

Column121921

Companions on the Journey

December 19, 2021

Dear Friends,

It's time. It's time to come home. For Christmas. It has been almost two years now. Two years of Covid-19. Two years of quarantine and masks and mandates and virtual zoom meetings and lessons. There has been some return to normalcy. This summer I saw a lot of it when I was down the shore over the Fourth of July. You could almost feel it. People wanting to get back to the living of their lives in a fashion familiar and comfortable to them, without being at risk.

The great feast of Christmas approaches. There is always so much to be done, over and beyond the ordinary and daily responsibilities of living. Doing all this for two years under the corona-virus has had its impact on every one of us. I have said on several occasions that I believe this covid-19 will have an impact on this generation as powerful as the Depression had its impact on families in the 1930's. We just don't know the exact nature of that impact any more than the folks who lived during the Depression realized what its impact would be. But make no mistake, everyone has been impacted.

What can we do? Well, I suggest we celebrate Christmas. Make the decision. Christmas is a Saturday this year. On Christmas Eve there will be three vigil Masses. 4PM for families. 6PM for those preferring a Spanish Language Vigil Mass. 8PM for the final Vigil Mass with Christmas Carols for a half hour preceding. On Christmas Day, Sunday, there will be two Masses. 8:15 and 10:30. Bishop Edward Deliman, one of our Auxiliary Bishops and a classmate from the Class of 1973 will celebrate the Spanish Language Vigil Mass. I will be celebrating the other Masses. I long to celebrate them with all of you.

Please come back. Be not afraid. Yes, there may be risks. But Our Lord's very presence is a sign of a God who took the greatest of risks and shared the divine freedom with some of his creatures—angels and persons. No, it did not go so well. The freedom was misused. The trust with the Lord was broken by selfishness. Then fear entered and then, vulnerability, then hiding and deception. And soon death. But those things will never have the last word. God has deigned it not to be so.

That is why the Word of God has become flesh. That is why there is a Jesus who came as the littlest of little ones, entrusting himself into our care. And making no demands for special treatment. And he took on all that selfishness and all that sin and he even tasted death because we have to. But he burst forth into life never to die again. And more than that he offered to each person the very same opportunity, to share in his victory over sin and his victory over death.

Christmas celebrates the beginning and acknowledges the great gift we have been given. And so we too exchange our gifts. Please come to worship him—like the shepherds did. Like the magi did. Like we all do each Sunday and especially on this most holy of days each year. The day of Christ's birth. Let us place our fears on hold for an hour. Let us put on our very best outfits and head for Church. Let us greet each other with genuine joy and hope. Let us offer our love to the One who is Love Incarnate. Christmas is acoming!

Peace

Msgr. McHenry