

Christmas – A time for Love and Hope

Isn't it amazing that we are once again celebrating Christmas. You can feel it in the air and see it in the excitement of our children as they await Santa Claus. Here at the parish we are celebrating Christmas with beautiful flowers and decorations that remind us of the unique time that Christmas represents. However, underneath all this is an anxiety that we all struggle with. Can I pay for the gifts that people wanted this year? Will my family and friends be disappointed with my gifts? Can I survive the craziness and the guilt that often comes with this holy season? Lots of good questions that we each can only answer in our own special way.

Perhaps reminding ourselves what Christmas is all about will help us answer these questions. Christmas is not about presents and parties and stressing out of our minds. Christmas is about the calm feelings of love and hope. It is about acceptance and a basic humanity that should guide us in all we do. Most of all it is about a family, a child and acceptance.

When Jesus was born, he was already marked as an undesirable in a world that was not unlike our own, upside down and full of uncertainty. Birth in the squalor of a stable, surrounded by strangers and unsure of the future, Jesus reminds us that in the face of the most desperate stranger we can find the face of God. Christmas is the story of the triumph of the human spirit and the dignity of a little baby. Jesus reminds us in his vulnerability that love and hope is what the foundations of faith and human dignity is all about. Without these we are nothing.

As we celebrate the Christmas season through Easter we will walk with Jesus, from being an illegal immigrant in a caravan, through his journey as an apprentice to his father, proclaimer of the good news and finally his death and resurrection. During this season we need to focus on the important things in life. We need to be reminded that embracing this child, opening our doors to the stranger, being a sign of hope and love is what Christmas is really all about.

Finally, we need to remind ourselves once again that we are all part of the Holy Family. The Christmas story is our story and we need to embrace it as a part of our journey to salvation. My prayer for you is that you will focus on the reality of the Christmas story. Celebrate the gift of life that you and your family are in our world and in our community. Focus on hope, see in the voiceless, the stranger and the persecuted the face of God and you will be truly rewarded with a calm and a hope that is a lifelong blessing.

On behalf of our staff and the Salvatorians who have the privilege to serve this community I wish you the very best of Christmas and I pray that you will have the best of blessings as we enter this sacred time of salvation together.

Merry Christmas,

Fr. Tom