



GROWING TOGETHER

A Weekly Newsletter from Pastor Miguel to the Church Leadership of Fourth

York, December 26, 2017 to January 2, 2018

Year III

Sensing Advent IV: SMELL

Luke 2:1-20



I remember being in a store doing some shopping, and someone says to a friend “Christmas stinks!”

Why am I saying this? The true thing is that we have such an old-fashioned picture in our minds of what that first Christmas was like. Most of our greeting cards and nativity scenes are populated with colorful flowing images and unspoiled figures that it fools us into believing that it was an immaculate, spotless place. Well, folks, it stunk! Remember, the first Christmas was in a stable.

For those who have not been following this sermon series, I have to share with you that these past four Sundays – Sundays of Advent, we have been under a sermon series called “*Sensing Advent*.” We have been discovering how our five senses can help us to understand the coming of the little boy of Bethlehem in a better way.

We dealt with the senses of sight, hearing, touching, and at this time, I would like to invite you to experience SENSING CHRISTMAS, with the sense of SMELL!

Do you understand now when I say that Christmas Stinks?

Let me share with you, there were basically two ways people kept their livestock in those days: The first one was in their homes. Yes! In their homes. It was an inner room of the house. It means on the interior of the house was a large room full of straw, mangers and other necessities for keeping the animals. Most people weren’t rich, and their homes were very modest, and they didn’t own much livestock anyway. Therefore, they probably kept couple of sheep and goats, perhaps chickens to get fresh eggs, but not pigs...because according to Jewish tradition, pork meat was unclean.

The second way was outdoors. However, it is not what you are thinking, a big barn with livestock. No, it was normally a cave

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RESOLUTIONS?

PART I

The practice of making New Year’s resolutions goes back over 3,000 years to the ancient Babylonians. There is just something about the start of a new year that gives us the feeling of a fresh start and a new beginning. In reality, there is no difference between December 31 and January 1. Nothing mystical occurs at midnight on December 31. The Bible does not speak for or against the concept of New Year’s resolutions. However, if a Christian determines to make a New Year’s resolution, what kind of resolution should he or she make?

Common New Year’s resolutions are commitments to quit smoking, to stop drinking, to manage money more wisely, and to spend more time with family. By far, the most common New Year’s resolution is to lose weight, in conjunction with exercising more and eating more healthily. These are all good goals to set. However, 1 Timothy 4:8 instructs us to keep exercise in perspective: “*For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.*”

Taken from: <https://www.gotquestions.org/>

next to the house. This is most likely the place that Joseph and Mary got when the innkeeper told them that there was no place in the inn for them. A dark, damp and musty cave.

We have to remember too, that there were some characters who went to visit the little boy, who were quite smelly in their own right—the shepherds. Keeping smelly sheep out in the fields of Palestine was not conducive to bathing on a regular basis. Therefore, we were not in front of a perfume store...This is why I said that “Christmas sticks.”

What a beautiful image! Are

you kidding me? Well, it was beautiful because we know it was God entering this world. It was God taking on human flesh. It was God coming to show us what he looks like, and when God showed up, he showed up in the smelliest, lowliest, darkest place on earth. It was the most beautiful fetid, stinky, smelly place on earth. The presence of Jesus transformed the dank, dark, smelly confines of a cave into a place of light, and life and love. That’s what Christmas did. That’s what Christmas is about.

Christmas means God is with us—Immanuel! God is still invading this smelly old world of ours. We know that God has

come in Jesus to transform our dark hearts made rancid by the stink of sin in our lives. We need transformation—all of us—all the time.

Yes, it stinks, but Christmas reminds us that the Christ who was born in a stinky place desires to be born in you and me, and the same Christ who transformed that stinky old cave can transform our stinky lives too.

Let us smell this Christmas Season with a different aroma, so we can truly celebrate the One who brought a pleasing fragrance to our lives. Amen <><



The week at a glance:

Monday, December 25:

- Christmas Day*
- ◆ Church office Closed

Tuesday, December 26:

- ◆ 9:00 am. daily devotions
- ◆ P. Miguel in the office.

Wednesday, December 27:

- ◆ 9:00 am. daily devotions
- ◆ P. Miguel in the office.

Thursday, December 28:

- ◆ 9:00 am. daily devotions
- ◆ P. Miguel in the office.
- ◆ Printing Day
- ◆ 4:00 – 5:30 pm. Stewardship Foundation.

Friday, December 29:

- ◆ 9:00 am. daily devotions
- ◆ P. Miguel in the office
- ◆ Praying together at noon.

Saturday, December 30:

- ◆ 10:00 am. *Insanity [Postponed]*

Sunday, December 31:

New Year's Eve

- ◆ 9:00 am. Sunday school
- ◆ 10:00 One combined worship service.

Pastor JR's last day with us, as he and Elsa moves to their new appointment. He will be preaching this Sunday.

2018
Happy New Year!



How many were the wise men who visited Jesus?

- A. Three
- B. Twelve
- C. Unknown number
- D. Six



Last week's answer: Luke 1:26 says : In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee.."

Coming Events:

Installation Service of New Officer 2018.



If you have been elected as part of the Church leadership for 2018.

Please, mark your calendars. **Sunday January 7 at the 10:30 am** worship service.

Holy Humor:

