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# ITE MISSA EST



A Newsletter from the Missions Office/Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States  
Catholic Diocese of Columbus, Ohio

## *O Come, O Come Emmanuel, Ransom Captive Israel!*

### *To monthly mission donors: Thank you for your support!*

On behalf of His Excellency Frederick F. Campbell, the Bishop of Columbus, and Father Andrew Small, OMI, the National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States, I would like to thank you for your prayers, sacrifices and financial support for the missions.

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The Advent Season is an opportunity for us to reflect more deeply in the “comings” of Christ: 1) His first coming in the manger in Bethlehem more than 2000 years ago, 2) His second coming in glory and majesty at the end of time, and 3) His coming at present in the life of the Church, in the sacraments (especially in the Holy Eucharist) and in the lives and works of Christians.

In the most significant moment in history, God became Man. God dwelt among us. God, who created the whole universe chose to become a small baby, dependent upon a young peasant girl and a poor carpenter. God left His golden throne in exchange for a sheep pen. He left His robe of eternity in exchange for swaddling clothes. There were no reporters from the media to tell the world of the significant event in history. There was no band to welcome the King of Kings. The sounds at the stable were: cows

crunching, hooves crackling, a young mother humming as the baby was nursing.

Yet, Christ’s first coming became and remains and will remain the center of history. All time is dated from the birth of Christ. Times before His birth are dated B.C. and times after His birth are dated A.D. We are now in 2018 A.D.

Christ is the most significant figure on earth. Christ’s impact in the world has never been, is not and will never be matched. Christ’s followers initiated a total revolution and transformation of the societies in which they lived. They presented Christ as the light that illumines all dimensions of human life. The Church Christ founded had developed and guided the growth of Western civilization. We should never underestimate the radical alteration of history that came about through the birth of Christ.

In Christ’s second coming at the end of time, He will appear in glory and majesty. Themes of Advent prayers draw us to His glorious return. The full blossoming of God’s grace in history is what we are waiting for; when heaven and earth will be reunited. When Christ ascended into heaven, He commanded His disciples, and us, who claim to follow Him, to continue His work on earth. When comes back, He will complete the work which His followers have done; He will complete the process of

restoration of creation to God. He will make the world new.

The third coming of Christ is happening now – in the present. It is Christ’s living action in the Church and in each of us: in baptism, in the service and charity of Christian individuals, communities, and institutions all over the world.

It is certain that the Church with its people had, has and will have an imperfect history. The Church is holy, but its members are not. But in spite of its woundedness, can you imagine what would the world be like, if there were no more Christians, no more sacraments, no more charitable works in the name of Christ? What if Christianity were to disappear? What if there were no more religious orders to take care of orphans, the sick, the hungry. What if there were no more people like Saint Mother Teresa? The world would be a different place. Wouldn’t it?

During the Advent Season as we reflect on the comings of Christ; let us fast; let us pray for the grace to understand more fully the effects Christ’s birth in our lives and in the world. We pray as we wait for His glorious return at the end of time. And we pray for the grace to understand deeper and appreciate more fully, Christ’s presence in our time, in the life of the Church, in the sacraments, and in the lives and charitable works of Christ’s followers.

***Et Verbum caro factum est***  
(John 1:14)

In our culture, Santa Claus is becoming the centerpiece of the Christmas festivity, especially among children. With Santa and gifts in their minds, it seems that Jesus is being pushed behind the scene during Christmas season.

I like the saying: "Jesus is the reason for the season". Not Santa! I have nothing against Santa. He is a great saint. He was a good and generous bishop. But Christmas is not about Saint Nicholas.

"Christ is the reason for the season" reminds us of what the Angel told Joseph; that the Child in Mary's womb was to be named, "Jesus" which means, "God saves". This is Jesus' identity. This is Jesus' mission. This is what Jesus does.

"Jesus saves!" That is what Jesus is all about. This is what His ministry is all about. This is what His life, His death and His resurrection proclaim.

Jesus saves us from what? Jesus saves us from emptiness and meaninglessness; He saves us from discouragement and despair; He saves us from sin and sadness; He saves us from fear; He saves us from hopelessness, and ultimately death.

Jesus is Emmanuel; God with us. It means that God is on our side.

When it comes to us, who had been created in God's image and likeness, God is not neutral; God is not disinterested; God is not distant; God is not passive; God is not detached.

Instead, God cares; God is involved. God breaks into time, space and history to save us.

God is with us; that is what the "Incarnation" means. That is what Christmas is all about.

The "Word", the second person of the Blessed Trinity, became flesh and dwelt among us.

God did not somehow fill the world with His presence. God actually became visible by taking a human form.

God wants us to tangibly experience Him; to see Him, to hear Him and to touch Him.

Jesus is truly present in our midst. He is in every tabernacle in the world. The red light flickering near the tabernacle reminds us that Jesus Christ - Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity - is truly present with us.

The Holy Eucharist is the center of our life. The Holy Eucharist the single greatest gift that God can give us in this life. The Holy Eucharist is the gift of His very Self to us.

May the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament open our eyes so we can see what God has done for us and will continue to do for us.

May we continue to grow, not only in gratitude, but also grow in our desire to be with Him.

***Merry Christmas!***

***Quest:***

If you want your neighbor to know what the Lord will do for him, let him see and hear what the Lord has done for you.

***Quip:***

If all of us hang our troubles, on a clothesline, most of us would choose our own troubles.

***Quote:***

"Kind words do not cost much. Yet they accomplish much".

~ Blaise Pascal

***Be born anew in our hearts***

Lord, enter into our dark world. We are weary of bloodshed and pain.

Like the wise men, we are looking for a star. Like the shepherds, we kneel at a manger.

Thank you for your love. Help us share the same love with one another. Amen.

***Pope Francis' December prayer intentions:***

That people, who are involved in the service and transmission of faith, may find, in their dialogue with culture, a language suited to the conditions of the present time.

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***A joke a priest can tell... 😄👏***

A worldwide survey was conducted by the UN. The only question asked was: "Would you please give your honest opinion about solutions to the food shortage in the rest of the world?" The survey was a huge failure. In Africa they didn't know what "food" meant. In Eastern Europe they didn't know what "honest" meant. In Western Europe they didn't know what "shortage" meant. In China they didn't know what "opinion" meant. In the Middle East they didn't know what "solution" meant. In South America they didn't know what "please" meant. And in the USA they didn't know what "the rest of the world" meant.

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