

‘Tis the season to be jolly!

That certainly seems to be the message of both the Prophet Isaiah who speaks of “rejoicing heartily in the Lord”, and the Apostle Paul who tells us, “Brothers and Sisters, rejoice always!”

If you’re not in the Christmas Spirit yet, you missed a great opportunity at our Breakfast with Santa. But, you’ll get another opportunity on Wednesday morning when our children in the Early Learning Center present their Christmas Pageant.

The other day as I was driving along filled with Christmas Joy, Dolly Parton came on the radio, singing “I’ll Be Home For Christmas”, which is a very beautiful song until you get to the poignant last line, “...if only in my dreams”.

That got me to thinking of all those who won’t get home for Christmas—our men and women serving our nation in the military and others who serve our nation. Then, I remembered an appeal letter I recently received from Covenant House, reminding me of all the children and young people who don’t have a home to go to. Then, as I thought of the recent funerals we’ve celebrated and the one to take place this week, my mind turned to those who are looking forward to Christmas with dread because there will be an empty place at the family table because a beloved member of the family has died.

No, the Christmas season isn’t jolly for everyone. It’s important for us to be mindful of this for two reasons:

First, it reminds us to count our blessings and as St. Paul tells us today, “In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.”

Second, we are to “pray without ceasing” for those whose circumstances this Christmas will be less than joyful.

If I may, I offer this thought to those of you who feel you will be overcome by loss and loneliness this Christmas. My own Mother died in May, 1966. My Dad would be facing his first Christmas without her after 27 years of marriage. My sisters and I were in our 20s. My older sisters by then had five little ones between them. We were all dreading Christmas without our Mother, especially aware of how painful it would be for Dad.

As Christmas approached every member of the family went out of his and her way thinking how each could make Christmas pleasant for all the others—especially the children. I dare say that Christmas was maybe the best we ever had because the love we shared was so obvious and real to us. We all commented on the fact that we felt our Mother’s Spirit present at that Christmas Dinner. Our love for each other would not allow that Spirit to be quenched.

“Do not quench the Spirit”! People die. Love never dies. If loss and loneliness are weighing you down as you look toward Christmas, find others with whom you can share your love. In doing so, you may just have your best Christmas ever.