

# The Fish Net

Dear Friends,

There is a rather amusing Christmas commercial airing on TV right now. The premise is that two adult sisters have a real sibling rivalry centred on who can give their mother the best Christmas present; a contest that the older sister has always won. The younger sister however is determined that this year will be different! She gives her mother the present and then it is the older sister's turn. The mother opens the box and becomes giddy with joy and excitement. The two women joyfully hug and jump up and down while the younger sister just sits there. The look on her face is a wonder to behold. She has lost again! Then the commercial cuts away to show three shopping bags which bear the names of the different store chains owned by one company. The clear message is that if you buy your Christmas presents from these stores, then both you and your gifts will be winners.

As I have already noted, this is an amusing commercial but in many ways, it is the antithesis of what Christmas is all about. Christmas is not a contest focused on who can give the best present but if it were, it would be a contest that we are doomed to lose. We would lose simply because God gave the greatest present of all that first Christmas; His very self. As St. John wrote:

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

full of grace and truth.

God so loved the world, and that includes each and every one of us, that He became one of us to know, share and experience life as we do, the good and the bad. God so loved the world including each and every one of us that He became one of us so that one day we might know, share and experience life as He knows it. None of our presents can ever beat this; indeed I wonder if, at that first Christmas, God has provided us with the perfect example of gift giving. This is to say, at that first Christmas God gave Himself and perhaps we should strive to do the same.

When I reflect back on Christmases past, I can recall some of the gifts that I gave and received. Even more though, I treasure the memories of the people so dear to me and the good times we shared together. Perhaps rather than focusing on the physical presents, we like God, should give of ourselves, making sure to let other people know how precious they really are and, in so doing, create precious memories for the future.

Wishing you a most blessed Christmas!

Shawn