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Dec. 19, 1988

EXPECTATIONS OF TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CAN CAUSE HOLIDAY DEPRESSION

If you suffer from holiday depression, you're not alone, says Mark A. Fine, assistant professor of psychology at the University of Dayton.

"The ideal Christmas is not achieved by a lot of people," said Fine. "Not everyone celebrates with a big tree, two kids and a happy family. Christmas is not a great time for everyone."

Fine said that holiday depression is caused by cultural expectations and media portrayal of a traditional family Christmas. "The expectation to be happy at Christmas only magnifies being lonely and not having family relationships," he said. "You get more frustrated and disappointed than you would be during the rest of the year. If you don't have a happy family life, or if you're going to be alone at Christmas, you have to realize that you're not alone."

By realizing that the traditional portrait of Christmas does not hold true for everyone, people may not expect as much from the season. "That might in itself be helpful," he said. "Also, churches have support groups for people who are lonely or upset during the holidays. It's best to not be alone for Christmas."

For media interviews on holiday depression, contact Mark Fine at 229-2165.

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS ON THE 27TH? IT'S ONE WAY TO UNPLUG THE CHRISTMAS MACHINE

Sister Mary Louise Foley, F.M.I., coordinator of the Family of Mary Office at the University of Dayton, helps people live out their fantasy of the perfect Christmas celebration.

She has conducted workshops at UD and Queen of Apostles Church to instruct people on how to "unplug the Christmas machine" and enjoy a more rewarding, less stressful and more value-centered Christmas.

It may mean celebrating the holiday with your "real loved ones," not necessarily your family, on another day. It may mean dividing up the various holiday tasks so one person isn't doing all the baking, card writing, shopping and wrapping. It may mean planning now for Christmas 1989.

"Christmas is a holiday bound with traditions and expectations and hopes. On Dec. 26, a lot of people are disappointed that the holiday didn't meet their expectations," said Foley. "We get people talking about their fantasies of a perfect Christmas and tell them to get working on it. Most people put Christmas shopping and gift wrapping real low on their values list. Instead, they value a joyful spirit in the home and a peaceful, quiet holiday."

For media interviews, contact Sister Mary Louise Foley at 229-3286, 429-0510 or 224-5896.



The University of Dayton

For further information or assistance in scheduling interviews, contact Public Relations and University Communications, 229-3241.