

# Some pick-me-ups for post-Christmas letdown

“Christmas is over,” Collin declared, a tinge of heartbreak in his voice, as he peered through the complete set of open doors on his kneeling Santa Advent calendar.

Dec. 26 is a dreary day for many people. All the preparations – the decorations, the shopping, the baking, the eating, the wrapping, the unwrapping, the smiling at strangers -seem to have come to a sudden halt.

It’s the falling action right after the climax of our exciting narrative. Where have we felt this before? Immediately after giving birth, many women sink into the “baby blues” and some even further into postpartum depression. We take honeymoons after our wedding to bond with our new bride or groom and to unwind after the biggest day of our lives. And no matter how much they look forward to summer, most teachers have a few moments of reflection where they wish they could go back and change a lesson, a unit, the way they disciplined that certain student.

When we make plans, we set out for them to be flawless, perfect. We have lofty expectations for celebrations, and whether everything goes smoothly or is a catastrophe for the ages, we miss that feeling of uncertainty, that vision of our dream come to life.

For adults, this could be the ravioli which spills in the sink, rather than being served in an intricate bowl so that it looks like the picture on the package. (By the way, mistakes make great stories. If you don’t believe me, watch *A Christmas Story*.) It could be that one extra visit with a friend we just couldn’t squeeze in. It could be that gift we gave that didn’t fit or was a duplicate or just wasn’t right.

For children and young adults, it’s almost always that toy or designer clothing or high-end electronic device that they set their eyes on. Sometimes Santa disappoints, whether you’re bad or good.

Dec. 26 is a day when we reflect on yesterday and the days leading up to it. We're Monday morning quarterbacks focusing on one particular game and the week before it. But, we're missing the point. We need to be looking at the entire season. We need to be looking at our careers, with our eyes on the hall of fame.

Christmas isn't over. Advent is over. The wait is over. Christ is born. The Christmas season has just begun. We should be rejoicing, not lamenting.

So rather than spending the day moping about that present you didn't get or that thing you wanted to do on Christmas day, but didn't, consider doing or thinking about some of these things to continue the festivities:

- December 26th is Boxing Day in the UK and Canada. It's a day for feeding the poor. Consider spending some time helping out at Our Daily Bread or donating food to your parish. Giving back is an excellent way to keep your spirits up.
- Exercise! Take a walk. Turn on some music and dance. If you belong to a gym, join a class. If you have an "On Demand" program through your cable provider, search for fitness videos. Working out increases endorphins, the "feel-good" chemical in your brain.
- Get together with the friends and family you didn't get to see on Christmas day. Go see a movie together (preferably a funny one) or have a "leftover" party, where everyone brings leftovers from Christmas dinner to share. Just because Dec. 25 is over doesn't mean you have to lose the closeness you have with the people you love.
- If you have young children (or pets), let them play in the leftover tissue paper and wrapping paper. Then, sit back, relax, and enjoy the show.
- Be thankful. If you have time, write a few thank you notes for your Christmas gifts and to people who have meant a lot to you throughout the year. Gratitude is the secret to happiness.



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Speaking of being grateful, we need to spend these few days after Christmas thanking God for sending us His only son and for inviting us to be a part of Jesus' birthday every year. The celebration is just beginning.