



# Advent Reflection

**Day #13**

**Friday, December 11**

Isaiah 48:17-19; Matthew 11:16-19

A few years ago, a guest from the nightly dinners at Catholic Charities thanked me for giving him his Christmas gift early, remarking, “Seeing you is my gift.”

Since the beginning of the pandemic, I have deeply missed my friends from the suppers. The guests still receive to-go bags, but volunteers and guests can no longer gather around a table and share stories from their lives. Our conversations now take place on city streets, where many of our guests live. I spotted a guest on my walk home one snowy October day. I stopped and spoke with my friend. He asked me, “What’s happening for Christmas?”

It will be harder to see the guests this holiday season. There will certainly be no sit down supper. This is a year marked by uncertainty and loss, a year of not knowing what to expect, what to say or what to do.

Inscribed on the monument where my brother was buried at age 16 are the words: “With Charlie, every day was like Christmas, because he shared so much love, and no matter how much love he shared, people understood.” Born with special needs, my brother had a hard time talking, but with a well chosen word and a smile, he shared love without limits with all those he met. He was the master of joy. Without waiting for the timing to be easier, for the world to be more welcoming, we are called, now more than ever, to spread Christmas love fearlessly—every day we are given, to every person we meet, on every city street. We are called to be the answer to the question: “What’s happening for Christmas?”

*Reflection by Holy Name Cathedral Parishioner Caitlin Manley*