

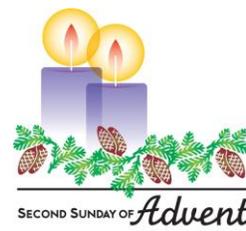
## BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS TREE

*You may find this helpful in making your tree a symbol of God's blessings*  
*Monsignor Morrison*

*The Sign of the Cross is made.*

L. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

**R. Now and forever.**



L. This tree is a blessing to our home. It reminds us of all that is beautiful, all that is filled with gentleness and the promise of God. It stands in our midst as a tree of light that we might promise such beauty to one another and to our world. It stands like that tree of paradise that God made into the tree of life, the cross of Jesus.

*Then the Scripture is read.*

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul to Titus.

But when the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, he saved us through the bath of rebirth, and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

The Word of the Lord.

**R. Thanks be to God.**

L. Let us now pray for God's blessing upon all who gather around this tree.

God of all creation, we praise you for this tree which brings beauty and memories and the promise of life to our home. May your blessing be upon all who gather around this tree, all who keep the Christmas festival by its lights. We wait for the coming of Christ, the days of everlasting justice and peace. You are our God, living and reigning, forever and ever.

**Amen.**

*The lights of the tree are then illuminated.*

L. Let us bless the Lord.

**R. Thanks be to God. [All make the Sign of the cross]**

**O come thou dayspring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by Thine advent here;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadow put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

## What Christmas Means

I again present here an updated insert that considers two of the meanings that Father Donald Miller described in his article in 1958. In a previous insert I had written about his thoughts on the personal meaning of Christmas. Without doubt this is the most important one for the ordinary believer. It is a meaning that I must let you personally think about. In this Year of Mercy, we must try to have "a deeper grasp of the meaning of Christmas." This will bring us closer to Christ, which is a noble aim for our spiritual life. I hope you are enjoying this grace-filled season, a season that lasts longer than just one day.

## The Family Meaning of Christmas

Everybody has a family. It is possible that one can be bereft of that relationship, due to the vagaries of life's journey. However, we look to the fact that God does desire us to be born into a family, to grow up in a family, and for some to begin new families.

Christmas is a family feast. While Christmas is a personal feast reminding us of our individual duties, our knowledge of the duties that human beings owe to their families finds its basis in the image of what a family is in the Christmas story.

Christmas brought into the world Him who laid down the rules for the right kind of family living. To save their souls husbands, wives, sons, and daughters have to keep the rules. They are a part of the plan that Christ has for their redemption. His plan is really the only protection for families on earth. Who else will protect family life, if not those gifted with the knowledge of the meaning of the message embodied in Christmas?

The Christ born at Christmas willed that your home and family life should center on eternal principles. These include the permanence of marriage (between a man and a woman), of chastity in every way of life and the Christian principle of love.

Families are built on love and in them love is found at its noblest and best. It is not just a love of feeling but love rooted in the free will of the members. Ask yourself in this season whether you have the kind of love that is seen in the Holy family, a love of God and of others. And recall that love is kind and patient and selfless.

Christmas does have a meaning for all of society. It may be attacked today, but Christmas is a time when we really do think about peace on earth for those of good will. Christmas is a Feast-day for justice - the work of justice is peace. It is a feast of charity when mercy and forgiveness of others takes center stage. It is a time to recall how Jesus was born in poverty; and think of why He was. It is a celebration of zeal- and leads us to want to be new evangelizers in this special Year.

Christmas is a time for you to live a generous faith, a faith filled with the spirit of mercy. It is a time for grace, received from the Lord who waits to give you peace. It is a time for surrender to God's Will. It is a time when we find the example of the love of Mary, of Joseph and of Jesus inspiring and compelling.

*With this reworking of Fr. Miller's article, I have tried to make the meanings of Christmas be a catalyst for action. I hope you really will do what Father said at the start of his article: "Look for the meaning of Christmas in your own life and in your own soul. If it has no meaning there, it is not time for you to celebrate, but rather to grieve.... See whether (these meanings) have, as yet, been grasped and applied in the inner most part of your soul. " In doing this you will truly live **the Spirit**.*

*God love you always!  
Monsignor David Morrison*