

2006 Christmas Homily

by Fr. Mike O'Brien ©

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How many times have you wished someone Merry Christmas this year?

I noticed Walmart & Macy's decided to bring back Merry Christmas vs Happy Holiday.

I love saying Merry Christmas!! Although Easter is the fundamental Feast of our Faith, saying **Happy Easter** just doesn't have the same ring to it as **MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!** I love saying Merry Christmas - politically correct or not - Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas.

Last year after all the Masses for Christmas I went back to the Rectory at St. Patrick's where I live. Before taking a well deserved nap - I stepped into our Chapel just to thank God for 4 awesome celebrations and right before I left - I blurted out "**Merry Christmas, God!!**" I was startled by what I just said. **MERRY CHRISTMAS GOD!** I felt a wee bit embarrassed. Thank God, that **only** God was listening! But far in the depths of my heart - in the way God speaks to me, I heard God say: "**THANK YOU, MIKE. VERY FEW PEOPLE EVER WISH ME MERRY CHRISTMAS!! Thanks! I needed that!!**" I was in shock **so I said again, with much more MEANING & PASSION, "Merry Christmas, God!"**

For the next few days I kept on thinking of that simple dialogue I had with God on Christmas Day!!!

"**MERRY CHRISTMAS GOD ,."** "**THANKS MIKE, SO FEW PEOPLE EVER THINK TO WISH ME MERRY CHRISTMAS; THANKS, I NEEDED THAT.**"

I wish everyone Merry Christmas. I do so to spread the Good News about Christmas to everyone I meet. But **NEVER** did I ever think to say to God: "**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**"

Nothing really magical happened. But a change did occur in me. I realized that I had "very subtly" taken God for granted.

Wasn't the Birth of Jesus, God's way of saying **MERRY CHRISTMAS** to you and me!

Wasn't the Birth of God's only begotten Son, God's way of saying **MERRY CHRISTMAS** to you and me?

Wasn't the Birth of the Savior of the World God's way of saying **MERRY CHRISTMAS** to you and me?

Instead of going on some guilt trip, thinking I had offended God, I spent the 12 Days of Christmas repeating over & over, **MERRY CHRISTMAS, GOD (X2)**. Nothing supernatural happened. God didn't speak again, but a change did occur in **ME**. A change that made me realize that Christmas is more than a **ONE** day celebration.

Christmas is an Event, **AN EVENT** that all Heaven and Earth had "**waited**" for and when everything was just right, God decided it was time to say to the world, for the **VERY FIRST TIME**, '**MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!!**'

I love preparing for Christmas. **But then it's over** and all the Christmas music abruptly ends, the lights come down and Tuesday, Dec 26 becomes just another day.

NO! It doesn't have to have to be that way anymore!! If we view Christmas, as one day, then it is on to Tuesday—business as usual. But if CHRISTMAS is an EVENT, then December 26th can be a **MOST UNUSUAL** Tuesday!!

HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?

You and I make Christmas an Event, when we take the time to wish God, a Merry Christmas and mean it!

I love Charles Dickens's A CHRISTMAS CAROL, and the one scene that I enjoy watching the most is when Scrooge, after his conversion says "**Merry Christmas**" for the very first time. Saying Merry Christmas to God might feel awkward the first time, but SOON it will become filled with meaning and love.

You and I make Christmas an Event, when we take the time to ponder the Great Miracle that occurred in a MANGER.

If you haven't seen, the movie, the Nativity, fight the urge to see the DREAMGIRLS, which opens on Christmas day and instead **see** a Movie that will give you a completely different perspective of the **EVENT** we celebrate. You will be treated to a 90 minute retreat on the WORD MADE FLESH and you will never see the Birth of Christ in the same way.

You and I make Christmas an Event, when we humbly acknowledge that Jesus Christ, is the Center and Purpose of our Christmas.

Did you see who Time Magazine chose as their PERSON of the year? (show mag) its YOU!! They put a mirror here, so everyone can see themselves. They go on tout how much a difference **YOU** have made this year. I don't know about **YOU**, but too much gazing into the mirror can give us a false sense of **WHO** really is to be at the center of the Universe.

You and I make Christmas an Event, when we decide to live the Gospel's message of repentance, justice, peace and love.

Many different titles have been applied to Jesus. The one that really seems to fit him well is that of TEACHER. His lessons for life were TRUE then and our TRUTH now! I would love to see Jesus on Oprah or Dr. Phil, teaching us the important lessons, we each need to learn and live by; Repentance, Justice, Peace and Love.

You and I make Christmas an Event, when we believe that the same Holy Spirit that overshadowed the Virgin Mary, can also Melt us, Mold us, Fill us and Use us. !

Through the Incarnation, through Jesus, the Son of God, becoming **HUMAN**, you and I have been given the opportunity to **REGAIN** our human dignity that was LOST by sin. We **can not** do it on our own. We can't SAVE OURSELVES. **JESUS** is the **SAVIOR!** And God's Spirit has been sent to be our Strength as we follow in Jesus' footsteps.

You and I make Christmas an Event when we give up trying to be a "good person" and allow God's Spirit to make us a HOLY PERSON; a Saint in Training!

You and Me **HOLY?** YES !!! That is the reason why GOD wished us the **FIRST** Merry Christmas.

Good isn't good enough.

Through God's Spirit **you and I** are invited to be HOLY. To be Saints in Training. Imagine a World where all 6 Billion of us, are seeking to become, what God intended us **ALL** to be: Saints –in-Training.