



*“Have yourself a merry little Christmas,
let your heart be light
From now on, our troubles will be out of sight*

*Through the years we all will be together,
If the fates allow. . . “*

This song brings tears to my eyes every year. The words elicit reflection and thoughts of past holidays. On Christmas Eve when I was little, we would sit around our table with candles lit, and there would be an extra place set for those who could not be with us or who had died. I can remember looking around the table and seeing everyone’s face glowing in the candle light and feeling at peace. I can still close my eyes and see my mom’s smile and her sparkling blue eyes. I can see my very impatient dad trying to make the night amazing for the family. I can see my brother and sisters squirming in their chairs filled with the excitement of Santa coming soon.

As a child I never understood the meaning of that extra plate, but as an adult who has lost family and friends, I feel it all too well. With perspective I understand the meaning of the extra table setting and the space that remains for the love I still hold in my heart for those who are gone.

When we are children we look at Christmas only with anticipation of what is to come, but as adults we see it through our memories and through the eyes of our children. We appreciate gatherings with family and the friends who give our life meaning and joy. Knowing that the people sitting at my table can and will change in the coming years, helps me focus on the present and enjoy each moment. Even with all the craziness of the season! Remembering what has been and who I have been blessed to sit with at our changing table has helped make Christmas richer for me with each passing year.

Over a lifetime we will sit at many, many tables with many different faces. This Christmas season, as you hurry about, shop on the internet, stress over the perfect gift and put up your Christmas tree, take some time to reflect. Reach back for the memories of what and who has brought meaning to your Christmases past. Share those memories with those you love. We are so very blessed by all the people who are and have been a part of our lives. Have yourself a Merry little Christmas now. . .

Peace and Love,
Stephanie

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Question/Comment on Article? lightly.salted@sfamanitowoc.com



601 N. 8th St., Manitowoc, WI. 54220
920-684-3718
www.sfamanitowoc.org
parish e-mail: info@sfamanitowoc.com