



Painting *The Nativity With Kneeling Donors And Saints Jerome And Lawrence* by David Gerard

CHRIST AND CHRISTMAS

By Timothy S. Klugh

Copyright © 2014 Timothy S. Klugh. All Rights Reserved.

I hear the phrase "keep Christ in Christmas" so much, and albeit it is strongly my wish as well, I do wonder if many who have this concern are aware that this December 25th holiday is much older than its Christian defined theme. The holiday goes far back into ancient cultures and has always been a time of good spirits, disregarding troubles, togetherness, and most importantly keeping out the darkness. Being at the darkest time of year, people would gather to be in each other's company and find comfort in each other despite the evils and perils outside.

Although Christ was added to this existing holiday by the early Christian church, it is a welcome connection to have. For the celebration of Christ's birth added a stronger theme of goodwill toward men to this ancient holiday. This inclusion eventually took the mischievous activities out of the holiday while keeping all the good of its celebration.

Today this holiday gives us the best of both its Christian theme as well as its secular theme, and the truth is, if we only had one theme or the other, Christmas would not be observed by the masses with such passion and enthusiasm. The "Christ" part of Christmas is just as essential as its other traditions, and the entire mix is what makes this holiday relatable to most of the world. Even more so is the theme of "goodwill toward men" which allows any religion, Christian or other, to apply their beliefs to this holiday as well. Goodwill applies to all of us universally, and is a great part of what Christ was here for.

So, to "keep Christ in Christmas" is very important, but it is important to love everything else about this holiday as well... the lights, the giving, the receiving, the feasting, the gathering together, the mythology, and yes, the commercialism too. It is all part of what this holiday is about and to lose any of it would take some of the magic away.

I wish all of you the merriest (or happiest) of what Christmas is about and hope you enjoy it to its fullest. Christmas is a rare treasure that has somehow survived despite the darkness in this world. That is how this holiday became, and how it still is. We should be so grateful for every part of it. Again, I wish all of it to all of you.