

It's cold outside, preparing for Epiphany, great Christmas gifts, and a happy New Year (7 Quick Takes)

~1~

It's cold. Ridiculously cold. I look at the weather reports, and it starts to sound like some terrible math problem. If the wind chill is 5 degrees on Thursday, how many cups of hot chocolate will Judy need when the wind chill is 15 degrees below zero on Friday?

~2~

One of Daniel's favorite Christmas gifts was two boxes of hot chocolate and a bag of marshmallows. You can't beat that. It reminded me of the year Leo was 2 and his favorite gift was the banana in his stocking.

~3~



Happy 12th day of Christmas! Are your decorations still up? Since Dec. 25, I've tried every day to mention which day of Christmas it is, but I haven't had great success. On the sixth day in honor of six geese a laying, we had egg sandwiches for breakfast. That's about as good as it gets here.

Meanwhile, our kings are inching toward the manger scene, and they'll arrive this weekend for the Epiphany.

By the way, if you've never blessed your home with an Epiphany chalk blessing—or

even if you have—you might like to do it this year. Here are instructions on how to do it. You can even take chalk to Mass with you and ask the priest or deacon to bless it afterward.

~4~



My husband apparently noticed that I have been using five different mismatched boxes to contain my jewelry. So for Christmas he gave me a lovely jewelry box to hold most of what I own.

I was surprised to realize that I do actually own quite a bit of jewelry. Very little of it would be valuable to someone who isn't me, but I have so many beautiful pins I have received from friends and family. Almost every piece has a story of the person who gave it to me, and I had such a wonderful time going through my boxes, piece by piece, and remembering when and how I added each to my collection. Some I have no memory of at all, which is truly intriguing.

~5~

Happy New Year! If you haven't picked a saint for the year, I recommend using Jennifer Fulwiler's Saint Name Generator. My saint for the year is St. Cosmas, who was a twin boy. I am learning that he was a martyr and is patron of a few things, including physicians and children. I'm curious to see how he will be important to me this year.

Jen also created a Word of the Year generator this year, and I could not wait to try it. My word is "Ask." I wasn't sure how I feel about it at first because it sounded a little passive. But then I decided that "Ask" doesn't mean not to act, and that also it implies an active openness and listening and also, perhaps, a little bit of challenge to how things are and a wondering of what might be.

You can find your own word here.

~6~



Parenthood is full of surprises, and one for me has been that an 8-year-old boy can care so much about his appearance. He spends much more time on his hair than I do, and I think that's part of a trend. In fact, his New Year's resolution is to try some different hairstyles.

I know people say New Year's resolutions don't last, but I have a feeling this one is here to stay.

And how handsome is his shirt? That was also a gift, and he looks so grown-up in it. Let's see if we can have 2018 go a little more slowly than 2017. These boys are growing fast!

~7~



On New Year's Eve, after we enjoyed fondue for dinner, we introduced our children to *The Sound of Music*. They knew they weren't going to like it, that it was going to be soooo boring, and why can't we just watch *Phineas and Ferb*? But then we turned on *The Sound of Music*, and the boys loved it. They didn't want to stop watching it to go to bed. And

they were excited to finish it the next day.

It had been years since I had seen it, and it was just as magnificent as I had remembered.

So we ended 2017 with fondue and *The Sound of Music*, and we started 2018 with

another pot of fondue and the rest of *The Sound of Music*. I'm not sure what that says about us—or about the two different years.

And now I really want to introduce our boys to more musicals. *Easter Parade*, anyone? *Singing in the Rain*? *Brigadoon*? We're just getting started.

Find more quick takes on Kelly's blog, This Ain't the Lyceum, and have a great weekend!