

# HOMILY ~ CHRISTMAS 2024

There was a woman who had a dream of traveling to England and riding a train through the English countryside. She saved up, bought her plane and train tickets and made the trip. When she boarded the train and got settled in her compartment, she was not happy with it. She decided to change compartments, so she found the porter and started looking through the train for a better compartment. She found one, moved her things and got settled again. She was planning to have lunch on the train so she went to the dining car. It was full by this time. She waited in line for a while and then decided to go back to her compartment as she had some snacks in her suitcase. She found the snacks, got settled but it was too hot in her compartment. She tried to open the window but it appeared to be broken. She found the porter again, and he said he would find someone to fix the window. This took a while and, by the time the window was open, the train was pulling into the station. She realized that she missed the train ride.

I wonder if some of us have done that with Christmas. After Thanksgiving, we prepare for Christmas and start celebrating Christmas at the same time. We are shopping, addressing cards, going to parties, having parties, baking cookies, decorating the house, putting up the tree. Sometimes we get so caught up in the details that we miss what we are celebrating. We are celebrating the birth of Jesus. All of you have not forgotten that because here you are in Church today. All of the busyness is over now, and we can relax. You are getting an hour here in Church where you can just relax. I am going to suggest to you that you think about where you are spiritually. Are you where you want to be? Are you making enough room in your life for God? Have you been away from Church for a while? People got out of the habit of going to Church on Sunday during COVID. Did you used to just come because it was what you did on Sunday? Do you think it may be time to come back? Does it feel good to be back at St. Edith? We have a fabulous community here, and a lot going on. Is it time to become more involved in the Parish? Be sure and take a copy of the bulletin and look at what is offered here. Are there things that interest you?

You will be getting a special gift this year for Christmas, but it probably will not be wrapped and under the tree so you may miss it. Christmas is a time that we make a point of spending time with people we love. Don't get so caught up in the details that you miss the gift. I remember a Christmas over 20 years ago when I was in

seminary. I was on Christmas break and staying with my Mother. She had just retired because the store she worked at for years closed. She worked in retail so she usually worked a lot around Christmas. We leisurely got out every decoration, made Christmas cookies and spent a lot of time together. I decided not to plan a lot of other stuff. By the next Christmas, my Mother had passed away. I had no idea that that was going to be her last Christmas, but I am still grateful that I spent all of that time with her for her last Christmas. So look for the opportunity to spend some special time with someone you love. You do not know how long you will have them. You may be getting together with relatives from an older generation. Maybe your gift is hearing the stories about your family history. Take time to do that. Once they are gone, the stories will be gone as well. Maybe you are the older generation and need to spend some time telling the stories to the younger generation. Last year I asked about 50 kids around seven or eight years old what their favorite thing was about Christmas. I expected to hear about presents they got or the trips they went on, but 90% of the kids said spending time with their family was their favorite thing. When we live together, we are together a lot; but how much of that time is just distracted time. Sometimes we focus upon the little unimportant annoying things that the people we love do. Let that go. It will just spoil the time you have with them. Or maybe we need to just put down the phone, turn off the TV and be really present to the people we are with. Studies have been done about multi-tasking, and the results are pretty conclusive. We cannot multi-task. If you try and do that you are not really attentive to anything. We need to focus upon one thing at a time. Don't miss the best gift you will get for Christmas this year. It is probably spending time with God and the people you love.

Love and Peace,

Fr. Jim