



December 12, 2022

Dear Friends, Brothers, and Sisters,

The cold weather is gradually approaching and the Advent season is telling us we are getting closer to celebrating Christmas. All year round we should be meditating and getting ready for the coming of the Lord.

Years ago, I learned from historians that the nativity of Jesus did not occur during the month of December as it has traditionally been celebrated. According to some scholars the birth of Jesus took place during the month of April. Others, however, claim that it was during the month of October. The Christian church, nonetheless, struggles over the issue of the actual date when the nativity of our Lord and Savior took place.

For about 300 years the early church preferred to celebrate the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ rather than His birth. The truth of the matter is that the central message of the gospel is based on His death and resurrection rather than His birthday. According to The New Encyclopedia Britannica and the Roman almanac, the Christian festival of Christmas has been celebrated in Rome since the year 336 AD. In the Eastern part of the Roman Empire, however, a festival on January 6<sup>th</sup> commemorated the manifestation of God in both the birth and the baptism of Jesus. In Jerusalem, only the birth was celebrated.

The New Encyclopedia Britannica says that "Christ's Mass" was a celebration dedicated to the birth of Christ and that the first time it happened was in the year 336 AD. Therefore, from that time on the celebration of the birth of Christ has been established from generation to generation, even though nobody knows the day and time of His actual birth. Because the day of His birth was closer to the time of His death and resurrection, those who started this celebration

selected the day of December 25<sup>th</sup> to set apart the birth from the dead. There are a lot of controversial issues about the pagan cults and other deities related to December 25<sup>th</sup>, but I am not going to make reference to those in this letter.

The reality is that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Egypt, according to the gospel. His family returned from Egypt to Israel and went to live in Nazareth of Galilee. In the Synoptic Gospels, after His death and resurrection, he appeared to His disciples and promised that he will return to earth in what we call today the Second Coming of Jesus.

Again, Advent is the time for preparation, watching, and waiting for Jesus to return to earth. This means we are eagerly waiting for His Second Coming. We need to be praying and alert because He will come when many people won't be expecting Him. Let us be prepared for the coming of the Lord because He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

This year the following organizations or people will be helped with the contributions sent to us: the Free Clinic and Passages. Thank you for your generosity in providing the funds so that others may live a better life in this world. I wish you a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year in 2023. May God bless you and all the members of your family.

In Christ,

*Rey Díaz*

Rev. Rey Diaz