

# Christmas COMMENTARY

## The season will not be merry for all

**Father Albert Shamon**  
Courier columnist

**Sunday's Readings:** (Christmas Midnight Mass): (R3) Luke 2:1-14; (R1) Isaiah 9:1-6; (R2) Titus 2:11-14.

Christmas is touted to be the happiest time of the year. The tinkling and jingling of bells. The well-wishing Christmas cards. The joyous carols. The angelic hymns. The soul-stirring "Silent Night." The triumphant "Adeste Fideles." The colorful lights. The glitter. The tinsel. Newly fallen snow that hides the earth's scars. Shoppers, hurrying, scurrying, hustling, faces wreathed in smiles.

And yet for many, Christmas is not necessarily the happiest time of the year. For many it is a time of deep depression — the emotional response caused by the gap between what is and what should be. For example, what is it for those separated from loved ones or faced with financial problems or loss of health or job?

Remember Ted Smith's song, "Where's Christmas?"

Where, oh where, are all the things

That I thought Christmas time was going to bring?

Last year I thought, maybe this year I'd see



### A WORD FOR SUNDAY

Love and peace under my Christmas tree.

Where, oh where did that dream go? I guess it got lost in the deep, deep snow. I thought maybe people would change, But here we are — just the same.

A gap exists between what is and what should be. We must recognize that and accept it, otherwise spirits can become unduly depressed during the Christmas season.

Not everybody will have a merry Christmas this year. The widow, the widower, the unemployed, those living far away from loved ones, must realize that not every Christmas need be or should be merry. December problems will perhaps still be present in January.

And yet, what was Christmas for Him whose birth Christmas celebrates? Jesus Christ's birth in a stable occurred in a terrible world situation. An emperor scratches a decree and the whole world moves. There is disruption of family life. But who cares? Each person must enroll in the town of his birth. And why? To assess taxes and to discover those fit for compulsory military service.

For the holy family, this meant an 80-mile trip — a hazardous journey for a girl about to give birth. But they didn't complain. Instead, she takes along swaddling clothes to be ready. At Bethlehem, she and Joseph choose a stable over the village inn.

Was that Christmas merry? Yes — a thousand times so. For Jesus was there. Mary and Joseph had been uprooted, far from loved ones; they were poor and alone, save for the companionship of animals; but they were joy-filled, for Jesus was there.

To humble shepherds, an angel an-

nounced the good tidings of the Savior's birth. And the lowly shepherds were filled with joy, because they, who were tending the lambs for the Temple sacrifices, were privileged to behold the Lamb of God.

Oh, we may have nothing but problems this Christmas, but we have the Mass. And the Mass is Jesus in our midst. And Jesus is joy! "Where's Christmas?"

We can ring jingle bells, sing "Silent Night;"

Get teary-eyed over Christmas tree lights.

Have our eyes fill up with joy

At the sight of kids op'n-ing some new toy.

Guess that's Christmas to some,

But that's not Christmas to me...

Maybe if we could think about that first Christmas night

When angels sang over all the earth Promising peace through the Savior's birth

If only people could see

Maybe that's what we need under our tree.

God bless you all and a merry Christmas to you all.

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