

Holy Christmas — Happy Christmas!

The only appropriate atmosphere for Christmas is a truly spiritual atmosphere. Worldliness is totally inappropriate at such a specially holy time. Wherever Christ is absent at the time of Christmas (especially Christmas Day), there is where one will find sadness, boredom and depression (if not worse!). In those places where Christ is the central Figure of the Christmas celebration, there is where one will find joy, peace and serenity.

As things have developed in modern times, we have to deal with the bright lights and the lavish tinsel decorations found all around us during this most Holy Season. "Christmas Tinsel Town" has come to be a way of life. To fight to do away with all the glitter of the occasion is neither practical nor realistic. To act as if it were not there is not good either. To teach the little children that it is evil and wrong tends to confuse their innocent young minds. The market place has succeeded in filling the minds and hearts of all the people with the frantic anticipation of giving and receiving. The very air rings out with excitement. Pretty lights go up in our neighbors' yards long before the Great Day, and our wonderful Christmas Carols begin to be heard months ahead of time and in the most unexpected and bizarre places. We simply cannot get away from it — it is everywhere!! All of this can be the cause of tension and crisis in the minds of our little ones, especially when on the one hand we caution them of the evils of the "pagan" observation, and on the other hand, their little playmates, whom they love, display all of the excitement of the occasion and tell of all their wonderful experiences with Santa Claus. To tell our children that Santa is a sin only compounds the problem and causes them to feel that all of their neighbors, and all of the neighbors' children are in the deep pits of sin because of all of their beautiful decorations and preparations for the great day when Santa arrives with wonderful things for everybody. The children wonder. They would very much like to share in the excitement with their playmates, but oftentimes are prohibited from doing so. They feel left out. They have no reasonable explanation for their plight, except that their friends are committing sin. Before the day of Christmas they cannot take part in the excitement because it is "wrong." The very day after Christmas, when the entire season shuts down completely, they again feel left out because they can find nobody to share their Christmas things with. We have a problem.

In previous ages, when faced with similar problems, our Holy Church made wise adjustments and turned the decorations of the Twenty-fifth of December, and the horrible debauchery of the Festival of Lights, into the simple beauty of the Stable of Bethlehem. The Church simply placed Jesus in His lowly Manger right on top of the Roman Festival. Rather than attempt to put out the light of the "sun," the Church quietly and adroitly made the light of the "SON" shine more brightly, and succeeded in replacing the former pagan celebration with the lovely, lovely Birth of the Baby JESUS — King of the Universe and of all Mankind!