

COMMUNITY COMMENT

12/19/14

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Christmas 2014

And before we knew it, Christmas was upon us. Christmas is next week already. How does it seem to sneak up on us? This season gets crazy with activities. We tend to do a lot socially and are blessed with friends that we are lucky to have. We both do a lot in the community so there are parties and celebrations leading up to Christmas. Before we know it, Christmas is here. I am not a particularly religious person but was raised Catholic. I know and appreciate the spiritual and religious meaning of Christmas. I am also aware of the mythology that has been passed down for centuries. Maybe more importantly, I appreciate the part that Christianity has played in the development of our nation. It is a big part of the culture of this melting pot of ours. So Christmas has a religious significance as well as a secular place in the United States.

Since we are a secular government, I get the balance that we try to strike when spending money or time on something that is Christian. I think it's a good thing that we try to be sensitive to those of us that don't share the Christian faith. I also think we often go overboard in our attempt to be neutral.

After all, the central message of the Christmas holiday is not only that Jesus was born and created a following that has endured for two thousand years. You don't have to believe that He was the son of God and a savior. You could simply know the history of his life and consider the teachings that he left us. In my opinion, the most basic and long lasting message has to do with the survival of us. It is simply peace on earth, good will towards men.

I have said many times to friends of mine that I really thought the turning of the new century would inspire us as a human family to work towards the betterment of all of us. So far this century, I couldn't have been more wrong. It started with 9-11 of course. We were attacked in a most horrific way. We responded at first with some reason in Afganistan. We were going after those who orchestrated the attack. But then we went into Iraq for reasons that are less obvious. Were we lied to? Were we ignorant of the facts? Were we unwilling to even think about how we conducted our foreign policy in parts of the world that might cause serious resentment? I don't know the answers to these question but it seems obvious to me that thirteen years later we are not any closer to peace on Earth, good will towards men.

So this Christmas Holiday, I hope you celebrate your own religious and spiritual beliefs regarding Christmas and accept the cultural aspect of Christmas in America and think of it in the best light possible. I hope you have family and friends around you and you cherish the happiness they bring you. If you give presents I hope they are heart felt and meaningful. I hope this season is one of optimism and light.

As a nation, I hope we work towards peace on Earth. Peace would allow us the opportunity to get on with the other work there is to do. And there is plenty.

A merry Christmas to you and yours. May 2015 bring you peace and joy. May we work to make this Earth a better place for our grandchildren.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.