



# CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS & AUXILIARY

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Dear Members of CWV and CWVA:

Each year we approach the celebration of Christmas within the unique circumstances of our times. This is particularly true this year: the pandemic of COVID-19 and the presidential election will both make for chapters in future history books and have affected all of us deeply. The various degrees of “shutdown” that we have experienced this year, along with, perhaps, a sense of discouragement at the corruption of our political system, cannot help but cause us to turn within ourselves and consider deeply our lives in this world, our place within our nation, and our own mortality. As Catholic Christians we are indeed

pilgrims on a journey through this life and this world to another life and another world. This spiritual reality may seem more evident now than ever due to this year’s events.

The “shutdown” response to COVID has forced us to turn inward and spend more time within ourselves. Yet, this may be a blessing in disguise. The sense of isolation remaining within our homes so much more this year may force us to reckon with our inner selves and our relationship with God. The Christmas parties and dinners so much a part of this time of year have all but vanished, leaving us to prepare to celebrate Christmas apart from friends and even our families. How different the holidays seem this year! But, this may be the very reason for us to find God even more intimately now. The Christ-Child of Christmas cards and Nativity scenes may be born within us in a new way precisely because of our greater aloneness with the Lord.

COVID and elections come and – pray God – will go. What we discover in our relationship with God during this part of our life’s journey will remain a part of us. We are changed by the circumstances of our times. May we realize Christmas joy by our discovery of God anew this year; and may we hope for another more traditional and joyful Christmas celebration by the end of 2021.

*Christmas blessings,*

*Fr. Bill McLaughlin  
CWVA National Chaplain*