



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

22 December 2020, 2:40 PM

Merry Christmas

We celebrate the birth of Jesus, but for centuries Christians didn't celebrate his birth. What's more, we really don't know when he was born – Isn't that strange? I think so.

Some say this day was chosen to celebrate Jesus' birth to take advantage of the light and darkness imagery, when longer light-filled days begin to shorten winter's long dark nights.

Others say that this date was chosen to show how Jesus is true God from true God, taking over the day that was celebrated as the birthday of Mithras, the pagan god of light.

Another theory is that Jesus died on the anniversary of his conception, which we celebrate on the 25th of March... and 9 months later, on the 25th of December, Jesus was born.

This year we would probably go with the guess that the date was chosen to take advantage of the light and darkness imagery, light dispelling darkness – at least we hope it will!

There's certainly plenty of darkness this year: a divisive election cycle; protests over racial discrimination and policing; the derecho; and the impact of the COVID...

Fearing for our health, lives and livelihood; suffering isolation; unable to enjoy fully our favorite things, like church and sports; and now the vaccine wars are starting.

In the midst of all this we remember and celebrate that Jesus was born, a great light that dispels our 2020 darkness.

Here's the deal, Parker: the birth of Jesus is THE sign that God loves us. John's Gospel says God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son to be our Savior.

Divine Love is sometimes spoken of as fire, giving us light, warmth and protection: a light to guide; warmth of being wanted, chosen; protection from the devil's temptations.

The unconditional and unbounded Divine Love dispels our 2020 darkness when the teaching and example of Jesus, God made man, inspires his followers to love others that way. So...

Where COVID isolates people, reach out to them. When the pandemic leaves people without food or money, help out. And not just at Merry Christmastime, but in March and May, too.

And when we do, watch other peoples' faces light up; see them relax in the warmth of Divine Love felt through us; and be guided to the source of the fire of Divine Love, Jesus. Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year (without COVID, please).

Archbishop Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque