

Merry Christmas To All

It is time for us to reflect on the gift that is Christmas, the story of the Incarnation. Literally the “enfleshment” of God. This is how God came to live among us, as Emmanuel, God with us. “For a child is born to us, a Son is given...” Isaiah 9:5a

Mary and Joseph were travelers looking for refuge, who were turned away from many doors before benefitting, we assume, from the kindness of a stranger who offered them a place to stay. They were far from home. Mary was about to give birth, and they were in need - a familiar story.

Today, millions of people are in a similar situation. Just recently, we have been forced to think of the plight of refugees and homeless people. Some 1.5 million of them have entered Europe. The heart breaking stories and images of families fleeing their homes in war ravaged countries enters our living rooms. Close to home we are saddened by accounts of homeless people dying in our streets. Inequality is growing worldwide, with half the world’s wealth in the hands of 1% of the population. Nor indeed should we avoid these stories.

If Christmas is to mean anything to us, it should impress on us the importance of doing what we can to welcome the stranger, we are particularly a nation of immigrants.

We just celebrated our parish 30th Anniversary - Congratulations - with a hall full of guests at a banquet celebration with Bishop McElroy. It was also in celebration of the dedication of our hall expansion, with your sacrifice, which increases our capability of welcoming the stranger. Fr. Jim Poulsen, founding pastor, remarked on all the strange faces, as well as familiar ones, who were present. The growth of community takes place in welcoming the stranger, which is one of the corporal works of mercy, like feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and healing the sick. These corporal works of Mercy find fulfillment in our faith community, and God willing, will continue, especially in this holy season.

This we do, not because they are Christian, but because we are Christian. We are Christian because Christmas happened, because God sent Jesus, born in a stable in Bethlehem, to be one of us, and to teach us to be good and compassionate human beings. We are agents of loving Mercy.

How better to observe this year of Mercy than by receiving the Lord’s mercy in our own lives by celebrating the sacrament of Reconciliation on Tuesday, December 15th at 7:00pm. There is no better preparation for Christmas. It gives meaning to the phrase, come home for Christmas, which is more than a physical journey, but honoring ones life as a sacred journey. We celebrate the wonder and beauty of who we are and who we are becoming, honoring the life that wants to live in us.

Our Christmas Masses are surely our greatest opportunity of the year for the people of God to welcome the stranger into the joyful celebration of the birth of our Saviour. “They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:5b

May peace and joy reign in our liturgies and in the hearts of all our families this Holy Season.

Merry Christmas!



Rev. Nicholas P. Clavin
Pastor