***It Ain’t Over ‘til the Fat King Sings***

I recently listened to a news commentator opine that this is a “weird week” because it begins with Christmas and ends with New Year’s Eve. It had occurred to me that this could well be the current “reality” — in fact, Commercial Christmas has apparently won. The Christmas Season begins sometime in October and November, with decorations up the day after Thanksgiving (always subject to change) and after saying “Happy New Year” at Midnight, Christmas is over. The decorations come down, Christmas movies are no longer broadcast, Christmas songs on the radio disappear — and we’re off to the races for what comes next — these days it’s now February 14 —what we used to call Saint Valentine’s Day, but the Saint is now deleted and forgotten, and it’s simply “Valentine’s Day.”

I really cannot blame the culture, because much of it is economically driven, and I understand the need to plan, prepare, and purchase (the three “p’s” of the economy culture) but what happened to the Wise Men — aka the Three Kings? Did they somehow sneak in on Christmas Day and make a quick exit? The name of the day of the arrival of the Wisemen, as we know is “Epiphany” and generally speaking it is now used as a secular term somewhat synonymous with “great idea” or “brilliant insight.”

So, we can easily see when commercial/secular Christmas begins and we can now see when commercial/secular Christmas ends, but why do so many Christians buy into that? I have never thought it appropriate for the culture to tell Jewish people how and when to celebrate Hanukkah, nor to tell Muslim people how and when to celebrate Ramadan, so I wonder why Christians allow the celebration of the Birth of Jesus to be altered and rearranged by non-Christians, nominal Christians, and others.

The burden of proof must always, classically speaking, be placed on people who wish to change what has been — what has existed, and inasmuch as the Twelve Days of Christmas predates the current secular celebration season, the operative questions are not “Why do you people put up your decorations so late and why do you leave them up for so long,” but rather, “Why have you changed how the vast majority of Christians have been celebrating the Feast of the Nativity Season (Christmas)?” Once again, one can justify decorating early given the complexities of the number of decorations and the work schedules of many people, but what compels people to take down their decoration while it is still Christmas? Why have we simply conformed to what the secular culture has produced? Wouldn’t we be a witness to the world by simply keeping up our celebration decorations during the entire Twelve Days of Christmas at least?

We recognize that the Holy Scriptures do not define with precision the number of Magi (Wisemen) nor their gifts nor how long it took for them to make their journey to see the Christ child, but the vast majority of Christian’s throughout the world have traditionally celebrated January 6 liturgically as that day, when the Wise Men arrived bearing gifts and adoring the Word become Flesh — Jesus our Immanuel. I have often wondered what it would be like if signs were made and put on houses which now no longer have decorations on January 6 saying “Sorry. It’s over.” For us we can say, **“It ain’t over ‘til the fat King sings!”**

I would like to challenge all Christians to reject the commercial/secular Season and return to the Christian Season. It is actually not difficult at all. Simply leave the decorations up, and on the Feast of the Epiphany (after having gone to Mass) simply gather and sing an Epiphany hymn such as the modern one, “We Three Kings of Orient are…” written in 1857 by an Anglican Priest. Be a witness. Let people know that Jesus is the light of the world, and do not allow a culture that is barely Christian, if at all, to tell Christians how to celebrate the most remarkable event (until the Resurrection and Ascension!) — the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us. **It ain’t over ‘til the fat King sings.**