



December 25, 2021

Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas! ***“The people who walked in Darkness have seen a great light; upon those who have dwelt in the land of gloom, a light has shone.”*** Each time I hear those words, joy fills my heart. The **first** words of the **first** reading for the **first** Christmas Mass epitomize the joy of the season. As we approached Christmas, the nights lengthened, and the days shortened. The sun’s strength waned. We donned our jackets and looked for our mittens and scarves. We longed for light and warmth. And on this holy day, we celebrate the real light, the true heartwarming presence of the Child Jesus. The infant comes to bring us joy and hope.

Sometimes, amidst all the caroling and wrapping paper, we can lose sight of the reality of Christmas. In Saint John’s Gospel, we learn that the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. Jesus, fully God and fully human, came to the world! He came, Prince of Peace, to a world that needed his peace. He came to a world that was uneasy. He came in poverty and simplicity. Jesus comes to us again today, to our uneasy and often violent world. He comes to us in poverty and simplicity. He comes to dwell among us, in our hearts and in our homes.

No matter what situation we find ourselves in, our Lord comes to us. If we are experiencing darkness, the Christ Child brings us light. If we mourn, Jesus brings us comfort and joy. If we wander alienated from each other and from God, the Baby Jesus brings grace, reconciliation, and peace. That’s the real gift of Christmas. Jesus comes to our messy world, to love, heal, change, and bless it with his presence.

As we celebrate this season, let’s keep in mind the reason we do what we do. We do all this because, no matter what, God loves us. We wrap presents and sing carols because we know the gift of God’s unconditional love. We give of ourselves because He gave to us. He gave us the greatest gift we could ever want, hope for, or need. God gave us his Son! Imagine the love God must have for us. What a gift! I invite you today to accept the gift our God offers and receive the gift of God’s love. Accept the gift of the Son. Let’s accept the gift the Son gives us, the gift of the Church. These gifts are ours for the taking.

As you receive this electronic message, I invite those who have been away from Church for a while to come home to Saints Joseph and Francis Xavier. I encourage our “regulars” to invite their neighbors and family members to join them at church this Christmas. Please know that all are welcome at Saints Joseph and Francis Xavier. Allow us to extend our welcome to you, with open arms and hearts filled with compassion, mercy and understanding. All who seek a church home will find one at Saints JFX; we would love to have you join us regularly. The Saints Joseph and Francis Xavier Parish family offers light, hope, warmth, and love. Register [here](#), get involved, and share your gifts. Welcome home!

Wishing God’s choicest blessings for this joyful season, and for the new year that will be here before we know it, I remain,

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Pastor

Saints Joseph and Francis Xavier Parish

P.S. You can make your Christmas donation to support the mission and ministry of Saints JFX [here](#). I promise we will be good stewards of your gift.