



From A Bishop's Journal (780)

A Christmas Meeting with Jesus

Depending on ages and cultures, Christmas takes on different meanings. However, if the year 2008 were a good opportunity to really meet Jesus, it would make an unforgettable Christmas.

A Bold Prayer

In offering you my sincerest wishes for peace and joy, and the happiest Christmas of all, allow me to offer you the prayer I have for you all:

A Prayer for Meeting Jesus

Almighty and ever-loving God,
I come to you with a bold prayer.

Like the Virgin Mary at the Annunciation and the Visitation, make that, in my prayer and my commitment I meet Jesus on my path.

Like the shepherds at Bethlehem and the Wise Men from the East, make that, in peaceful nights and starless nights I meet Jesus on my path.

Like the Prophets Simeon and Anna make that, in my expectations I meet Jesus on my path.

Like the first disciples Peter, James, and John, make that in my search for the Messiah, I find Jesus on my path.

Like the tax collector Matthew and humble Zacchaeus, make that in my undertakings I find Jesus on my path.

Like Martha, Mary, and Lazarus of Bethany, make that I may, in my relationships, find Jesus on my path.

Like all the men and women who are searching for a Saviour, make that, in my desire for liberation, I find Jesus on my path.

Like Simon of Cyrene and even the "Good Thief," make that, as I come home from my work and even at the final moment of my life, I find Jesus on my path.

Like Mary Magdalen, like the disciples at Emmaus and the Apostles at Pentecost, and with Paul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, make that, in my doubts and distress, I find Jesus on my path.

The Prayer Continues

My prayer would be incomplete, without the following:

Make, Lord, that through the countless activities of the holidays, but especially through the poor that I encounter at that time, I meet you on my path.

Make, Lord, that through those I cross in the shopping mall, through the employees in stores and restaurants, and through all the other clients shopping in the many stores for food, gifts, and toys, I meet Jesus on my path.

Make, Lord, that at all the social functions, parties, and gift giving, I meet you on my path.

Make, Lord, that in my days of illness, solitude, mourning, and even imprisonment, I meet you on my path.

Make, Lord, that in my visits to the hospital, health care centres, senior citizens homes and homes for the handicapped, detox and rehabilitation centres, I meet you on my path.

Make, Lord, that in my moments spent in church or at a shrine to meet other Christian brothers and sisters, hear the word of God and celebrate the sacraments of forgiveness and the Eucharist, I meet Jesus on my path.

Make, Lord, that in my family activities where I spend precious time with my loved ones, at meals, sharings and services rendered, I meet you on my path.

Make, Lord, that all the precious minutes and hours of these precious Christmas and New Year's Day, in my leisure time, my studies and readings, and my concerns of all kind, I meet you on my path.

Make, Lord, that in the monotony of life and the excitement of happiness and jubilation, in moments of discouragement and of enthusiasm, I meet you on my path.

Finally, Lord, since you send us your Spirit to be our prayer and our life, help me bring forth your Holy Spirit from within me, so that in every place and always I may meet you on my path, and that this encounter be most wonderful and beneficial for me and all my loved ones.

Merry Christmas! Peace, Joy, and Health!

+ François Thibodeau ym
+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.
Bishop of Edmundston

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