

Christmas 2020 message

Following is a Christmas message from Roger McGowen, whose story many of you are familiar with - <https://gentleartofblessing.org/category/roger-mcgowen/>

Dear friends,

It is said that life is not what it appears, but what we make of it. The life we have been given is indeed a blessing, and we should treat it like that every day because no matter what we think, it is not guaranteed to anyone.

That is why every day should be spent doing something in the name of love. People ask themselves and their friends every day, "Do you believe in God?" They reply. "Yeah, I believe in God." That is well and good, but how often do we do the things that are pleasing in God's eyes, and make Him believe in us?

You, my family, and friends should never need to ask yourselves those questions because you are already doing what is pleasing in the name of God. You saw the hungry and you fed them! You encountered the naked and you clothed them! When you heard of those in prison - that they were alone and abandoned by all - you visited them and gave them your love and support.

I am often asked, "Roger, how do you do what you do after so long?" And I tell them, "Look at my feet and you will see that they are standing on the shoulders of all those who believed in me and who love you and all humanity!"

I do nothing without you, my friends! You are the love that gave my dream reality. You are the force behind all the good that I do and take credit for. You are the unsung heroes in the story of my life. I want to take this time to tell you how much I love you and care for you.

I had a dream prompted by my RRSB* friends. A dream that one day the visiting room at the Wynne Unit prison would be filled with visitors from France, and you made that happen! You gave nine days of your life to stay here in Huntsville Texas while a very terrible disease was slowly making its way across the ocean that would eventually kill over 1 million people worldwide. You came to show and give your love to men who our society said were not worth it!

We have endured much. And we are still here. And if we live long enough, we will endure much more. It is the nature of life. We live, we learn, we grow. And we learn that we are the ones to learn from what the universe gives and takes.

I write this to say to you all that you take not one day of your life for granted. Learn to appreciate every moment of every day, because they are all gifts. The day that you take for granted is a day that could have been spent making someone else's life better just by the brightness of your presence.

The holiday season is upon us and it is one that is fraught with fear and longings for those who are no longer with us. We must remind ourselves that love is not dead. It is the wish of those whose loss we feel that we move on in their names and create a better world for our children and grandchildren. And that is what we must do.

Let us create that better world now – not tomorrow! Get up and do what must be done to make your tomorrow brighter. And your today! Let us bring in the new year pledged to give more and

do more for the survival of love! Each of us has a stake in it. We are all reflections of one another.

I write this in the hope that we all understand how important we are to one another. More importantly, how important we are to the world. So, take the holiday season to look around and find what is broken, and fix it; What is hurting, and comfort it; What is in need of love, and love it!

Christ lives in your heart and in your actions, and Christmas is really every day for the person who just found love. I wish you all a love-filled Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

I love you all! Roger

*Acronym for Roger's French support group