

If you believe that we celebrate Christmas on December 25 because it was the day Jesus was born, sorry, you are mistaken. We don't really know what time of year Jesus was born, not even the exact year, though most scholars think it was about 4 BC. Which is ironic because BC means "before Christ" so he may have been born 4 years before himself. Just shows you that faith is not an exact science.

I happen to believe that Christmas is more important than any other day in the liturgical year, including Easter. I believe that most Christians would gasp at that statement. Because their faith revolves around Jesus being killed in order to redeem a sinful humanity. And his resurrection is proof of God's renewed love of humanity.

Easter is certainly important, but I don't believe that Jesus was born to teach us how to die. Jesus came here to teach us how to live. That was God's Christmas gift to us. God so loved us that God was willing to become human so that we would have an example of what it means to be fully alive. Of course we messed it up, rejected the gift, executed the messenger and still blunder about aimlessly. But, the example is still there if we only listen to his words and actions.

I am so convinced of this that I thought about joining the Church of the Christmasites. That an imaginary church invented by Fr. Ed Hayes, an author and mystic. He offered that this church would celebrate Christmas every day of the year. There would be family dinners, and gifts exchanged 52 weeks a year. We'd keep our Christmas trees and decorations up continuously, and carols would become our liturgical chants. Members would be generous and loving to all their neighbors 365 days of the year. They would work tirelessly for peace on earth and they'll practice good will toward all.

But I eventually caught on. Old Ed was pulling my leg. What he was describing is exactly what Christians should be doing. That's exactly the importance of Christmas. If only we would wake up and follow Jesus rather than worry about so many things that have no importance. "Am I saved?" Of course we are. Once we believe that then we no longer have to keep score, trying to build up good points to offset our sins. You are freed up to be generous and loving just like Jesus. Remember our big three commandments: Love God. Love our neighbors. Love ourselves.

When you pack up the decorations this coming January, make sure you don't pack up your Christmas spirit along with the lights. When you box up the crèche, give the baby Jesus a hall pass so he can continue working with you. Make this season a model for the entire year. Be a Christmasite.