



The Vicar's

Christmas Message

For a number of years, our culture has repeatedly tried to use other terms in place of the word “Christmas” in reference to this season. In our schools, we once spoke of “Christmas break,” now we refer to it as “Winter break.” In many circles, instead of saying “Merry Christmas,” in fear of being politically incorrect, we prefer to use other alternatives like “Happy Holidays” and “Season’s Greetings.”

What is it about the word “Christmas” that has become so unfavorable in our culture and have we found a suitable alternative? The modern English word “Christmas” comes from the Old English *Christes Maesse* (Christ Mass), the name of the service of Holy Communion that commemorates Christ’s birth. Christmas is the Church’s or Christianity’s celebration of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the mystery that God took on human flesh and was born in this world of the Virgin Mary. Thus, Christmas has to do with Christ and Christendom’s celebration of his birth. It has become apparent in our society, that in seeking to separate church from state, we believe that by eliminating the word “Christmas,” we have gotten rid of Christ in the process. In other words, instead of using terms that are associated with a particular religion, our culture prefers to use alternative phrases like “Happy Holidays” and “Season’s Greetings.” The question is ‘Have our society truly eradicated Christian beliefs when it comes to the Christmas season?’

My belief is that the answer to that question is “No!” When we use the terms “Happy Holidays” and “Season’s Greetings” we expose ourselves to having to answer a number of questions. “Which holy day or holy days are we celebrating?” and “What is the reason for their holiness?” “What season are we celebrating and what is the reason for extending these greetings during this season? If we answer these questions honestly, we would realize that we cannot truly get the rid of “Christmas” and especially the reason we celebrate the season, which is Jesus Christ, himself.

My dear friends, we need to feel comfortable, as Christians, when it comes to the celebrations of our religious festivals. We do not have to feel politically correct or afraid to wish people “Merry Christmas.” People of other religions boldly wish their family, friends and people in general, the religious holiday they are celebrating. Why should we be any different?

I pray that we are able to celebrate Christmas, with an ease, knowing that “God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Yes, God loves us so much that He sent His Son, not only for us but for the whole world. Let us then allow the light and meaning of Christmas to shine forth so that the whole world may know that God loves them and that the season of Christmas is for them as well.

Judith and our children join with me in wishing you, your family and loved ones, a blessed and holy Christmastide, filled with love, joy and peace.

Merry Christmas!

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Tony

