

I'll first apologize that I'm back up here for the second time in a month. I was planning to only talk at the business meeting for the month. However, I decided for the December meeting I would talk about the Advent season, and since it begins next week, I thought it appropriate to deliver it before Advent starts. That combined with the fact I'll be in LA for the first meeting has me up here again. My Christmas gift to all of you will be the fact I will not deliver another reflection, at least until the New Year. I'll pause here so you can applaud if you wish.

We are fast approaching the end of the year, which of course brings us to the Advent season. For many, it seems Advent is a way to celebrate Christmas for a month, while racing to the finish line of Christmas Day. From putting up decorations to shopping for presents, it is mostly a blur in the end, nothing but a brief passing moment. I propose we all slow down, myself included, to take a moment every day during Advent and reflect on those times when our giving had a real effect on someone else. Yes, Christmas is a time of giving, that we all receive joy from. Seeing the faces of your children or grandchildren opening a gift is priceless. However, I would be hard pressed to tell you what we gave the grandchildren last Christmas. Time for me to share a little more of myself. Unless you have been to my house and saw the pictures on the refrigerator and asked me about them, you probably wouldn't know this next part. Over the years I have sponsored a few children through Children International. Besides the monthly donation which takes care of Medical, Dental and Education needs, I would send additional gifts for Birthdays, Easter, and Christmas. Pre-covid when this was done the organization would send you photos of the child standing in front of a table showing off the items purchased with the funds. So, I'd receive a photo of the child holding a doll, blouse, or shoes but on the table, there would be cooking oil, 10 lbs. of rice and or beans etc. So here is an 8-year child using her gift money to support her family, using the gift

to its fullest extent. That to me was eye opening! But more overwhelming was the fact every time one of the children wrote to me, they were so grateful for the gift, as is their family. Every letter I received thanked God for my support, this is the giving that truly makes a difference in the world. As members of the Knights of Columbus we all learned the main cornerstone of our organization is Charity. It was emphasized during our first degree. As a relatively small council, we have had huge effects in the community. We support Birthright, the Life Center, Kids Need More, the wheelchair mission, the Joe Horn toy drive, adopt a Family, the food pantries, and the list goes on. Think about all the people you had a hand in helping. The mother who was able to feed and clothe her child, the family that had a Thanksgiving Day dinner, or the child that had a present to open on Christmas day who may otherwise not have. I believe if we reflect on these items, we may get more out of the season than we normally do. When reflecting about the giving think about this; on Christmas Day God gave us the ultimate gift, his only son for our redemption. I'm personally going to use this season to also reflect on whether like that 8-year-old girl, am I using that gift to its fullest extent.

In closing I want to wish you and your families a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, from Angie and myself.

Vivat Jesus.

For those new members who may never have heard that phrase, Vivat Jesus is a salutation used in the Order. Translated it means "Jesus Lives", what better way to end a talk about Advent. So once again.

Vivat Jesus.