

Traveling Companion: Just a simple Christmas

Fr. Michael Tracey

The reporter with Catholic News Service asked me, "How are you going to celebrate Christmas this year?" My answer was a direct one – "just a simple Christmas." I went on to explain.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas because there is very little clutter in my life right now. Hurricane Katrina divested me of all my personal belonging and now I don't have to worry about accumulating or divesting. She was a great teacher.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas without the distractions, without knee-jerk reactions to sales pitches or bargains. They have been dethroned to their rightful place.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas in the company of my parishioners and friends who will share the common bond of simplicity with me.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas because in my emptiness, I can be filled with a much richer and lasting Gift.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas without fanfare or frivolity that might become escape hatches through which I dare not go anymore.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas with a simplicity of faith that draws me even deeper into the Mystery of the season.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas with a spirit of gratitude for what I have gained rather than what I lost; for what I have discovered about others that what I ignored; for what I have discovered about myself than what was obvious for so long.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas, realizing that "it's a wonderful life" is real and not just the title of a movie.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas, knowing that I will continue to discover a new birth within myself that will astonish and captivate me.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas because I am reminded that it was the simple people with uncluttered lives that recognized and celebrated that first Christmas.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas by being homeless, knowing that new birth can and will take place in our places of displacement.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas because God has got my attention and when he has, He is always ready to be born anew within me.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas by being and becoming what God wanted me to become and not doing so that I might receive the recognition of others.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas by being more at home with my own journey rather than being guided by the fleeting signposts that seem to surround me.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas by reflecting on the gift of personhood rather than the gift-wrapped.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas by filling my heart with an expectation that can only be filled with the gift of a Person.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas because its miracle will take place within me, not on 34th street.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas because there is a child within me yearning to be born just like the Christ Child that changed the world.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas by allowing its quiet to permeate my life.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas by continuing to embark on a journey of discovery while I am led by the hand of God.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas in the quiet spaces of my life which yield a clearer map for life's journey.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas by taking census of my blessings, instead of my crosses; my gifts instead of my wants and my emptiness instead of my satisfaction.

This year, I will celebrate a simple Christmas because the mystery and message of Christmas is profoundly simple.