

Christmas, 2017 – Reflection

In my living room at home, I have set up a beautifully decorated and lit Nativity Scene to remind me of the true reason for this season of celebration and tradition. And, it may seem strange, but in baskets around the manger, I have placed all the cards I have received. There are cards that have religious pictures and messages in them; there are cards that had little and not so little gifts in them; there are cards that are just pictures of the family ... Wow! How the kids have grown! ... there are cards with letters in them to catch me up on a whole year of living and accomplishments and losses; there are cards with Santa and Rudolph and elves and snowmen on them; there are Thomas Kincaid wintry scenes; there was even a card from "our house to yours" with a picture of their house on the cover (I wonder, am I supposed to take one of mine and send it back??).

Why do people send cards at Christmas? Why do people open them and feel guilty about not getting theirs out this year? The whole reason can be found in the name of the holyday we celebrate: CHRISTMAS. The name for Jesus' Birthday, comes from two little Latin words: "Christus" meaning, as you might guess, "Christ", and "missus" meaning "sent". So, Christmas actually means: "Christ is sent", "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life."

On the First Christmas, God sent the first Christmas Card. The message was the Word Made Flesh come to dwell among us, Jesus, His own and only Son.

He came to us in time, in Bethlehem, back then. He comes to us in Word and sacrament each time two or three gather in His name at Mass. He comes to us in the faces of our brothers and sisters, but most especially, in the poor and the outcast, the inconvenient and the ugly. He comes to us in the works of charity, in the striving for peace, in the standing up for justice, in the fight for fairness, in the deeds of kindness that try to drown out the words of hate.

Christ is sent to us by our loving Father God to give His children the most precious gift of all, His only Son.

Christmas ... Christ is sent. Christmas ... Christ the card from God. We'll never know the message save we bring the mail into our hearts, open Christ the card, and ponder the Greatest Story Ever Told.