



Seeing the Presence of God through Christmas Ads

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The Christmas season is upon us and we look forward to celebrating the birth and baptism of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This celebration gives us hope to continue upholding our faith while striving for even a better and brighter future as our predecessors have. This is a message that we try to pass to our younger generation as well.

Unfortunately, we also come across many who try to abuse the spirit of Christmas and take unfair advantage of fellow human beings. As we try to teach our young people to discern, to learn to tell the difference between the true spirit of Christmas, of worshipping God and helping fellow humans, in contrast with those who purposely abuse the name of God and take unfair advantage of fellow humans, we find that it is not easy to teach the difference. There are many “wolves” in “sheep’s clothing.” So what can we do? We can try to explain that even for such extreme people, God is more powerful than any human plan and financial scheme. We can explain to them the supremacy of God even on “Black Friday.”

“Black Friday” is the Friday, and some extend it to the Sunday after the Thanksgiving Day when businesses hold their biggest sales. The reason this period is called “Black” is because this is when retailers go from losing money and being in the “Red,” to making profits and being in the “Black.” Interestingly, there are some organizations who make 80 to 90% of their annual profits during this period and the time leading to the New Year’s day.

What does this tell us about “Christmas”? It tells us that no matter how savvy, experienced, rich, organized, and powerful organizations are, they still depend on God, on Christ, and the Christmas season to make their profits. No human being or power has any means of inspiring, motivating, and bringing joy into the life of people as God has. Yes, even those extreme people who want to take unfair advantage of fellow human beings, have faith that God’s name is more powerful than any human name and endorsement on earth. As much as they love their money, they know that they cannot do it without God! If those whose only interest is making money believe in the power of God to inspire people to share and reach out to others, then how much more should be our own belief and faith in God as the faithful of the Church?

We could ask our young people to turn away from the commercialized advertisements of Christmas. Yet, it is difficult for them since they sound so joyful, exciting, hopeful, and help people escape reality. Even though wise adults know that many of those product advertisements during the Christmas season are deceptions, yet young people don’t know and even want to try to believe in them. So instead of panicking, we could help them discover the presence of God *even* in those situations and even in those who go to the extremes of accumulating riches at the expense of innocent and good hearted people.

It is interesting that even those who go to extremes and choose accumulating excessive riches over serving God and helping fellow human beings, know that God and the Spirit of Christmas has more power to inspire, guide, and empower humans to do good than all their human marketing schemes and business savvy. What a hopeful lesson for all of us to keep in mind and share with others during this Christmas season: “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.” (Revelation 21:3)