

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS...

"Unless we make Christmas an occasion to share our blessings, all the snow in Alaska won't make it 'white'."

– **Bing Crosby**

The best of all gifts around any Christmas tree: the presence of a happy family all wrapped up in each other."

– **Burton Hillis**

"Christmas, my child, is love in action. ... Every time we love, every time we give, it's Christmas."

– **Dale Evans Rogers**

"Some trails are happy ones, others are blue. It's the way you ride the trail that counts, Here's a happy one for you..."

Happy trails to you...until we meet again. Happy trails to you...keep smiling until then. Who cares about the clouds when we're together? Just sing a song and bring the sunny weather. Happy trails to you till we meet again.

– **Dale Evans Rogers**

"One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas Day. Don't clean it up too quickly."

– **Andy Rooney**

"God walked down the stairs of heaven with a Baby in His arms."

– **Paul Scherer**

"He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree."

– **Roy L. Smith**

"As long as we know in our hearts what Christmas *ought* to be, Christmas *is*."

– **Famous CBS Commentator Eric Sevareid**

"Christmas is the season when people run out of money before they run out of friends."

– **Larry Wilde**

"Christmas ... a piece of one's home that one carries in one's heart..."

– **Freya Stark**

"So remember while December brings the only Christmas Day in the year, let there be Christmas in the things you do and say."

– **Ms. Kate Smith**

"When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain"

"There's nothing sadder in this world than to awake Christmas morning and not be a child."

– **Dayton Ohio's very own Erma Bombeck**

"Give us, O God, the vision which can see Your love in the world in spite of human failure.

"Give us the faith to trust Your goodness in spite of our ignorance and weakness.

"Give us the knowledge that we may continue to pray with understanding hearts.

"And show us what each one of us can do to set forward the coming of the day of universal peace."

– **Frank Borman, Apollo 8 Space Mission, 1968**

"What good is it that Christ was born 2,000 years ago if He is not born now in your heart?"

– **Meister Eckhart**

"The most precious thing in this world is the love of one human being for another. This is a gift in life that no one can put a price on."

– **Fr. Michael Paraniuk, Guest on the Oprah Winfrey Show February 1998 (My 53 seconds of fame.)**



The Work of Christmas Begins

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with the flocks,
then the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal those broken in spirit,
to feed the hungry,
to release the oppressed,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among all peoples,
to make a little music with the heart...
And to radiate the Light of Christ,
every day, in every way,
in all that we do and in all that we say.
Then the work of Christmas begins.

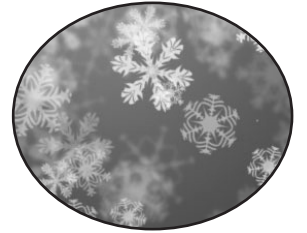
A Christmas Prayer for those who have suffered the recent death of a loved one

God of compassion, there is such a hole in my heart! Today should be a day of joy, but I feel only emptiness and loss. While the world celebrates around me, I remember Christmas celebrations of the past and I long to have my loved one with me. I bring my sorrows to You, Lord, like some odd gift of the magi and dump them at Your feet. In my blind tears, I wonder if anyone can possibly understand the depth of my sadness.

I know You can. You sent Your son to be with us in our deepest sorrows and I know that even though I might not feel it now, You are here with me, grieving with me, caring for me in my sadness. Today I ask that my loss soften my heart and make me more compassionate with everyone I meet, so that my loss may become a gift to others. Amen...

SO YOU WANT TO WHINE ABOUT WINTER

Quebec City, Canada.



FR. MIKE'S SERMON

A THOUGHT FOR HOLY FAMILY

(Do not read before Mass. This is the sermon.)

It had been some time since Jack had seen the old man. College, girls, career, and life itself got in the way. In fact, Jack moved clear across the country in pursuit of his dreams.

There, in the rush of his busy life, Jack had little time to think about the past and often no time to spend with his wife and son. He was working on his future, and nothing could stop him.

Over the phone, his mother told him, "Mr. Belser died last night. The funeral is Wednesday." Memories flashed through his mind like an old newsreel as he sat quietly remembering his childhood days.

"It's been so long since I thought of him. I'm sorry, but I honestly thought he died years ago," Jack said.

"Well, he didn't forget you. Every time I saw him, he'd ask how you were doing. He'd reminisce about the many days you spent over 'his side of the fence' as he put it," Mom told him.

"I loved that old house he lived in," Jack said.

"You know, Jack, after your father died, Mr. Belser stepped in to make sure you had a man's influence in your life," she said.

"He's the one who taught me carpentry," he said. "I wouldn't be in this business if it weren't for him. He spent a lot of time teaching me things he thought were important...Mom, I'll be there for the funeral," Jack said.

As busy as he was, he kept his word. Jack caught the next flight to his hometown. Mr. Belser's funeral was small and uneventful. He had no children of his own, and most of his relatives had passed away.

The night before he had to return home, Jack and his Mom stopped by to see the old house next door one more time.

Standing in the doorway, Jack paused for a moment. It was like crossing over into another dimension, a leap through space and time. The house was exactly as he remembered. Every step held memories. Every picture, every piece of furniture....Jack stopped suddenly.

"What's wrong, Jack?" his Mom asked.

"The box is gone," he said.

"There was a small gold box that he kept locked on top of his desk. I must have asked him a thousand times what was inside. All he'd ever tell me was 'the thing I value most.'"

"Now I'll never know what was so valuable to him," Jack said.

It had been about two weeks since Mr. Belser died. Returning home from work one day, Jack discovered a note in his mailbox. "Signature required on a package. No one at home. Please stop by the main post office within the next three days," the note read. Early the next day, Jack retrieved the package. The small box was old and looked like it had been mailed a hundred years ago. The handwriting was difficult to read, but the return address caught his attention. "Mr. Harold Belser" it read. Jack took the box out to his car and ripped open the package. There inside was the gold box and an envelope. Jack read it.

"Upon my death, please forward this box and its contents to Jack Bennett. It's the thing I valued most in my life." A small key was taped to the letter. Jack carefully unlocked the box. There inside he found a beautiful gold pocket watch.

Running his fingers slowly over the finely etched casing, he unlatched the cover. Inside he found these words engraved:

*"Jack, Thanks for your time!
The thing I valued most was the time
I spent with you.
- Harold Belser."*

Jack held the watch for a few minutes, then called his office and cleared his appointments for the next two days. "Why?" Janet, his assistant asked.

"I need some time to spend with my son."

Do you realize there are at least two people in this world who love you so much they would give up their life for you? We call them "mom" and "dad."



Happy Holy Family...Fr. Mike