



See what love our Abba, who is God in heaven, has given us that we should be called children of God; for that is what we are. 1 John 3:1

So, I don't know if it is because of the pandemic, the economic crisis, the isolation, the climate crisis or the centuries old crisis of anti-Black racism, but I haven't heard much about "saving Christmas" this year. Usually that issue is about keeping Christ in Christmas by wishing people "Merry Christmas" and doing away with the more generic "Happy Holidays." It really has never been a big issue for me. I'm glad to wish people a Merry Christmas with no evangelical political strings attached. I'm equally glad to wish people "Happy Holidays," particularly if I note that the person I'm greeting might be a person of a different faith, say Jewish or Muslim.

But I recently read something that made me think again about our seasonal greetings. I subscribe to an e-news that is put out by a group called Progressive Christianity (progressivechristianity.org). They often have things to share that make me wonder and ponder. So, I wasn't surprised when in one of their e-newsletters they shared this meme.



Wow! That really made me think. The writer of the first letter of John says that through the love of God, we are all called "children of God" Now I know that John's letter comes from the Christian faith tradition and our understanding of Jesus as our Redeemer, but the truth is, that one sentence from John's letter doesn't qualify who the "children of God are." In fact, the reading may well be pointing us to the fact that all of us are God's children, just because that is who we all are. That would be in keeping with the birth and life of Jesus, who famously welcomed outsiders, people of difference, women, people with disabilities and others restoring them to right relationship with each other and with God.

So, I've decided that I will still wish people a "Merry Christmas," as is my tradition, but I will also be aware that saying "Happy Holidays" is an expansively welcoming way of greeting people in this season in which so many great faith traditions observe religions holidays. To do so, would be in keeping with Jesus' teaching on the greatest commandment, wouldn't it? That we are to love God and our neighbors.

However you say it, I hope you have a Holy Advent, a Blessed Christmas and a Joyous New Year, Merry Christmas, Happy Hannukah, Joyous Kwanza, Eid Mubarak.

Holy One, as we come to the manger this Christmas, remind us that all are Your children, beloved by You, and help us to love our religiously different and non-religious sisters and brothers treating all with the respect they deserve as Your children. Amen.

