

TAKING CHRISTMAS SERIOUSLY

Lord, I give you myself this Christmas as an instrument of Peace:

*Let not this Christmas pass without my
bringing a little joy and comfort
into the lives of the needy around me:
the visible poor: ragged, filthy, shiftless and
vulgar, who live a half-life unnoticed in
a bleak, hate-filled world:
the otherwise needy: the forlorn, lonely,
estranged souls around me —
These make up the milieu Your Peace
must penetrate.*

*Somewhere, somehow, a bit of me must change for the better—
I must feel more concern for the outcasts, like
the man who threw a Christmas banquet for a crowd
of nondescript poor—
— “by invitation of Jesus” —
and presented each with a Holy Bible*

*I must grow more aware of others' needs in daily life,
their moods, their anxieties, oddities and
preferences.*

*Above all, I must remain open to the stirrings of
the Spirit within me, beckoning me to
pierce the skeins of self-interest built up over the
years
and woven into a strangling layer over the heart —
rend the fabric of my carnal affections, prejudices,
resentment and malice towards others —*

*This shell must shatter into a thousand fragments,
else Peace will remain nothing but a far-away promise.*