

## PASTOR'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO PARISHIONERS IN TIME OF A PANDEMIC

My Dear Parishioners:

I write to you today to bring you my Christmas message and prayerful support as we celebrate the birth of our saviour Jesus Christ in such a very difficult year. For many, Christmas is a wonderful time of the year! The beautiful Christmas decorations, the Christmas songs, the get-togethers and Christmas parties, all go to show the feelings of joy and happiness that the infant Jesus brings to us at Christmas and beyond.

No doubt, we are all having a different Christmas in the time of a global pandemic that has continued to ravage our world and change the way we do things, the way we celebrate, the way we worship, the way we travel and gather with family and loved ones. Surely, this year's celebrations will also be different with fewer gatherings and get-togethers, probably with just our immediate family members and households, with lesser travels and Christmas parties. Perhaps this year some of the figures adorning our Nativity scenes will be wearing masks where it's not possible to keep the social distancing. This is one way of telling us to always try to take care of each other and keep one another safe.

One thing that is very important in all our celebrations this Christmas is to note that while the ways and forms of our usual Christmas gatherings and celebrations may change, the meaning and reason for the celebration and season does not change and so remains the same; our good God is never far away from us but is with us always. That is also the reason that for about four weeks now, we have been waiting in joyful anticipation of the birth of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ. Now the wait is over, and God's promise is fulfilled once again in our lives.

That is the good news that Christmas brings to our doorsteps, to lives and homes, to our communities and our world as the entire world rejoices in such a difficult time to know that despite our trials and struggles, God has not abandoned us to our own fate, but is very much with us at the incarnation, when the Word took flesh and dwelt among us in order that things will be well for us again.

This is the fulfillment of the promise that God made to us long ago, that a child shall be born, and his name shall be called **EMMANUEL**, which means "God is with us". He is with us every step of the way as we continue to navigate these difficult times and in our entire human history to our eternal destination.

As we share the same good news that was first announced in Bethlehem more than two thousand years ago, though in a very different way and form this year, may that feeling of joy, happiness, and peace felt by the shepherds on that first Christmas night also fill our hearts and homes this Christmas season and always.

Just as the arrival of a new baby brings happy cheer and joy to every home, may the arrival of the infant Jesus this Christmas in such a difficult and trying time dispel every darkness of sorrow, sickness and pain and give us true peace, restoration, and healing this Christmas and grant us a New Year of many blessings, good health, and peace. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a prosperous and more peaceful New Year 2021.

- Fr. Gordian

