

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



Although this is the Fourth Sunday of Advent, our minds and hearts are already turned to Christmas. Since we will not have a separate bulletin published for Christmas, I would like to take occasion here to speak of Christmas, and especially to say a word of welcome to all those who will come to worship with us on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, or join us via live-stream.

This has been an unprecedented year. Who would have imagined when we rang in the New Year 2020, that a global pandemic was just around the corner? The pandemic has meant a complete upheaval of our lives. Some of us lost loved ones, others have been in isolation for 9 months now, and all of us have experienced the lockdown, and the closing and cancellation of so many things we take for granted – Church, family,

school, work, vacations, travel, sports, theater, restaurants.

One thing that never shuts down is the Love of God. There is nothing that is able to prevent Christ from being born for each one of us this Christmas. God is Emmanuel, God is with us.

The Virgin Mary and St. Joseph were socially isolated in Bethlehem – they were turned away from the ‘Inn’ (Oikos in Greek, meaning ‘house’) by their own relatives. Their family gave them no welcome; not out of fear of a virus, or for health reasons, or to stay safe, but out of capricious selfishness. There was more money to be made from other lodgers who were well healed.

What a disgrace. It is in this ignominy that God enters the world, our world. There is no isolation, no fear, no sickness no pandemic that is able to prevent Him from being born for us.

God Loves you. He desires to be totally one with you. Christ is born for each one of us. He is close to us, especially the down trodden, the dejected, the broken hearted, the desolate, the poor in spirit.

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It is of Christmas that one of the readings from the Mozarabic Liturgy speaks, when, proclaimed on Christmas day, it says:

“Today is born our treasure.

Today is born a physician for the blind,

a healer for the paralyzed,

strength for the weak, health for the sick.

Today a new light shines out upon the darkness of the night.”

How much we need to hear those words. How much our world needs to celebrate Christmas. God’s power in heaven, contrasted by his helplessness on earth. On this night, on this Christmas night, all the nations will gather at the foot of the crib.

Christ, born for us, is the real vaccine that the world is waiting for.

It is to him that we lift up our humble prayer, which is that of all humanity. In a beautiful Christmas homily, Saint Pope John XXIII put it this way:

O sweet and gentle infant of Bethlehem, grant us the gift of sharing with our whole soul in this profound mystery of Christmas. Put into the hearts of men and women the peace that they seek so openly and that you alone can give them. Help them to know themselves better and to live like brothers and sisters as the sons and daughters of one single Father.

May this prayer be fulfilled in us.

Merry Christmas

Fr. Sean