



FROM THE DESK OF FATHER JONATHAN

JANUARY 1, 2017

Last week I visited a family in the parish to bless their new apartment.

They have several small children and the mother stays at home. She hopes to go back to work when the youngest enters kindergarten next year. For now they are living on one, part-time income because the husband was laid off from his full-time job. They moved into this new apartment, a one bedroom, in order to be able to make the monthly rent.

Just before I left the older daughter ran to the corner of the small living area and brought back to me a brand new toy. I thanked her for it, thinking it was a gift for me. She laughed and said, "No, Father, that's not for you. That's for you to give to the children who don't have a gift on Christmas, just like you asked us to do". Tears came to my eyes. The middle child had already told me she was sad because this year her parents told her they wouldn't get a Christmas tree in order to save money for rent. What a family! What Christians! They were foregoing a tree, on one hand, and buying a brand new toy for someone else's children, on the other.

I blessed their home, but I was the one who walked away blessed.

Christmas has passed but we are still in the "Octave of Christmas", the eight days of intense celebration of Jesus' birth.

The best way to celebrate is to double down on our commitment to love others, even to the point of sacrificing our wants and needs out of love for others.

God bless,
Father Jonathan

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**God Bless,
Father Jonathan**