



*On a quiet December Sunday afternoon, I stroll silently, alone by the bay,
Observing the sparse and subdued Christmas decorations, a drastically modified landscape
Sparkling sadly as masked pedestrians wander aimlessly on deserted sidewalks,
The sounds of the season eerily quieted by the adversity that has altered our existence.*

*A year ago, the exciting sounds of countless tourists permeated the air, but
Today, the solitary cries of seagulls accompanied by the rhythm of gentle waves
Perform a simple acoustic duet that beckons me to reflection
As my thoughts drift to a year of uncertainty and an unsettled holiday season.*

*Time has raced by swiftly since our world was disrupted nine fateful months ago.
Amid the confusion, days have lost their identity, each one a mirror image of the next,
With routines simplified, contact and communication distorted by
An unprecedented reality that has transformed our existence.*

*With fear and uncertainty separating us from the tender touch of family,
We search for a connection in our isolation, seeking security, craving an embrace,
United in sadness for the thousands of loved ones who departed alone,
The cruelty of a pandemic robbing them of a final goodbye.*

*Disturbed by the ever growing insecurity and longing for the tradition of the holiday,
I dream of the idyllic sounds of Christmas carols gently playing in the background as
Five grandchildren help Papa and Grandma decorate the house while
Listening to the history of each precious ornament as they respectively place it on the tree.*

*With these turbulent times forcing us inward,
I think of the special ornaments in my life, the sacred symbols that summon me
To remember those whose imprint lies deep within my soul,
An eternal connection providing trust, faith, and hope in the journey of my life.*

*My dad's simple black and silver rosary beads reverently drape my computer screen.
Each worn, discolored bead tells the story of his commitment and devotion.
This beautiful ornament serves as a symbolic testament to his deep love and conviction,
Always reminding me that in our darkest hours, prayer and faith will guide us.*

*My father-in-law's simple brass stamp dispenser sits modestly upon my desk.
With each use, I remember a noble man who was proud to serve his country,
Intensely committed to his own beliefs but respectful of the ideology of others,
Who understood that differences should not divide us, but only make us stronger.*

*A cherished black and white photograph of courageous brothers in peace,
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Father Theodore Hesburgh, is the centerpiece of my reflective symbols.
Standing together with arms entwined, they form a hopeful chain of love and harmony,
Reminding me to appreciate the combined gifts of a nation defined by the beauty of our diversity.*

*As we approach this Christmas season, may we celebrate the ornaments of our lives,
The precious jewels that serve as a connection to our past and our present.
May your faith in God, belief in our country, and commitment to unity
Shine as we navigate a new future overcoming the most challenging of times together.*

*Frank Allocco
Christmas 2020*