

Good News

Dear Friends,

I wish to thank everyone who made the Christmas liturgies at St. Mary's such a beautiful, moving and hospitable experience. So much work is involved with making sure all details are set in such a way that everything 'works.' Liturgy works with great ease here at All Saints because there are so many people, too many to name, that band together so that the height and expectation of celebrations such as Christmas can be truly enjoyed and savored.

I also wish to extend my blessings prayers for the new year ahead. Many of us are planning resolutions for better habits and ways in the year 2020. I believe God has in store many good things for our parish and there is nothing like waiting joyfully, as the Advent season taught us, to make this a hallmark of our discipleship. With these resolutions, should come an increase in devotion, attention, and practice of the Catholic faith. All of us desire to be rid of habits that prevent us from embracing and living fully the mysteries of faith.

The Feast of the Holy Family, celebrated this past weekend, gives us a model for what we hope to be in our lives and what we hope to attain, which is eternal life. They are holy for two reasons: their actions and responses to challenge and God is the most important part of their lives. He transcends the relationship they have with one another and realize that without God, they could not have a relationship with each other. In the season that celebrates the Incarnation of the Son, this feast and Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, reminds us of the true meaning of what we celebrate during these days:

1. Christmas is the Feast of God's sending us a Savior
2. Christmas is the Feast of God's sharing His love with us
3. Christmas is the Feast of the Emmanuel (God living with us and within us):

Without Him, we have and are nothing.

In Christ,
Fr. Jones

Gospel Meditation - The Holy Family

"Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you." 725 kilometers. That's the distance on modern roads from Bethlehem to Cairo. Assuming one covered 40km a day on foot — ambitious for two young parents and their infant son — the journey would take well over two weeks. Of course, the Holy Family didn't have modern roads. They would travel through wilderness, fear bandits, run low on water, and cross the vast Sinai Peninsula in a reverse of their forefathers in Exodus. Here, in struggle and sacrifice, are the beginnings of the forging of the Holy Family.

"Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod." Large Jewish communities existed in most major cities of the ancient Mediterranean world, after the collapse of their kingdoms chronicled in the Old Testament, and Joseph could likely find work as a carpenter. All the same, today's Gospel reminds us that the first formational years of Jesus as a babe-in-arms were spent in a strange land. The members of the Holy Family were foreigners, outsiders, immigrants.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. God took on our humanity. He is in solidarity with our own trials and difficulties. On the feast of the Holy Family, we honor the special place of the family within society. We are invited, too, to recall those families who share in the struggles of the Holy Family in a particular way. We pray for immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. We pray for all parents who sacrifice their own well-being and comfort so their children may have a better life.

God's GPS Never Fails

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I use GPS wherever I go, and it serves me well most of the time. However, sometimes it leads me to a place that does not exist. Then there are those times when I am about to turn, and the man inside my phone shouts out, "GPS signal lost!" or "Rerouting!" The problem is, when the area is unfamiliar to me, I have no choice but to listen. I could try to get where I am going by simple intuition or by pulling over to look at a paper map, but I don't trust my sense of direction. And I haven't bought a paper map in close to a decade!

Many people move through life without any direction. They find themselves constantly rerouting and wondering when they will ever get to a satisfying final destination. What they need is a compass and a companion for the journey. Yet they have no idea how to get either.

Prayer can serve as a compass, and it connects us to a companion for the journey. Stewardship living is impossible without prayer. If we count on our own will and believe we can become fruitful without daily contact with the Divine, we can find ourselves looking for directions more than moving toward a destination. God, through prayer, will help us see all we have as a gift. God, through prayer, will lead us away from materialism and selfishness and toward freedom and generosity. Even when we fall to sin, the path back is clearer. God's GPS signal is never really lost.

