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# Christmas Time Has Arrived!

May I join in wishing everyone all the blessings of Christmas Time!

And that is everyone, whether everyone is sharing my Catholic Christian faith or not. It is a prayerful wish for good things for all, not a demand for agreement with me and all who share this faith tradition.

I hope others, sharing in their own big feasts or seasonal changes, are likewise celebrating. I hope their wishes for good extend to all of us.

There are other major observances occurring in these days – in our Jewish, Muslim and African American communities to cite just a few. In its best, “Happy Holidays” is an exercise in inclusiveness, not a device for flattening us all.

Having said this, I do wonder why we Christians aren’t more intentional in celebrating this time so sacred for us. We are after all celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, a really big matter. Some intentional moves:

Do I

- Use the beautiful Madonna and Child postage stamps?
- Use religious-themed greeting cards?
- Use “Christmas” language in my good wishes?
- Devote some time in my busy days reflecting on what this feast means and how it should affect my life? Thank God for all it means?
- How does the quality and quantity of my prayer time compare to the time I devote to hearing/looking over ads, keeping up with the schedule of parties and the whole gift thing? If this comparison is way out of balance, what are the consequences for me, for us? What do I want to do about it?

A second matter here: starting to celebrate Christmas now – as different from starting to do so in say last October. We seem to be big on anticipating (in the sense of speeding up things) but seemingly unable to wait until

the time arrives and savor it for days/weeks afterward. It seems to me something gets lost this way.

There are a lot of reflections on gifts and gift giving at this time of year, too.

- Are there gifts to give and receive that are beyond “things”?
- What are the really important gifts I desire and want to give?
- Is it time to include our Earth home on our gift list: taking very concrete steps to take care of it much better, seeing these definite steps as gifts I can give others –near and far away?

As I reflect, I truly wonder what precious Advent and Christmas Time next year will be like. Our climate seems to be changing; international relations seem extra troubled; our national and international economy is grumbling.

And we are moving full steam into national elections that will be settled by next Advent – if our president hasn’t declared a national emergency by that time and taken over all branches of US government (such is our national emergency plan at this time).

Weighty wonderings these....

However, the wonderful message of Christmas is that God has created us all, redeemed us all, loves us all, and is always with us. As challenging as life is or gets at this Christmas Time and all year, God IS always with us – cause for calming any of our fears.

Again, blessed Christmas Time, All!

December 19, 2007

*The Catholic Conference of Kentucky (CCK) is an agency of the Catholic Bishops of Kentucky, established in 1968. It speaks for the Church in matters of public policy, serves as liaison to government and the legislature, and coordinates communications and activities between the church and secular agencies. There are 406,000 Catholics in the Commonwealth. The Bishops of the four dioceses of KY constitute CCK's Board of Directors.*