

CHRISTMAS' HOMEWORK

ESSAY ASSIGNMENT: WHAT TO DO IN 2019?

DUE DATE: December 24, 2019

COURSE TEACHER: GOD

Teaching Assistant: Jesus

The opening part of January's reflection for the board resembles the typical cover page for a big essay or homework assignment in high school, college or university. Here is why:



In the light of a new year, I was wondering why, this year more than any year before, I am feeling the darkness of daylight savings time. There have been many nights, I have been so ready for bed, and then looking at the clock and realizing it is only 6:30 pm! Some nights I have had to force myself to stay up until 9:30 pm. I now couple that with the enveloping darkness that is happening as more and more people start shutting off their outdoor Christmas lights. Winter is tightening its grip. The gym is becoming a chore now because I cannot mix it up with a hike or a walk around the neighbourhood. Life seems heavy for some reason. When life starts making me feel like this, I start to pray and reflect more on life, my life, and all that is around me. So, all of this has had me stirring and thinking...

I wonder if Mary and Joseph felt the same way. After the angels were finished singing their joyous songs and once the shepherds headed back to their hillsides to tend to their sheep, it must have seemed eerily quiet. It only made sense that the Wise Men should return to their palaces and sleep in the luxury they had always known. Their people needed their leaders back. The innkeeper needed his livestock to return to a normal routine. The great nova star in the sky naturally would go dim. People can only 'ooo' and 'awe' over a baby before they have to go back and feed their own kids at home.

They the young, newlywed couple, were now, with donkey in tow, making the journey back to their hometown. They weren't just bringing their baby home...it was the Son of God. They had no idea what their future was bringing them. They had no idea the violence their child would go through one day. They had no idea how kings would and had turned against him. His light would bring them darkness too.

I am feeling in touch with Mary and Joseph lately. I watch the news and see Presidents throw people and the truth into chaos of darkness. I have seen movies lately where your worst fears are kept out only by blindfolding yourself and therefore stumbling and falling down every moment of your life! Violence is on the rise. Racism is on the rampant. Isolation is growing. I do not want to subscribe to this kind of life. I am sure God does not want me to live that kind of life either.

Maybe there is something greater than Christmas and the birth of the Christ Child. I know that might seem horrible, even blasphemous to some, but hang with me here! Maybe we celebrate the coming of God's only Son so we can carry His HOPEFUL and LIGHT-FILLED message throughout the whole year.

How do we do that? Well, there are people who are broken that we know. The Homework of Christmas would tell us to hold those people and help them mend their broken parts. There are people who feel lost. The Homework of Christmas would say help them find their way. The food bank could always use not only donations of food, but maybe donations of your time. Helping to feed and to support the hungry, well, that for sure would be a high Level Three grading! There are people we haven't forgiven in our lives. We carry grudges or maybe they do! Either way, we are all prisoners of pride and frustration. The Homework of Christmas would challenge us to forgive and yes, even pray, for those who have hurt us the most. I could see a Level Four coming out of that! Do we all want a world of Level Four +++ - then we need to bring peace to our hearts, our families, our work places, and our neighbourhoods. We should rid the darkness of racism and judgement with the power of God's LIGHT and LOVE. If we want the music of the angels to return like that night over that little manger, then we need to let our hearts sing of the glory of God's endless blessings we have in our lives.

We will never master the darkness. We will never be the master teacher. We will never come close to the love of that baby for us. What we can do is continue the HOMEWORK of CHRISTMAS throughout all of 2019.

God bless us all in 2019.

By Chaplain Wayne Lachapelle – Notre Dame CSS