

## THE SEARS CHRISTMAS CATALOGUE



When I was a little kid the arrival of the Sears Christmas Catalogue heralded the coming of Christmas. I was a little kid who loved getting stuff from Santa so I would grab the Sears catalogue, immediately turn to the toy section, examine each picture, review every item, read every description, make my choice and on a separate piece of notebook paper write down the name of the item and what page Santa could find it in the Sears Christmas Catalogue. This was my Christmas wish list and when I was finished I had two pages of wants.

Christmas to me was nothing more than two pages of wants from the Sears Christmas Catalogue.

As a high school senior I no longer used the Sears Christmas Catalogue from which to select my wants. I can vividly recall still receiving lots of stuff and in the midst of opening another gift feeling a wave of guilt washing over me. I had too much stuff.

Today's Gospel reading is an account of John the Baptist appearing in the desert, clothed in camel's hair and a belt, on a diet of locusts and wild honey. There is nothing in the Gospel description of John that conjures up an image of John thumbing excitedly through the Sears Christmas Catalogue. His unmistakable purpose was to prepare others for the coming of the Lord, not for the retail season.

Despite what I once thought Christmas was about and contrary to what may first come to mind to many of us—so many people to buy for, so little time, so little money—Jesus is the reason for the season. Christmas was once an occasion to celebrate the birth of Christ with a mass (Christ mass). It still is.

Jesus came to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free. Jesus came not for his birthday party, not to create an economic model where the health of the economy depends on the retail sales of goods purchased to be given and opened on the date of his birth.

As we embark upon another journey into the Christmas season let us remember the poor, the captives, the blind and the oppressed. Let us listen to the Gospel reading of John announcing the coming of the Lord and remind ourselves the reason for the season.

The arrival of John the Baptist heralded the coming of Christ. Today, that contains much greater meaning for me than the Sears Christmas Catalogue.



**Office of Life, Justice, and Peace**