

Christ comes in History, Mystery and Majesty, but...

You duped us, Madison Avenue, and we let ourselves be duped! You tell us that Christmas is one-day for extravagant, debt-incurring gift-giving, and we let ourselves forget that the immortal God became human in poverty, humility and simplicity.

You tell us to shop till we drop, and we let ourselves forget that we are debtors of the triune God.

You tell us that Christmas is a one-day celebration that **ends** December 25, and we let ourselves forget that the celebration of the incarnation **begins** the 25th of December and continues until the Baptism of the Lord.



You tell us to spend every moment (and every penny) after Halloween in frantic activity for a one-day

marathon gift exchange, and we let ourselves forget that Advent is the time to prepare - not for the birth of a helpless infant - but for the King of Glory who will return to judge how we have spent our time, talents and treasure.

You tell us to follow the twinkling lights to the sales, and we let ourselves forget that we are to follow the Light of the World, and then to be ourselves a light for the world.

You tell us to party for weeks before Christmas and we let ourselves forget that Advent is a time of serious and prayerful preparation, as well as a time of joy.

You tell us to sing carols all during October, November and December, and we let ourselves forget that the focus of Advent is preparation.

You tell us to forget Christmas and the singing of carols on 25 December, and we let ourselves forget that Christians begin to celebrate on the 25th, and that we continue our joyous songs and gatherings throughout the season until the Baptism of the Lord.

You set the pace and tell us what to do and we follow. Churches, schools, dioceses, parishes, families and individuals follow your lead. Instead of being "a city built on a hilltop (that) cannot be hidden" (Mt 5:14), we let ourselves blend into the current materialistic culture. Instead of remembering that our celebrations should be counter-cultural, and that our lights are to shine before others "so that seeing (our) good works, they may give the praise

to (our) Father in heaven" (Mt 5:16), we follow your tinsel like thoughtless children. We have feasts and seasons to celebrate the mystery of Christ throughout the year, and you have wrested them from us - and we let you. Yes, we have seen your signs, your ads, your commercials, and we bow down to them.

By Rita (Mary Dolores) Fisher, IHM