoration to all the people, our 150th Christmas as a parish community was certainly a beautiful celebration. I am grateful to all who made it such. Christmas is a feast of visible and concrete things: The Word Made Flesh. It is a Season therefore for and of the senses. How beautiful it was then and how important that all our senses were able to be engaged and caught up in the celebration of Jesus’ birth. Again a word of thanks.

Of all the seasons of the Church year, Christmas is the shortest. But the reality of Christmas itself is quite long. In fact, it’s never ending. Even today, risen and ascended into heaven, Christ has a human body, hands and feet, eyes and ears. Our humanity is now and forever will be wedded to Him. Emmanuel, God-with-us, is his forever name. And so, we are allowed to savor and in fact prolong Christmas. And I would encourage you to do just that. And in this week of New Year’s resolutions, that might not be a bad one to consider. Namely, resolving to savor, slow down and welcome God-With-Us throughout the New Year. Allow me to suggest a few ways:

- 1) Leave the Christmas Tree up a little longer. (The Vatican leaves its tree up till February 2nd)
- 2) Leave the manger scene out. (Franciscan homes leave it out year round).
- 3) Pray the Angelus each day. (This prayer remembers the reality of Emmanuel, God-With-Us)
- 4) Watch Christmas Movies throughout the year. (Why watch them only in December?)
- 5) Adoration/Mass. (Pray before the flesh of God not just in the stable but in our Church).

To savor and rest, to enjoy and relish the gift of Christmas, what a great umbrella under which we can orient any and all the resolutions of our New Year. In our fast-paced world, science is showing more and more the proof that savoring, resting, enjoying and relishing LIFE, the present moment is the way to Peace. Baby Jesus teaches us this. And His very presence invites us to do just that. He comes as a baby because He wants to be loved, He wants to be held, He wants to be ours.

Lord, in this New Year, give us the grace to do this, the grace to want to be yours. For nothing else will do.

Peace,

Fr. Rogers