

Greetings to everyone who continue to celebrate the birth of Christ,

**SCRIPTURE:**

John 15:11 (NIV) – Larger reading: John 15:1-17

*“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”*

**STORY:**

“It is this that made the future of Christianity,” said Matthew Arnold, “it’s gladness, not its sorrow ... its drawing from the spiritual world a source of joy so abundant that it ran over upon the material world and transfigured it.”

**REFLECTION:**

Most of the world took time out of their busy schedule yesterday to experience the joy that had come into the world. Admittedly, it might seem hard to celebrate when some tragedy has visited a loved one. But, while life could be challenging in this time of Covid ... the time of celebration has come into all of our homes ... even when this seem the darkest. I shared Mr. Buscaglia story at the end of my Christmas Eve sermon how in the face of financial ruin his mother rallied the family with what she called, “The Misery Dinner” and so, our celebration can rally our spirits in the face of Covid or whatever each of us might be facing. The time to celebrate is NOW. Rejoicing dispels the gloom and dark. Joy turns night into day. And so we stopped to celebrate ... may the celebration of Christmas continue not just on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December and not just during the month of December, but may it continue throughout the year.

I have always found it peculiar the number of homes that remove all signs of the Christmas celebration on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December. The tree is out on the curb to be picked up. The lights come off the house. All decorations are packed away for another year. They seem to be declaring, the time of celebration is over ... now get back to routine, our work, our busy schedule ... we’ve had our moment of happiness and it is time to pick up the pieces of our life.

But I like the declaration of the little girl who got up on December 26<sup>th</sup> and proclaimed to her family, “Merry Christmas, Jesus is born!” When her father tried to correct her by reminding her that Christmas was yesterday she shared, “But if he isn’t born today then he wasn’t born yesterday either. His birth is every day and every day is Christmas.” I think that she got it right. Her joy was and is complete.

**QUOTE:**

*“When you do things from your soul, you feel a river moving in you, a joy.” – Rumi*

**PRAYER:**

May we dear Lord celebrate the reality of Christ’s birth in our life everyday. May our joy be complete as you live in us. Amen.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim  
Jmartin450@tampabay.rr.com  
386-795-5323