

THOUGHTS FROM YOUR PASTOR: When Really is the ‘Christmas Season’?

Back in August, on a sweltering summer day, I was shopping in a Hobby Lobby store for some items for my rectory. From the checkout counter, I happened to notice a few aisles down that the “seasonal” department already featured a wide selection of Halloween items. I joked with the cashier that they were already ahead of the curve – over two months in advance – of Halloween. She looked at me and said, “Honey, if you look a few more aisles down, we already have our Christmas items out!” I stood there a bit stunned. Christmas items for sale in August!

Not to pick on Hobby Lobby – actually, I greatly admire this privately-owned Christian-family company for their recent and courageous witness to First Amendment religious-freedom rights in the Supreme Court at great cost to themselves – but that encounter at the cash register in August reminded me of the need to remind our culture of the true “timing” of what is known as the “Christmas Season”. Now that Thanksgiving turkeys have been slaughtered and eaten, the mad dash is on in our commercialized culture to capitalize upon this sacred day as if it has already occurred. We hear of the “Christmas Season” already being upon us.

However, we Christians know that we are NOT yet in the Christmas Season. We are now in the Season of Advent – a time of preparing for Christmas, in a holy and spiritual and penitential way. Christmas has not yet occurred. It WILL occur on December 25. And that day – when the rest of the culture quickly forgets Christmas and hastily sweeps away all vestiges of the day in preparation for Valentine’s Day – is actually only the BEGINNING of the true and real “Christmas Season”. The Christmas Season actually begins on December 25, and lasts for many days thereafter. The first “eight days” of the Christmas Season (inclusive, from December 25 through January 1) is known by its own special name as the “Octave of Christmas” (‘octave’ from the number ‘eight’); this means that each day of the Octave is observed by the Church as if it were Christmas Day itself. (I sometimes joke with kids to tell this to their parents, in order to demand seven more days of presents; for some reason, parents don’t seem amused...)

On the Octave Day of Christmas (January 1), we Catholics come to church, not so much to celebrate “New Year’s Day” (in fact, having the year start on January 1 is a relatively recent historical custom; for most of history, the calendar year actually began in March) but rather to celebrate the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, out of respect for Mary’s central role in the birth of Jesus at Christmas. But then, Christmas Season continues even further to include the Solemnity of Epiphany (which is observed by United States Catholics on the Sunday between January 2-8), and even beyond that to include and finish with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (usually, the Sunday after Epiphany). Thus, this year, the Christmas season will end on Sunday, January 13. So, as we learn more about our great Catholic tradition of preparing for and celebrating the Christmas Season, may we do so with its true authentic meaning: not as a cultural shopping spree, but as an encounter with the love of the living Lord Jesus!

Fr. Ferguson is available to help you with any questions or concerns you may have; please contact him at hamilton.college@outlook.com or at 419-634-2626.

THOUGHTS FOR OUR PARISH CHILDREN by “Jackie”, the Pastor’s Cat



Hi boys and girls! My name is “Jackie”, and as you know, I am Father Ferguson’s cat. Did you know we are in a special season? That’s right! And I don’t mean “winter”; that’s a weather season. And we cats don’t like winter. Winter is too cold; we felines like to stay inside a warm house and curl up on a blanket and sleep. But the season I’m talking about is called “Advent”! Advent is four weeks long, and it’s a time to get ready for the special day of Christmas! I hope you know that Christmas is the “birthday” of Jesus! It’s such a special day, that we want to get ready for it by praying to Jesus, asking Jesus to help us to love others the way He does, and to thank Jesus for coming into our world. That’s the real meaning of Christmas. I bet you can hardly wait for Christmas, but you need to prepare!

Why not do that this week by taking 5 minutes every night and pray to Jesus and tell Him how much you love Him for coming into our world in Bethlehem! That would be a great birthday gift to Jesus!

Have a “purr”-fect week!



2019
Columbus
Catholic Women's Conference
Saturday, February 16, 2019
To register visit
<https://www.columbuscatholicwomen.com/>

Early bird tickets are \$35 for regular and \$20 for discounted student tickets. Early bird ticket prices are good until January 14, 2019. After January 14 prices are \$45 and \$30.

For more information about the conference and travel arrangements, contact Desiree Tosatto at desireet02@gmail.com

The Diocese's [Catholic Foundation](#) has supported our travel to the women's conference by providing a grant of 75% of the cost of travel. We have, over the last few years, had either limousines, party vans, or a bus so that our parish women could travel together in comfort and safety, especially when February weather is so unpredictable. We are truly grateful beneficiaries of the generosity of the donors to the Catholic Foundation!



COLUMBUS CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE

Saturday, February 23, 2019
8:00am to 4:00pm

Cardinal Hall, The Ohio state Expo Center

www.catholicmensministry.com ~

mail@catholicmensministry.com

Please let us know in the office if you would like to be the parish's Men's Conference Coordinator!

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Men's Group

You are invited to join a parish men's group that is meeting twice a month for talk and support; discussions include how to be men of God, how to be better husbands and fathers in our current culture. Please contact Men's Group coordinator Travis Juergens at t-juergens@onu.edu

Meetings take place on the first and third Thursday of each month, meeting in an upstairs classroom. The next gathering is December 20 at 11:00 a.m.