

Christmas 2013

Christmas Is a Gift

Christmas is a gift. It is God's gift of himself to us in his Son, Jesus Christ. Christmas is a gift. It is a gift of pure grace that we did not earn.

Christmas is a gift; it is not something that belongs to us. It is God's free and gracious gift to each one of us. At Christmas the eternal Son of God is born into our lives and into our world. At Christmas God gives us the gift of himself. At Christmas God comes into our lives so that we may enter into the life of God. God becomes Man so that we enter into God's life. God enters into our world so that we can enter in God's life. Yes, Christmas is a gift—God's gift to us, an unimaginable gift, a gift we did not earn, a gift we did not expect, a gift to which we have no right.

Christmas is our gift to each other. Christmas allows us to extend the gift that God has given to us to each other. Christmas summons us to give each other gifts of love, mercy, and forgiveness. Christmas says that all is forgiven. Christmas reminds us that our life is a gift, a gift from God that we are to give to each other. Christmas is God's gift to us and our gift to each other.

On this day we give gifts to each other as signs of the love and devotion we have for one another. But the greatest gift we give is the gift that God has given to us, the gift of God's love and mercy. Christmas encourages us to be God to each

other: to forgive, to forget past grievances, to extend mercy, kindness, and generosity to each other.

Christmas is a gift of pure grace. There is nothing we can do to gain the gift of Christmas. There is nothing we did that earned God's love for us. God did not send his Son because we were good and forgiving. God sent his Son into the world to save us from the power of Sin and Death. God sent his Son into the world to do what we could not do—what we could not imagine. God sent his Son into the world because God loves us. All is grace; all is mercy; all is forgiveness.

Christmas is a gift for everyone. No one is excluded. It is a gift of God's love for sinners as well as for saints. It is a gift of God's mercy and grace for each one of us without exception. No one is excluded from the gift of Christmas. No one stands outside of the circle of God's love at Christmas. No one is deprived of God's grace. No one can say "God has forgotten me." No one can say "this day is not for me."

This day is for all of us. It is for you little children, who look with innocent eyes upon the manger and see the child Jesus. It is for you parents, who see the love of God in your children's eyes. It is for you grandparents, who see the wonder of Christmas in the eyes of your grandchildren. It is for you who are without children but see the love of God in every child. It is especially for you who are angry and depressed today, alienated and lonely today, longing for God's love

today. Christmas is for everyone; for, Christmas is God's gift to us and our gift to each other. Christmas is a gift of pure grace, a gift that excludes no one.

On behalf of Father Santiago and Deacon Art, I extend to each and every one of you and your loved ones a most blessed and joy fill Christmas.