

It's still Christmas!

Those who observe Christmas as a religious celebration are probably noting little change this season, except perhaps that they are celebrating with immediate family as opposed to a meeting of their church congregation. The faithful will continue to feel the joy in their hearts that requires no secular trappings. Perhaps they will light candles and display their creches.

For others, who celebrate Christmas more in the Winter Festival mode, this will not be a typical Christmas. A lethal virus raging in our midst will steal some of our most beloved traditions.

Because of the convenience of online shopping, there will still be gift giving, but the joy of giving those gifts in person will be denied for many. Family gatherings will be limited to immediate family for the most part.

"I'll be home for Christmas," will just be a sweet musical refrain for those who would have to travel by air. While air travel has not been restricted, the risks involved while the virus expands its reach every day will be greater than most will be willing to take.

There will be no photos of children on Santa's lap this year. Most department stores and other venues will not offer this service. Most parents will appreciate this caution. Many children will enthusiastically applaud it!

The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade will soldier on, but with fewer participants and no spectators. The event will be televised as always.

Christmas caroling will be eliminated because of the danger of gathering in large groups and the increased potential reach of the airborne virus through singing as opposed to merely talking.

The cruelest tradition that this virus will claim, aside from the actual loss of our loved ones to the insidious disease, is the ability to be in one's own home for the holiday, as loss of jobs creates homelessness among hard working people who never anticipated a situation like this would rob them of the comfort of their own homes. If giving is part of your tradition, this demographic presents the perfect opportunity for meaningful giving.

If you have a roof over your head, food on your table, and family to share a meal with, your Christmas is already blessed.