Columns
Spirituality



A Nativity scene is displayed in Kolkata, West Bengal, India, in December 2019. (Dreamstime/Subhamay Acharyya)



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What if this Christmas, we allowed ourselves to become a symphony of love, letting it transform both our lives and the world around us? Can we see this as a time to slow down, to rediscover the passions and purpose that give our lives melody and meaning? In doing so, we might find that love becomes the unifying force that shapes our lives and our world in ways we never expected.

This season presents an opportunity to follow our dreams, explore our talents, and align our actions with our core values. In doing so, we might free ourselves from the things that distract us and we might then focus on what truly matters.

Christmas invites us to think about how we can create a little heaven here on earth — by changing the way we live. What if, instead of getting caught up in the rush of life, we made room for discipline, honesty, humanity, morality and spirituality? What if we allowed these values to lift us up and join us in the cosmic symphony of love?

At the heart of the Christmas story is God's gift to us — his only Son, sent into the world to save us. The question we might ask ourselves is: Can we embrace the hope he offers us, making it real in our lives, and sharing it with others?

In today's world, where technology and consumerism dominate, it's easy to feel disconnected. With so many global challenges, we might wonder what it means to bring peace and joy to those around us. What if we took a moment this Christmas to be present with our loved ones — perhaps cooking a special meal or surprising someone with a simple act of kindness?

It's in these small, thoughtful gestures that we can embody the spirit of Christmas. We might remember the Kris Kringle tradition and reflect on who our "secret Santa" might be. Maybe it's a lonely neighbor, or someone who could use a little extra love and attention.

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I recall a Christmas many years ago when, instead of visiting my family, I spent the day with an elderly widow who had just lost her husband. Her daughter, who had come from America for the funeral, couldn't stay for Christmas. This widow and her husband were both converts to Catholicism. Spending time with her, and listening to the story of their conversion, and the many happy memories of their married life

together, gave me immense joy.

For her, it was a catharsis — an opportunity to share her grief and her gratitude. For me, it was a reminder of what love really looks like: not as an abstract ideal, but as something lived out in the quiet, intimate moments we share with others.

This Christmas, as we reflect on the power of giving, we might find that the victory of good over evil, the beauty of joy over listlessness, and the power of light over darkness are not distant ideals but realities we can embrace in our everyday lives.

By adopting a "less is more" mindset, and fostering deeper connections, we can awaken to the truth that all is one. The divine plan for humanity is one of fraternity, of recognizing that we are all bound together as God's creatures.

Jesus inaugurated a kingdom that is still unfolding. Wouldn't it be great if we worked toward its realization this Christmas? Helping restore the health of Earth's systems, and ensuring that everyone has what they need — both materially and spiritually — could be a meaningful way to celebrate this season. Discovering better ways to coexist, to treat our planet as a sacred sanctuary, becoming a *Vasudhaiva Kutumbaka* (a Sanskrit phrase that means the whole world is one family) would be an extraordinary way of ushering in the New Year.

As we look toward 2025, what if we all embraced the idea that the whole world is one family, woven together by threads of the same cosmic fabric? It would sure make the babe in the manger smile!

This Christmas, as we reflect on the power of giving and the beauty of "less is more," we will find deeper connections that can awaken us to the consciousness that all is one. This Christmas, let us adore the babe in the manger, celebrating the unity of existence, through our words, actions and care for one another.

Happy Christmas and a grace-filled New Year 2025!