

**White Robed Monks of St. Benedict  
Homily delivered at 2020 Christmas Eve Zoom Mass**

Rejoice and Be Glad!

*Merry Christmas* - what feeling does this phrase bring to our hearts? *Rejoice and be Glad!* In our Old Testament Reading, we heard that *there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens.*

*Merry Christmas* mentions a specific season - the beginning of winter in the northern hemisphere and the beginning of summer in the southern. *Merry Christmas* is not attached to winter or summer, or even fall or spring for that matter. *Merry Christmas – Rejoice and Be Glad!*

Right now, here, today is today, in another part of the world our today is tomorrow and in another, yesterday. *Merry Christmas – Rejoice and Be Glad!*

A circumstance is any activity under the sun. A circumstance is just what is happening. How we perceive that circumstance makes it a situation, an illusion. If we take the circumstance personally, we create our own drama. If we intend to perceive, the best we can, what is happening just as it is happening, regardless, we can *Rejoice and Be Glad!*

Jesus of Nazareth, apparent son of Mary and Joseph in one sense was Son of God and Son of Man in another - much like ourselves. How so? When Jesus referenced Himself as "Son of God" he was referencing Himself as a Child of the Father. When he referenced Himself as a Son of Man, He was recalling Daniel's allusion (Dan 7:13) of the son of man who is a heavenly person coming to Earth and returning to God. Jesus was referencing his own divinity by saying: *Only God has the authority to forgive sins, I did this that you might know that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins.* (Matt 9:6)

We, too, are children of God. The metaphor follows that we are, come from and are born of The Father through our parents and to Whom we shall return: We too are Sons and Daughters of God and Man. In our first reading, we recognize the human condition: a time for this and a time for that, a time of duality.

Wishing *Merry Christmas* transcends that duality as we wish Peace and Joy! to all whom we meet. They – as we each - have an option to *Rejoice and Be Glad!*

Words, though, need action to give them actual meaning. *Merry Christmas* is the expression of the Christmas Spirit, metaphorically present under so many guises. The joyful lights of the tree, the glee of opening gifts, the echo of the carols, all reminding us of glad tidings: *Rejoice and Be Glad!*

Merry Christmas resounds with *Rejoice and Be Glad!*. We can bring such rejoicing and glad tidings in to our lives the whole year round. How?

What to do? We can focus our attention on what we have to be thankful for, beginning with our Life. We can appreciate what we have, including our sorrows and joys. We are yet able to enjoy the opportunity to experience human life. Just be thankful. *Merry Christmas* – Thankful gratitude. *Rejoice and Be Glad!* - it's but a choice.

*Merry Christmas*: What really matters when we replace human drama with appreciation for the gift of Life and just smile at our own and other's human foibles? We all have our blind spots, don't we? We really don't know the whole picture or what this dance of human life is really all about. Do we just recognize ourselves in others and let go of our self-centered ways? Do we recognize that each of us are on same path to our death? Do we take whatever happens to us personally? Do we not each have a touch of Mr. or Mrs. Scrooge? *Merry Christmas* with a smile and a simple *Hello* often suffice and brakes the ice. *Rejoice and Be Glad!*

Some of us are poor in spirit. We each have mourned. Others of us are meek. Some of us hunger and thirst for righteousness. Others of us are merciful. And some of us are pure in heart. No matter. We each can opt for Christmas and *Rejoice and Be Glad!*

We can maintain the Christmas Spirit with a general practice. We can be mindful of what we say and how we say it. We can act in accord with what we know – not think – but know to be true. We can engage in a career or work that brings joy to ourselves and others.

In other words, we can *Rejoice and Be Glad!* that we appreciate how we can serve in small ways, being mindful that whatever we do or do not do impacts the people present or not. *Rejoice and Be Glad!*

We can focus our attention to our breathing when we find we are out of sorts. We can realize that the impact of how we act does not end with our death. What we do or not impacts the whole one way or the other long after our deaths. *Rejoice and Be Glad!*

So, our basic intention: to bring the Christmas Spirit alive all year round *by rejoicing and being glad* in thought, word, and deed. *Merry Christmas!*

Again, *Merry Christmas* / Rejoice and Be Glad!!- just with a smile says and does it all!. Let us bring the Christmas Spirit to all whom we meet all year round.

Thank you. Peace and Joy!! *Merry Christmas!!* and Happy New Year!!