

A NOTE FROM FATHER EICKHOFF

Merry Christmas!

For the past four weeks I have been writing to you about preparing for Christmas. I have written of the need to pray, to reconcile yourself to God, to take the time to prepare spiritually for the great celebration of the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. I have done this for four long weeks. It seems a rather long time of preparation for just one day (maybe two or three depending on how you spend Christmas Eve and the observed federal holiday on Monday) of celebration. Fortunately, we don't celebrate Christmas for just one day.

As Catholics, we treat the full octave of Christmas (eight full days) as Christmas Day. That's eight days of celebration so make sure to party hard (without sinning of course) during the joyful days of Christmas. This period of time makes the four weeks of Advent seem worthwhile. But wait! Just like the late-night television commercials of old there's more. The Christmas Season will actually continue until the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord on January 9. The secular world may want to tear down the Christmas decorations starting on December 26, but we know that there is a very good reason to keep on celebrating into the month of January.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has entered into our world. He has come to reconcile mankind to God through the forgiveness of our sins. He has come to offer to us the hope of eternal life with God if we would only believe in Him and live by His teaching. Even now, no matter what you or I have done before whether bad or really, really bad; we can welcome the Good News that Jesus brings and enjoy the grace, hope, and joy that Jesus offers to everyone. This good news, this hope, this joy is something that we cannot gain on our own. We need God to make this happen. And God has done this for us by sending us His Son. The joy that we have from the recognition that God has come to save us should not and cannot be contained to a single day.

So once again...Merry Christmas!

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Stephen Eickhoff
Pastor