

Christmas 2020 “Get to Know Jesus”

Fr. Frank Schuster

This has been a very strange Christmas season. Something is definitely off this year. I am not actually talking about the pandemic really. Nor am I referring to politics per se. The strangeness for me actually began at the beginning of December when I was in a check-out line at Walmart. Next to the cashier was a display for advent calendars (so far so good). However, when I took a closer look, instead of focusing on the baby Jesus, the main focus was baby Yoda. What a nightmare! Baby Yoda can't save us. Only Jesus can save us! Of course, no matter which store I would shop in, there would always be items for sale from a galaxy far far away. And they have been really strange. I have seen light saber chop sticks, Jedi coffee mugs, and Darth Vader pajamas and teddy bears because nothing says a good night's sleep than a dark lord of the Sith, am I right?

Now, please don't get me wrong. Anyone who knows me gets that I am Star Wars fan. I can't help myself. In fact, on my visits to Alderwood Mall, I got into the habit of walking by the Lego store with one hand over my eyes so to not get tempted by their Star Wars sets. This past Tuesday however, the force was too strong. I got sucked in there somehow and ended up walking out with a Star Wars Tantive IV Lego set. Talk about a total fail. For the uninitiated, the Tantive IV is an Alderaanian Space Corvette. It is so cool. Clearly, I am not beyond a little escapism. However, I am putting my foot down about Baby Yoda. I sincerely don't trust him. I recommend you don't either.

The truth is, I have picked up a vibe that people are spending a lot of energy this year trying desperately to make this Christmas the best we can make it. You see it in the over the top and somewhat manic Christmas light displays in our neighborhoods (which I have been enjoying, by the way). You see it in the shopping carts in the malls. And you see it in strange novelties like baby Yoda earrings (why is that even a thing?). However, we all get the reason why. This has been a very, very depressing year. We are trying our very hardest to make the best we can of it.

Having said that, there is a truly awesome and grace-filled opportunity this Christmas of all Christmases that we are in real danger right now of missing out on if we are not too careful. Because this year has been so very difficult, we have an opportunity this year to truly grasp why this feast day offers us real joy, not fake joy; and real hope, not fairy tales. When the world could not get any darker, God became man in the person of Jesus Christ. This is not a made up story. This actually happened. And, more to the point, celebrating Christmas makes absolutely no sense whatsoever without our Easter hope. God not only became man in the person of Jesus Christ, God has offered us salvation through his passion, death and resurrection. There is nothing else in this universe that can save us. Only Jesus can save us.

It is that story, that sacred story, that true story, that we need to reacquaint ourselves with. It is that salvation history we belong to that makes this holiday make any sense whatsoever. Listen, all that matters this Christmas is a relationship with Jesus. When we have one good year after another, it can be easy to take this point for granted. It is when we are confronted with a very difficult year, such as this year, that we have an opportunity to finally understand why a relationship with Jesus matters. My friends, this Christmas, get to know Jesus! Open your hearts to him. This relationship begins by opening our bibles. The relationship continues by being a part of his Body on earth, the Church. The story ends with our salvation if we get to know Jesus who is the way, the truth and the life.