



## Keep on celebrating Christ

**When I was a little boy, I knew that the Christmas season was coming because the decorations would appear, school was out and the Christmas tree went up.**

And how did I know that the Christmas season was over? The decorations got put back into the box. Then school started again and I knew that Christmas was really over. How were the people of Jesus' time to know that he was coming? God sent angels and Magi and finally John the Baptist to tell people to get ready for him.

Here's an important difference between then and now: The season of Christmas begins and ends, and then – apparently – it will go away for a whole year. But the time of Jesus Christ with us does not end. Jesus is not a season or a holiday that ends or a visitor who went away.

Jesus the Christ who is Son of God and son of Mary is still with us, in ways that John the Baptist could not imagine. Christ is with us in the life and teaching of the Church; he is with us in the Scriptures; and he is with us in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist ...

Let's make this year's celebration of Christmas different from previous celebrations of Christmas. Let's not treat Christ, the Word-made-flesh, as a decoration to be put away until next year. Let's not treat Christ as a visitor who stops by during the holidays.

What can and should "the real world" look and feel like for faithful Christians who know that the birth of the saviour changes everything? Let's focus on the three points:

1. **We are not alone:** God is now always with us, speaking to us in creation, through the Church, and through the amazing dignity of each human.
2. **We may have hope:** The saving work of Christ, begun at his birth, was undertaken to re-open the gates of Heaven for us. We have a higher destiny than life and death in the realm of common experience!
3. **We have work to do:** People are in misery to the degree that they do not know and love Christ. What we have received as a gift – our Christian calling – we must now give as a gift. Whatever our state in life, we can't rest or know peace until we do our best to bring Christ to the world and the world to Christ.

"Why can't every day be Christmas?" It can be, it should be, and it is. Every day, Christ is with us and for us, and asks us to join him in restoring all creation to God. Even as the Christmas season ends, the time of Emmanuel (God-with-us) never ends – and that's worth celebrating!

Source: excerpt from "Christmas, world without end", Fr Robert McTeigue SJ, Dec 27, 2017 (<http://bit.ly/2CcebMW>).

### REFLECTION

> How can we keep Christ with us throughout the year?

COMPASSION JUSTICE RESPECT HOPE