

# ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – DECEMBER 27, 2020

## **Dear Parishioners and Parents,**

In this specific year the celebration of the Nativity places us more realistically than ever with the original event. The birth of a healthy child is a most happy event. But it doesn't foretell the future. In the case of Jesus there are ominous signs as well as joyful signs in that shepherd's cave. There were also prophetic signs since Jesus is born in a temporary shelter fit for sheep herders and sheep. All of this is a prelude to his life.

On this Feast of the Nativity in 2020 we rejoice in the birth of Christ because he brings us the Good News of the Gospel. On the other hand, the pandemic has so changed our lifestyle, that it seems nothing can return to normal. We are also living in a time of significant fear.

The Good News of the Gospel looks beyond this particular day, this particular year, and indeed years to come. Jesus came down from Heaven so that we could attain with him later, the Kingdom of Heaven. He announces our place at the Wedding Feast.

This extended weekend beginning with the Vigil of the Nativity on Thursday, and culminating with the Feast of the Holy Family on Sunday prompts us to think deeper, higher, and more realistically. We are not simply creature of this earth, the kingdom of earth, but made a creature of the Kingdom of Heaven with the Word Made Flesh on earth. Even when we are stressed, we are blessed because Jesus has come that we may "Have life and have it more abundantly."

## **The Feast of the Holy Family - - Sunday**

St. Joseph Church reminds us of the Holy Family. Why? As we enter the church and look up on the left side there are the two statues of Mary and Joseph with Jesus. Family forms the essence of God.

Pope Francis in his *Joy of Love*, reflects with us on this. "In the Christian vision of the Trinity, God is contemplated as Father, Son, and Spirit of Love. The Triune God is a communion of love, and the family is its living extension." St. John Paul II shed light on this when he said, "Our God in its deepest mystery is not solitude, but a family, for it has within itself fatherhood, sonship, and the essence of a family which is love."

The family of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus was a close reflection of the Trinity. The human family, however, has one significant difference from the Trinity of God. Our families are consigned to growth. The love and unity in a human family is not an automatic like it is in God, but a constant avenue for growth.

This was also true in the Holy Family of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus. Humanly we grow and in this growth we gain wisdom day by day. Jesus humanly had to grow.

Jesus lived in Nazareth for almost thirty years of his life. When he returned to Nazareth in his public life, the people remarked: "Where did this man get all this wisdom? This is the carpenter, surely, the son of Mary, Joseph's son." Jesus humanly had grown.

We too as families must grow. Growth implies growing pains, but an increase of wisdom. May the Lord be with all of you and family even in our growing pains.

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.  
December 27, 2020

