

Peace is...the Presence of Christ

Baruch 5:9 “... for God is leading Israel in joy by the light of his glory,
with his mercy and justice for company.”

Philippians 1:9,10 “And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and
more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of
value, so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ”

Luke 3:4 “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.”

Reflection: ***Let us focus on the presence of Christ at Christmas,***

not the material presents we exchange at Christmas. It is so easy in our culture to get caught up in the materialism that society puts forth as the “meaning” of Christmas, the essentials of the “holiday.” To the contrary we must focus on Christmas as a holy day.

How do we prepare?

We must examine ourselves and root out all the obstacles that distance us from our God and from the Christ child who was born among us. He came to earth to live as we do in order to be one with us and to save us from our sins. Unfortunately, look at what we as a people have done: “We have exchanged the Sacraments for entertainment... the riches of prayer, for hours of television... the blessings and consolations of God, for empty material objects... the deeds of mercy to the poor, for self interests.”¹ Now during Advent we must look into our hearts and ask: “Does this describe me?” Jesus tells us, “No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”² What are my priorities really?

We must bring His Presence to others

Our world is full of darkness, our people so often without love, without peace. It is we who are to bring the light and love and peace of Christ to them. Yet we cannot give what we do not have. Jesus tells us, “Your Heavenly Father knows all that you need. Seek first His kingship over you, His way of holiness, and all these things will be given you besides.”³ We must focus on our relationship with Christ, becoming close to Him, and allowing His love to flow through us to those in our lives.

It is so important to be mindful of His presence in us, so that we bring His eyes, His ears, His hands, His smile, His words, His heart ... to others, even in the smallest of encounters. We don’t know the impact we may have on another. Let us strive to make every encounter a positive one.

Let us follow the example of Mary, who completely trusted in God and brings us closer to Christ through love.

Action:

- *Donate to the Advent Outreach “Adopt-a-Baby” Program.*
- Contribute to an organization like Food for the Poor, where you can provide for the needs of the poorest of the poor⁴, or locally to the W/R Food Pantry for Christmas.*
- Instead of exchanging gifts: 1) volunteer together; 2) go through belongings, toys, etc., in your home and give what you don’t need to the poor; or 3) give of your time.*
- Honor Our Blessed Mother in a special way on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Dec 8th), and on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Dec 12th), the Patroness of the Americas.*

Hail Mary, full of grace ... pray for us sinners.

1. www.markmallet.com/blog/?p=8 2. Luke 16:13 3. Matthew 6:32,33 4. go to: www.foodforthe poor.org , click on gift catalog. Items include: feeding a family for a month for \$12.; providing 100 pounds of rice and beans for \$20; or providing 20 chicks to a family for \$25.

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<http://www.sjbcatholicparish.org/peace-justice.php>