

December 2021

Hallmark Christmas movies are nice but predictable. A girl goes back to her hometown after being away for years and meets the man who seems to be the local handyman but in reality is the town's wealthiest resident. They have witty banter until she is finally swept away by his charm, rugged good looks, and never ending wardrobe of Land's End or Eddie Bauer apparel. It snows peacefully and lightly as the new couple engages in a kiss while the camera gently pans out from the town square giving sight to a few people milling around not dressed properly for the end of December in the mountains.

That's nice. And mostly wholesome.

Yet it is a Christmas without Christ. And no Mass. No Jesus and no church. Sure, there might be a passing glimpse of a nativity scene or some hubbub about happenings at a Christmas pageant of sorts, but these things are peripheral if not all together absent. The point here is not to deter you from Hallmark movies (obviously I've seen them), but is to bring our attention to the unpredictability of how God has chosen to come to us and how that should be paramount and drive our lives as ones rescued by Him.

Advent teaches us that we have not been ruggedly handsome nor have we been dressed in the best attire. We haven't been charming or wholesome or secretly the best person in town. The twist in the plot - that which is so startling - is that which we hear on Christmas. That Jesus comes for us anyway. *Unto you is born this day a Savior, Christ the Lord.* This is Christmas. God among men, as a man. To save sinful men. By dying.



This fact makes Jesus the center of any true Christmas. For what joy can compare to Christ who puts on our likeness to redeem us? What town square festivities can hold a candle to gathering around the flesh and blood that once lay in a manger but now comes in His church for you? God be praised when you see a nativity set up and remember "That's for me! And I have a Savior who still comes to bless me with His benefits." Jesus born is true beauty revealed. It is the unexpected gift for poor sinners. It is hope and the love of God mingled together with the camera not panning out but zooming in on where you should be focused. Let everything else be peripheral to that. Put up scenes of our Lord's birth and Him on a cross in your house. Hear the angels say "For you" as they rejoice with good tidings of great joy.

Unpredictable mercy and grace through the God-Man born to die. For you. Keeping Christ in Christmas brings you that. And keeping Mass in Christmas delivers to you the gathering in His church where all His benefits are poured out.

*Savior of the nations, come,
Virgin's Son, make here Your home!
Marvel now, O heaven and earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth.
(LSB 332)*

Merry Christmas,
Pastor Suggitt

LIFE QUOTES

The world needs your voice to declare Jesus' words of eternal life. The world needs your voice to declare God's value of life in all of its stages. The world needs your voice to declare God's convictions born of His Word. The world needs your voice to declare that God's word of forgiveness purchased with the blood of Jesus extends to all of us sinners, including those who have chosen abortion. The world needs your voice!

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