

Keep Christ in Christmas

by Rev. Andrew P. Carrozza

"So once again it's Christmas,"
said the man, without much glee,
as he fumbled with the lights
which he was hanging on his tree.
"I'm told I should feel peace and joy
once Christmastime is here,
but peaceful is the last thing
which I feel this time each year.
I want to feel Christ with me,
and to know He's in my life,
but every year this hectic pace
brings me unending strife.
I wish I knew what I could do
to love Him much more dearly.
I wish He'd just appear to me;
then, perhaps, I'd see more clearly."

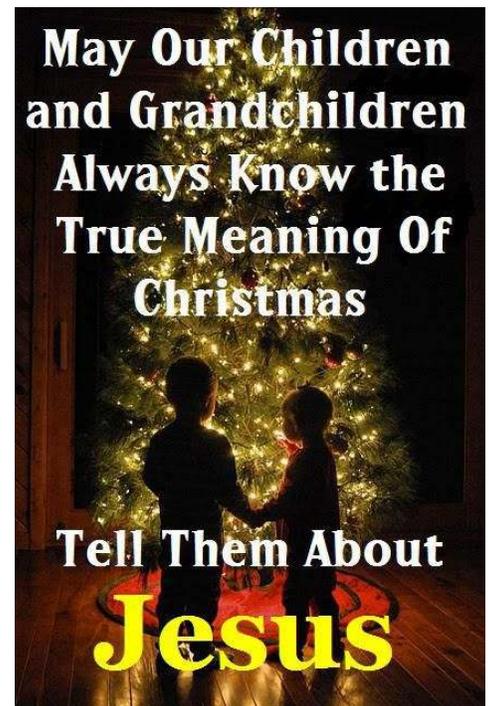
Then, just as he was speaking,
Jesus walked into the room.
"Peace be with you!" said the Lord,
"I'm here to end your gloom.
Sit down here on the sofa
and I'll show you where you've erred.
I'll tell you why I don't seem near
even though your heart has cared.
You've forgotten that this season
tells of how I came to earth.
You've cast me out of Christmas
'though it's all about my birth.
Christmas without me
is like the frosting with no cake!
That's why you find it senseless;
leaving me out's your mistake!
"You've decked your house with images
of reindeer, snow and elves,
but there's not one reminder
of my birth upon your shelves!
I see no manger showing you
the day when I was born.
Just Frosty, Santa, Rudolph
and a holly-covered horn.
Now, all of these are fine,
but they alone don't help you see
the true meaning of Christmas
which is my nativity.
At the heart of all your ornaments
place a crèche, and you will find
that all the rest makes sense now
for you've kept me first in mind."

"And now, about those Christmas cards
which you sent to your friends:
They had nice scenes of winter
and of all the current trends.
But chickadees and sleighs
have not a thing to do with me.
They don't remind your friends
that I was born to set them free.
Send them a card with shepherds
telling them to view my star,
or to seek me like the magi
who once journeyed from afar.
Wish them 'Peace on Earth'
and you will find it in your heart.
Speak of me to others
and from you I'll not depart"

"Then you wrote 'Season's Greetings'
and said 'Happy Holiday.'
But these are things that you could wish
on any given day.
What 'Season' is it that you mean?
Spring? Shopping? Rabbit? Deer?
Why do you wish them something
when its meaning isn't clear?
What 'Holiday' do you mean?
Fourth of July? Labor Day?
Why be so vague? Why leave me out?
Why throw my name away?
Say only 'Merry Christmas'
for in that my name is clear.
For when I'm on your lips,
then in your heart you'll find me near!

"And look upon these package tags,
what is this that I see?
Why, there's a giant 'X'
right where my name's supposed to be!
You crossed me out of Christmas
with that 'X-mas' you wrote there!
Is it too hard or cumbersome
to treat my name with care?
You write 'Washington' and 'Lincoln,'
'Martin Luther King' with pride,
but my name takes too long to write,
so 'Christ' you cast aside?
How come only my name
is too long for you to write?
Why not pretend I'm special
and write my name with great delight?"

"And then you made the worst mistake:
you never prayed to me!
You gave great care to shopping
but not to my memory.
You got so caught up in wrapping gifts
to place beneath the tree,
that you forgot the true meaning of
Christmas - and that's ME!
No matter how much work you have,
take time each day to pray.
For when you seek to know me
that's when you will find the way!
If peace is what you're seeking,
then the answer's very clear:
'Keep Christ in Christmas' and you'll find
I'll stay with you all year!"



*Dedicated to the memory of Rev. Edwin J. Kenny on the 15th anniversary of his entrance into eternal life.
May his passion for the Holy Name of Jesus resound forever in the hearts of all mankind!*