

Carry Christ to combat Christmas chaos

“Behave like a duck — keep calm and serene on the surface but paddle like crazy underneath”.

This saying was credited by British actor Michael Caine in 1976. However, records show that it was first written in Nov 1934 about diplomacy in Japan.

Christmas is beautiful. However, it can also feel like we have to behave like a duck: be calm and serene on the surface, but paddle like crazy underneath. There is shopping, cooking, wrapping presents, decorating, travelling, visiting family, and friends.

Christmas is supposed to be about peace, joy, and love. How do we find the true meaning of Christmas: peace, joy, and love in all the busyness?

Mary was busy: “Mary set out and went as **quickly** as she could.” However, carrying Jesus, she found peace, joy, and love in the chaos. Whatever you are doing this Christmas, “**Carry Christ to combat Christmas chaos**”.

Travelling – “Mary set out ... to a town in the hill country of Judah.” The distance between Nazareth and Judea is roughly 100 miles. She would have had to walk 1000 metres uphill too. The terrain would have been dangerous. It may have taken her 4-7 days. You may have to travel far. There may be bad weather conditions. It may be challenging. If/when you travel, “**carry Christ to combat Christmas chaos.**”

Visiting - “She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth.” You may be visiting or hosting family, friends, and new people over Christmas. This may be naturally joyful. However, this may also be challenging. Zechariah didn't greet Mary. An angel made him unable to speak, because of his unbelief at Elizabeth's pregnancy. You may have mixed feelings about visiting or hosting some people! There may be awkward silences. You may want more silence: people may make inappropriate jokes or comments, and/or have too much

to drink. Don't look or sound unhappy when you visit/host. Greet people joyfully. "**Carry Christ to combat Christmas chaos.**"

Conversations – The narrator says: "Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit." Elizabeth said: "For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy." Carry Christ into conversations. Objectively, people are filled with the Holy Spirit. Subjectively, their hearts leap with joy! If you have difficult conversations, pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you.

We are living in a very fractured world. The world needs peace, joy, and love, more than ever. Carrying Christ brings a peace, joy, and love that no other person, community, philosophy, economic system, technology, or political party can bring.

American pastor, Rick Warren, says that "the hope of the world is the local church" (repeat). I want this parish community to be fully united in Jesus' Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:19); that is, to "**Carry Christ.**" Let others meet him, put God at the centre of their life, and spread the peace, joy, and love that only He can bring!

"Mary set out and went as **quickly** as she could." Do not hesitate. In this Mass, offer your life to God. Receive Jesus in the Eucharist, and carry him in your heart quickly to others!

Prayer

Jesus, come in to the womb of my heart, like Mary.

Picture any travelling, visiting, or people you will speak with this Christmas.

Help me carry you in my heart when I am travelling, when I visit family, friends, and strangers, and when I have to speak/greet this particular person.

Amidst any chaos, bring your peace, joy, and love.

In Jesus' name, amen!