

prepare ourselves to be participants in God's desire that all people might come to know of God's love. To imitate Christ, to bring Christ into the world, we must first know Christ and embrace His message. We need to be willing to spend time in prayer, to read the scriptures, and to open ourselves to the guidance of the Spirit as we wrestle with the challenges our society makes to our Christian values. From time to time, we need to reflect on how well our lives are conformed to Christ, and how well we've done in bringing Him into the world. But, perhaps most of all, we need to nourish ourselves at the table of the Eucharist where Christ comes to us in His Body and Blood. And, as we receive this great gift, we pray that we may become what we receive, the Body and Blood of Christ in the world today.

So, yes, let's strive to make every day Christmas! Let's strive to bring Christ to others in our day-to-day lives. Let's strive to model ourselves on Mary's faith-filled "yes" to God's invitation. In a world that cries out for the Gospel message of love, let us allow ourselves to be instruments in God's ongoing effort to bring the message of His Son to those who are so in need of hearing it!

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A publication of the Congregation of Holy Cross,
United States Province of Priests and Brothers
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DECEMBER 2019

MONTHLY REFLECTION SERIES

Making Every Day Christmas

by Rev. Thomas Bertone, C.S.C.

“What?” You say, “make every day Christmas? It’s hard enough with only one Christmas Day a year!”

A reaction like this to the title of this reflection is part of the problem. The celebration of Christmas has become so commercialized that the religious meaning of the feast gets lost. During the month of December, the focus of many people of the world is on preparing for Christmas. Of course, most of this is in a secular sense with shopping and sending out greeting cards. And nowadays, it usually begins well before the first of December!



We Christians often try to “keep Christ in Christmas,” but this is easier said than done with all that goes on around us during this time of year. Family traditions such as Advent wreaths and Advent calendars sometimes help keep the focus where it should be. More and more, it is challenging to truly make Advent a time of preparation for the celebration of the coming of Christ into the world. It has become a time of stress

and consumerism. So who would want to make every day Christmas?

A short time into the Advent season, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. On this day, we recall that Mary was conceived without original sin to prepare her to receive the long-awaited Messiah into her womb. Mary’s “yes” to participating in God’s plan of salvation was an act of total giving of her life to God’s will. Her “yes” models the attitude we should have in responding to God’s call to each of us – as his sons and daughters – to do our part in bringing Christ into the world today. Our “yes” can, in that sense, make every day another Christmas.

How do we do this?

We do this by living our lives in such a way that others see Christ in us. We do this by modeling our lives on the two great commandments: to love God with our whole heart, our whole mind, our whole soul, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

When we forgive those who’ve hurt us, we give birth to Christ’s forgiveness. When we reach out to those in need, we give birth to Christ’s compassion. When we speak out on behalf of those who are oppressed by those in power, we give birth to Christ’s passion for justice. When we reach out to those who are marginalized, we give birth to Christ’s concern for all people. When we love even our enemies, we give birth to the

fullness of Christ’s love. Whenever we imitate Christ in our day to day lives, in our interactions with those we meet, we are bringing Him into the world in a concrete, visible way. And, we can do this all year round, not just on Christmas.

“ When we love even our enemies, we give birth to the fullness of Christ’s love. ”

Mary was prepared, from birth, to bring Christ into the world. Her fidelity to her faith allowed her to remain open to God’s call to her. Her strong faith, and her strong relationship with God, allowed her to trust fully and give of herself totally.

As Mary was prepared for her role in the history of Christ’s salvation, Advent can be seen as a time of preparation for ourselves to participate in God’s plan. It is an opportunity to reflect on our lives to see how well prepared we are to receive Christ into our lives so as to bring Christ into the world for others.

If we are to truly bring Christ into the world in our lives, we, like Mary, must be faithful people with a strong relationship with God. We, too, must