



I was taught that the word “holiday” is derived from medieval use of the term “holy day” in the 12th century. These “holy days,” designated by church authorities, were supposed to inspire reflection and prayer. My wife jokes that the modern celebration of Christmas does indeed inspire prayer—prayers that we can survive the frenzy of the commercialism so as to rest quietly on Christmas Eve and reflect on anything but meal preparations, decorations, and buying gifts!! Today’s mass media places much stress on all of us to conform to what others think the “perfect holiday” should be. I think the “reflection” part gets totally lost.

So my wish for all of us is that we can find the means and time to reflect on this past year, to think about what we did and what we could have done to improve our lives and the lives of those we love. Settle down in front of the Christmas tree, or gaze into the Menorah candles that flicker with symbolic meaning, or study the Bethlehem crèche scene. Let’s take a “time out” from the frenzied madness and lose ourselves in thought. Stop worrying about getting the perfect gift or being perfect. It’s not worth it. When we leave this world, our children will not remember the holiday gifts we gave them or the perfect “holiday experience” we tried to recreate. They will remember only the time we spent with them and the love we shared.

On behalf of the Borough Council, municipal employees, and service volunteers, I wish all our residents a Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukkah, and a Happy New Year!

Mayor John J. Ruocco