



Dear Parishioners,

We are well on our way as we journey towards Christmas. Mary and Joseph are brought to Bethlehem by the command of the emperor to participate in the census and be registered. Their journey was a sign of those who were powerless responding to the emperor who is powerful. By bringing the pregnant mother to the place where Jesus must be born, God has fulfilled the Prophecy.

Our Christmas faith is that God does not desert us; that somehow God's friendship is at work, bringing Jesus to be with us and among us today.

The most profound aspect of the Christmas miracle is the joyous response of the uncountable host of heaven! The *'host of heaven'* is the name given to the great number of angelic beings. One angel announces the birth of Jesus, but suddenly there was a great multitude of the heavenly host praising God, *"Glory to God in the Highest."* (Luke 2:14)

Among the witnesses are shepherds, considered disreputable people who are not to be trusted. These people probably were not counted in the census, so the heavenly host announced the birth of the Savior to these who do not count. Both angels and shepherds were off the map.

If we wish to hear angelic announcements, we need to be with the shepherds; in other words, those out on the edge. In our own parish, the parade of brown bags recently collected at church would indicate that this is happening among us today. In addition, your generous response to hurricane Harvey and other natural disasters, come to mind. So too, your fine giving towards our Offertory Appeal. Even the children at our parish school and in faith formation, have demonstrated outstanding generosity. Surely these actions indicate that we are staying close to the shepherds.

Also, speaking of a child, it is the angel who proclaims, *"And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."* (Luke 2:12) A child is always a sign of hope; of a future we cannot see. It is appropriate that we take this lesson seriously in the opening of our parish preschool. We anticipate this opening as an influence on our community and a real blessing to our school. The preschool should serve to enhance the number of kindergarten registrations, which has become a real concern in recent years. God bless your fine support in this new venture.

Every Christmas, Christians remember the birth of Jesus and we say "humanity has a future". We cherish our Savior by cherishing the children. If we can struggle to give hope and a future to the children, they offer hope and a future to us.

During this blessed season, do keep Deacon Ron, Stephanie Lower, and Rebecca Krawczak in your prayers for recovery. We are thankful to God that their respective surgeries were a success. During their recuperation we will miss them.

In closing, I invite you to experience God's loving mercy & unconditional love in the **Advent Penance Service on Monday, Dec. 18th at 7pm** in preparation for Christmas. We will have 13 priests to hear your confessions. I look forward to seeing you all at the Advent Penance Service and at Christmas Mass.

Merry Christmas,

Rev. Nicholas Clavin

Rev. Nicholas Clavin Pastor