

What Christmas Means

I again present here an updated insert that considers two of the meanings that Father Donald Miller described in his article in 1958. In a previous insert I had written about his thoughts on the personal meaning of Christmas. Without doubt this is the most important one for the ordinary believer. It is a meaning that I must let you personally think about. In this Year of Mercy we must try to have “a deeper grasp of the meaning of Christmas.” This will bring us closer to Christ, which is a noble aim for our spiritual life. I hope you are enjoying this grace-filled season, a season that lasts longer than just one day.

The Family Meaning of Christmas

Everybody has a family. It is possible that one can be bereft of that relationship, due to the vagaries of life’s journey. However, we look to the fact that God does desire us to be born into a family, to grow up in a family, and for some to begin new families.

Christmas is a family feast. While Christmas is a personal feast reminding us of our individual duties, our knowledge of the duties that human beings owe to their families finds its basis in the image of what a family is in the Christmas story.

Christmas brought into the world Him who laid down the rules for the right kind of family living. To save their souls husbands, wives, sons and daughters have to keep the rules. They are a part of the plan that Christ has for their redemption. His plan is really the only protection for families on earth. Who else will protect family life, if not those gifted with the knowledge of the meaning of the message embodied in Christmas?

The Christ born at Christmas willed that your home and family life should center on eternal principles. These include the permanence of marriage (between a man and a woman), of chastity in every way of life and the Christian principle of love.

Families are built on love and in them love is found at its noblest and best. It is not just a love of feeling but love rooted in the free will of the members. Ask yourself in this season whether you have the kind of love that is seen in the Holy family, a love of God and of others. And recall that love is kind and patient and selfless.

The Social Meaning of Christmas

Christmas does have a meaning for all of society. It may be attacked today, but Christmas is a time when we really do think about peace on earth for those of good will. Christmas is a feastday for justice – the work of justice is peace. It is a feast of charity when mercy and forgiveness of others takes center stage. It is a time to recall how Jesus was born in poverty, and think of why He was. It is a celebration of zeal – and leads us to want to be new evangelizers in this special Year.

Christmas is a time for you to live a generous faith, a faith filled with the spirit of mercy. It is a time for grace, received from the Lord who waits to give you peace. It is a time for surrender to God’s Will. It is a time when we find the example of the love of Mary, of Joseph and of Jesus inspiring and compelling.

*With this reworking of Fr. Miller’s article I have tried to make the meanings of Christmas be a catalyst for action. I hope you really will do what Father said at the start of his article: “Look for the meaning of Christmas in your own life and in your own soul. If it has no meaning there, it is not time for you to celebrate, but rather to grieve.... See whether (these meanings) have as yet been grasped and applied in the inner most part of your soul.” In doing this you will truly **live the Spirit**.*

*God love you always!
Monsignor David Morrison*