

Faith Notes...

Post-Christmas Reflection

After Christmas is a perfect time to examine our hearts. What is Jesus saying to me these days as the Christmas season closes? What is He inviting me to do? If we've been in a bad situation He's not asking us to repeat our account of what happened, who was right and who was wrong. Rather, Jesus always draws us to Himself, always invites us into the mystery of the *power of surrender to Him*. Jesus is offering us a chance to stay longer in that Bethlehem stable, next to the manger, to draw deeper from the mystery of His self-sacrificing love. What do I do with my angry and hurt feelings? What if the other person isn't sorry? What if the other person isn't "turning to Jesus"? This is the time we need to let the Lord's love *heal us*.

To hold on to resentment, anger, disappointment, or worry is to let it become like a cancer in our hearts. To surrender these feelings to Jesus is to taste the freedom He offers us. This doesn't mean that the bad didn't happen. It means that I let what happened *be transformed* in my heart, from hurt that festers, to something bad from which Jesus died to set us free. As Paul says, this is how God dealt with sin. He nailed it to a tree. Jesus takes away the sin of the world and gives us a peace the world can't give. It is only *in this peace* that we can let the other be a fellow sinner loved by the same Lord and Savior. Jesus doesn't love us on the condition that we get our act together first. He doesn't wait until we become holy to love us. He loves us because we need loving, and *we need it now*. The more deeply we experience this love, the more completely we will be able to let the other be loved by Jesus. In the process, we grow in compassion for them - an ability to suffer with them. We can begin to see them as Jesus sees them. We can grieve for what they suffer. We can feel sadness for whatever insecurity handicaps them. We can even become their ally - begging God for the graces they need, for the healing they can't ask for themselves.

Perhaps this week, we can let these new faith-filled feelings grow in us. Whether we tend to be stirred by conflict or tend to avoid conflict, we can let this peace fill our hearts. Then we can use the healing grace we receive to become a healer. When we pray for someone, it is much easier to love them. Sometimes it requires acknowledging sorrow for our part in what has happened. But, most of the time, it just requires gentle care, attention, affirmation of their goodness. We may not see the fruit of our loving efforts right away, or ever. Jesus understands.

Keep coming, Lord Jesus. We beg you to keep coming to set us free - freer to receive your love, freer to forgive, and freer to love even more self-less-ly. Thank you, Lord. Thank you.

from: <https://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Advent/post->

Epiphany:

(also known as Twelfth Night, Theophany, or Three Kings Day) marks the occasion of a time-honored Christian tradition of "chalking the doors." The formula for the ritual — adapted for 2023 — is simple: take chalk of any color and write the following above the entrance of your home:

20 + C + M + B + 23.

They abbreviate the Latin phrase, *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*: "May Christ bless the house." The "+" signs represent the cross, and the "20" at the beginning and the "23" at the end mark the year. Taken together, this inscription is performed as a request for Christ to bless those homes so marked and that He stay with those who dwell therein throughout the entire year.

The Chalking of the Doors: An Epiphany Tradition Explained - CatholicCitizens.org

Special Days This Week:

Jan. 8: Shirley Beers (B);
Julie Daniels (B);
Lynn & Tammy Bowerman (B).

Jan 12: Sydnee Cluff (B)

*Happy Birthday & Anniversary!
May you be richly blessed as you
celebrate your special day!*

UPCOMING EVENTS

All Fridays in Jan: 4p.m. Choir Practice

Jan. 8: Religious Ed classes resume!

Jan. 9: Altar Society meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Jan. 10: Exploring the Faith class after 9 a.m. daily Mass in the Parish Hall.

Jan. 11: Knights of Columbus meeting – 7 p.m.

Jan. 12: Exploring the Faith at 5:30 p.m. in the Library.

Jan. 17: Pastoral Council meeting – 6 p.m.

Jan. 28: Annual Italian Dinner. 4-8 p.m.

Feb. 4: 8 to 10:30 a.m. Knights of Columbus benefit breakfast for *Hope's Place* – *Pregnancy Care Center*.

Italian Dinner Fundraiser

Please see the board in the Church entrance for the many opportunities of sponsoring food items and supplies needed to put on the dinner.

We need dessert items of any delicious kind! Please call Martha to let her know she can count on you! 208-756-2150

Pray for the health and generosity of the many volunteers and our patrons of this event.

