

For God so loved the world that He
gave His only begotten son...



That whosoever believeth in Him,
may not be lost but may have
eternal life.. John 3:16



Season's Greetings to You....

We wish you a Holy Advent and Christmas season. May the Peace and Joy of this season fill your homes now and always, and we ask the Holy Family to guide you in all that you desire for 2016.

God Bless you,

Cintra and Ricardo Joachim

National Coordinators

Catholic Engaged Encounter Trinidad and Tobago (CEETT)



May the star of Christmas shine upon us and reflect its light in all that we do and in all that surrounds us. This Christmas, let us follow in the footsteps of Jesus, by bringing light to all God's creations, and fill us with the light, hope and peace that will allow us to transform the world, with our testimony of love.

We pray the Lord to give us a new birth as we celebrate as we celebrate the beginning of His Son's life on earth.

Merry Christmas

Sandra and Macedonia Garza and Fr. Louis Monroy.

Executive Team 2015-2018

International Catholic Engaged Encounter



Merry Christmas from "way down yonder in New Orleans!", We wish everyone in International Catholic Engaged Encounter (ICEE) many blessings of peace and joy during Christmas, and 2016. We invite everyone to attend the USA national convention which will be in New Orleans, Louisiana August 26th to 28th, 2016.

Steve and Claudia Schulz and Fr. Kevin Maloney

2015 Executive Team

International Catholic Engaged Encounter



As we approach another Christmas season, we ask that the Lord will encourage us to follow His example of love and mercy which he showed by sending us His Son to save us from what our sins deserve. May we in this coming year extend that love, mercy and humility to our family, friends, ministry and to all we meet, so that they may experience the joy that Jesus brings; the joy that we ask God to bless us all with now and in the coming year.



Tony and Angela Mitchell

Caribbean Coordinators, Catholic Engaged Encounter

We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the teams who are involved in the Evenings of the Engaged Programs of Marriage Preparation in the Archdiocese for their commitment and continued support. We join with Catholic Engaged Encounter in wishing everyone a blessed Christmas and a joyous and prosperous New Year.



Jose and Barbara,

Coordinators of Marriage Preparation

Archdiocese of Port of Spain

Peace on earth and good will to all men Luke 2:14



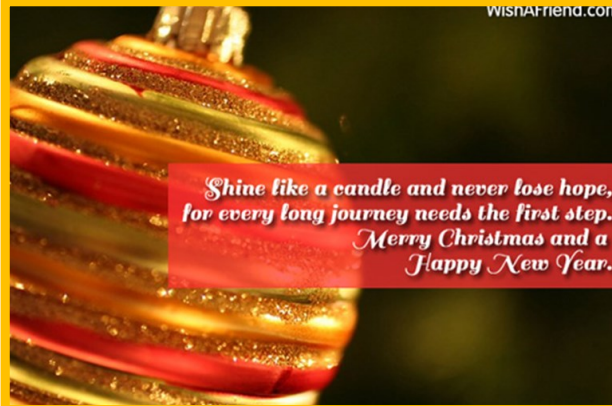
Gifts of the Heart

What is the most memorable Christmas gift you've ever received? When you think about that question what comes to mind is something tangible like a present that you can hold in your hand. But what about a gift that you can hold in your heart—a gift of mercy when you don't deserve it? Wouldn't that, in the whole scheme of every day life, mean more to you than just receiving things that eventually will break or decay or lose their importance?

We're not saying you shouldn't get your spouse a Christmas gift. Tangible gifts can also be important. But we need to give each other more than material possessions in order to maintain a growing relationship which honors each other and honors God.

As we look for gifts to give our spouse this Christmas, let's not forget to also share with them gifts of the heart—the type of gifts that "keep on giving"—not only at Christmas but throughout the year. After-all, isn't that what the Christ of Christmas came to give us? We didn't deserve the gift of mercy and grace that He gave on our behalf, but none-the-less, it's available to all who believe in His name and receive Him as their Savior.

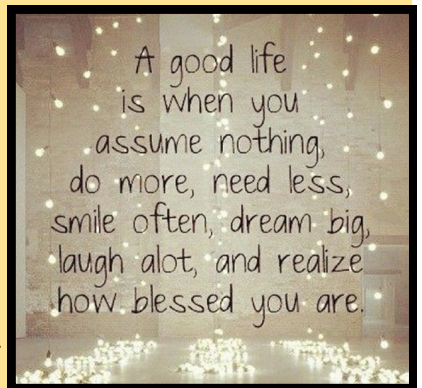
On this note, we'd like to share with you the following (shortened) message, which was sent to us through a



friend of the ministry. It's titled, *SPREAD A LITTLE CHRISTMAS CHEER!* By Julian Marion: "Sharing is what this Christmas season is all about. When God sent Jesus Christ into the world, God was sharing heaven with us. Christmas is not about Santa,

it's about a Savior. It's not about gifts, it's about grace. "Jesus will always be the reason for the season because He is Lord. The knowledge of Christ must effect a transformation in our lives that will in turn affect our attitudes and our actions. The words we speak will only influence others if our actions support our words.

"We live in a day and age, where people are weary and perhaps reticent when it comes to doing good. But this should not however, deny us the privilege of walking in obedience to our Lord.



"Jesus said, 'For I was hungry, and you gave me food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' Then the righteous shall answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry, and fed You? Or thirsty, and gave You drink? When did we see You a stranger, and took You in? Or naked, and clothed You?' (Matthew 25:35-38).

"Inasmuch as you are kind and charitable to one of the

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least of these, you are doing it as unto the Lord Himself.

“The Bible states that those who profess to love God and hate their brothers are in denial. After all, how can you hate your brother whom you can see, but you claim to love God who you cannot see?”

“Christmas is that time of year when the whole world is hearing the message of the birth of Jesus. Keep a sharp eye out for even the smallest chance to assist people. It’s amazing how others are ready to hear what you have to say when you say it in love.

“It’s easy to give people what they deserve, but it’s a privilege to give them mercy. As we ask God to begin a work of humility in our hearts, we will see just how powerfully His transforming love truly is. Remember, Christmas is only complete when we receive God’s gift —Jesus Christ.”

Let us not forget during this season of busyness to give each other the gift of mercy, and also to be kind to each other. After-all, if you’re too busy to be kind—you’re too busy. You need to do some rearranging of your priorities. As we go through the rest of the days leading up to Christmas ask God to show you how to share with your spouse gifts from the heart —ways in which you can extend grace and mercy. Over-look little annoyances that in the big scheme of things won’t amount to much 100 years from now.

The following are seven gifts of the heart we challenge you



to put in the forefront of your mind to give each other this Christmas season:

- Give the gift of LISTENING: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry (James 1:19).
- Give the gift of BEING POLITE to each other and to be SELF-SACRIFICING in your motives: [Love] is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:5).
- Give the gift of BEING CAREFUL WITH YOUR WORDS: Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen (Ephesians 4:29).
- Give the gift of BEING CONSIDERATE WITH HOW YOU SAY THINGS: Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing (Proverbs 12:18).
- Give the gift of TRYING TO TRULY UNDERSTAND YOUR SPOUSES FEELINGS over a matter that’s important to them: A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions. (Proverbs 18:2)
- Give the gift of RESTRAINING YOUR ANGER: A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control. (Proverbs 29:11)
- Give the gift of SPEAKING ONLY KIND WORDS, AND BEING PEACEABLE: Remind the people... to slander no

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one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men. (Titus 3:2)

And lastly, if you have children, give *them* a peaceful Christmas by applying these principles to your life, so they don't have to pay the price for their mom and dad being mean-spirited and unlike Christ in words and actions.

You are a living example to them and others of how a Christ-follower honors the Christ of Christmas during this holiday season. Make it truly a time when there will be "Peace on earth and good will toward men" —at least lived out in YOUR home!

May God bless and keep you,

Steve and Cindy Wright

Adapted from <http://marriagemissions.com/the-gift-of-grace-and-mercy-marriage-message-179/>



THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

The story's told of a little girl who's passing out the presents to her family on Christmas morning. After finding gifts for each member of her family, she was puzzled that there wasn't a gift for the One whose birth was being commemorated. "I guess everyone forgot about Jesus," she said.

If you want a truly meaningful Christmas season, it stands to reason you need to grasp the true meaning of Christmas. Forget about Jesus and you've missed the entire, glorious point of the celebration.

Adapted from <http://www.gtv.org/resources/sermon-series/3/the-real-meaning-of-christmas>



Home baked happiness- Giving Christmas to Your Family

It's Christmas time, & Lucy comes in where Charlie Brown is standing & says, "Merry Christmas, Charlie Brown. 'Tis the season of peace on earth & good will toward men. Therefore, I suggest we forget all our differences & love one another." Charlie Brown, whose face lights up at this, says, "That's wonderful, Lucy. I'm so glad you said that. But tell me, do we have to love each other only at this season of the year? Why can't we love each other all year long?" Lucy retorts, "What are you, a fanatic or something?"

If we really get serious about Christmas, it seems that we're branded by the world as some kind of fanatic. Yet, Christmas is supposed to be a time of "peace on earth, good will toward men." If we really get serious about Christmas, it seems that we're branded by the world as some kind of fanatic. Yet, Christmas is supposed to be a time of "peace on earth, good will toward men." In the passage concerning our Saviour's birth found in Luke 2:8-14, "In the country side close by there were shepherds who lived in the field and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.



And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.; And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God

and singing: *Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy this favour.*"

How wonderful our homes could be, how wonderful our lives could be, how wonderful our world could be, if we really did put into practice the blessing of "peace on earth, good will toward men." And as Christmas comes, we think once again, "Maybe it's not impossible. Maybe we really could have hearts filled with love. Maybe we really could be kind to each other, & not just once a year, but all year long." Most of us spend a great deal of time & thought in choosing just the right gift for that special person in our life. We think about their needs & wants & what might make them happy. Then we go shopping, & make that purchase, maybe over our budget. We gift wrap it, & anxiously await the moment when that loved one will open our special gift. And when he or she opens the box, & looks at our gift, we eagerly anticipate expressions of joy & delight. But if there are no expressions of joy & delight, we'll be most disappointed, won't we? Because in receiving the gift, they're receiving us. Or if they reject it, they're rejecting us. At least, that's the way we



feel, isn't it? What was God's gift to us at Christmas time? In reality, God gave us several very valuable gifts.

I. HE GAVE US THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS

In Jesus Christ, God gave us the opportunity for the forgiveness of our sins. You see, we'll never have peace with our fellow man until first we're at peace with ourselves. And we can never really be at peace with ourselves until we're at peace with God. And we can never be at peace with God until our sins have been forgiven.

A few years ago. In the Eastern part of the U.S. a cookbook was recalled. This cookbook was recalled because one recipe had left out an important ingredient. And the producers of the book realized that if someone followed the directions of that recipe & left out that ingredient, that the ingredients they put together could actually blow up in their faces. So because of that hazard, the cookbook was recalled. God has given us the recipe for life. He says, "You want peace? Then here is the recipe. Find forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Live according to My rules & principles, the ingredients that make it all possible." But if you leave out some of His ingredients, or stick in some of the ingredients of the world, then what happens? Life can blow up in your face. That is why there is so much depression & so much suicide & so much rejection.

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tion. Because too many are following the wrong recipes for life. So God says, "Here's my gift. It is not just the gift of a baby, but it is the offer of forgiveness & salvation."

II. HELP IN OUR PRESENT SITUATION

The 2nd thing that God offers is "Help in our present situation." I think of the shepherds sitting out on the hillsides; they were poor, with not much prospect for improving their lives. Life was hard & harsh for them, without much hope of it ever getting better. And then, one glorious night, the angels appeared & made his wondrous announcement. And suddenly everything was changed. God had become real to them. God had come to help them, to be their Savior, to bring "peace on earth, good will to men." At the other end the Magi were people with power & authority & wealth. Yet there was an emptiness in their lives as well. So when they saw the star, they came because they needed something, too. Whether rich or poor, powerful or weak, whoever we are, we need help. And God has promised that when the Christ child enters our hearts & lives then we will receive His help. And when we're helped by the Holy Spirit of God, then we develop a more sympathetic feeling towards one another, too. At Christmas time we seem to be more sensitive to one another, don't we? Because Christmas reminds us that God has reached down to help us. And now we want to help one another. Maybe there is more good in us than we give ourselves credit for. Maybe we spend too much time beating ourselves over the head, telling ourselves how bad we are.

In December 1997, shooting at a high school in Paducah, Ky. left 3 children dead & 5 wounded. It was a terrible, terrible tragedy. I was moved by the love & compassion of the parents who immediately gave permission for the doctors to remove vital organs from their daughter, & to use them to save the lives of at least 3 others who desperately needed them. I was moved by their tears, tears of both sadness & joy, as they learned that their daughter's lungs had been successfully transplanted into a young man whose family had been told that he had only a few more days to live. But if we are moved by scenes of sorrow & joy, how much more moved should we be to realize that the King of Kings & the Lord of Lords, has visited our world to cry with us, to rejoice with us, & to help us over the hurts & bumps of life itself. When you realize that, then "peace on earth, & good will toward men" becomes easier, & more realistic.

III. GOD GAVE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE



One final thing that God gave at Christmas time when He gave Jesus is hope for the future. You know what kept the shepherds going? It was hope. God had made a promise to their people. He would one day send a Messiah, the Anointed One.

And when the Messiah came everything would be all right again. And that hope burned in the hearts & lives of the people of Israel. You know what kept the wise men going? It was hope. Every night they would go out & search the heavens, looking for that star of promise. And they knew when they saw it they



Three Wise Men

must follow wherever it led them, because it was a sign from God, & it promised the birth of a king. So hope kept them going. And God brings hope to us at Christmas. An impossible dream - "Peace on earth, good will toward men?" Maybe...But there is one thing to keep us going. One day heaven is going to open, & God will come back, & the dream will be fulfilled of peace & good will for all eternity.

A 7th-grade boy by the name of William Spurling, was given the part of the inn keeper in Christmas play. He was a little slow mentally, but well liked by the children. When Joseph and Mary pleaded for room for the third time, there was a long pause, one of those pauses that is as embarrassing for the audience as it is for the cast. William Spurling had forgotten his next line. Back behind the props you could hear the prompter saying, "No, be gone! No, be gone!" Finally, William said, with softness in his voice, "No, be gone." Mary & Joseph sadly turned to leave. But as they did, suddenly William Spurling regained his voice & said, "Wait a minute! You can stay in my room, & I'll sleep in the shed." In the stunned silence that followed, the teacher thought the play was ruined, until she thought again of the words of a 7th-grade boy, who may have communicated the real truth of Christmas better than any. "No, you can stay in my room, & I'll sleep in the shed." Conclusion: Isn't that what Jesus did? "No, you don't have to die for your sins. I'll take your place on the cross." "No, you can enter the heavenly home. I'm preparing a place for you there."

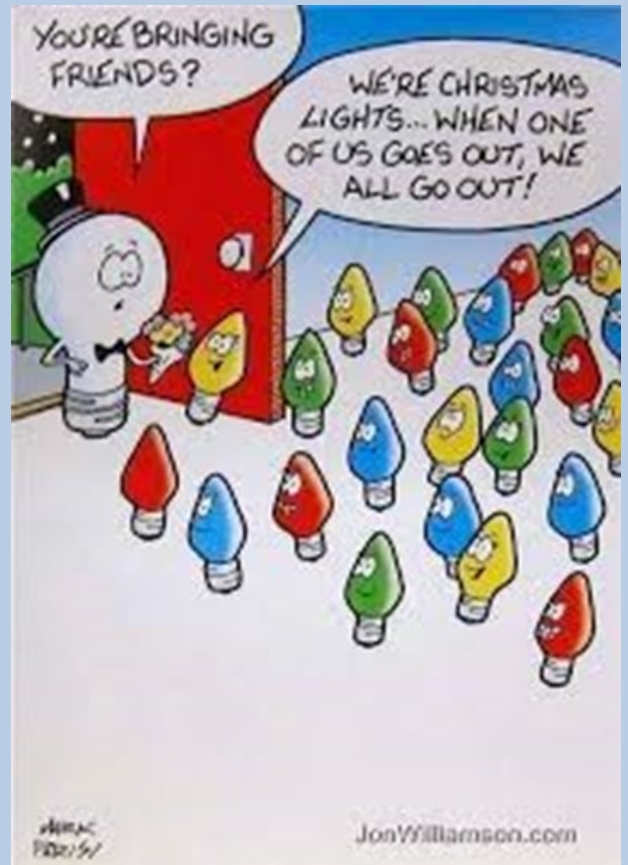
Christmas made the difference. God wrapped up a gift & gave it. Now He stands back & waits to see what we will do. Will we receive it with joy? Or will we treat it with indifference & rejection? God waits to see, because what we

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do with the gift is also what we do with Him. If we accept the gift, then we receive Him & His forgiveness & His help & His hope. But if we reject it, then we also reject Him. God offers that gift again this Christmas and every day, & He waits to see what you will do. I pray that you will receive Him with open arms of love as we extend His invitation to all we meet.

Adapted from: <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/home-baked-happiness-giving-christmas-to-your-family-melvin-newland-sermon-on-christmas-39260.asp?Page=1>



CEETT Christmas Luncheon Sunday 6th December, 2015
Fatima R.C. Church Parish Hall