

## Christmas 2020

Well, here we are, into the Christmas season of 2020. To say that this year has been a strain on many of us would be an understatement. If this past year has reminded us of anything, it is that we can take nothing for granted...except, of course, God's promise. And what did God promise? God promised that He would never leave us orphaned, that He would grant us everything we need, that He would save us; that He would be with us always. Emmanuel – God is with us, this is what we celebrate at Christmas.

God could have come to us in so many ways, in power, but He chose to come as a vulnerable child in the quietness of a stable.

“Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.” (1 Kings 19:11b, 12)

Some may say the Son of God should have been born in a great palace. It would have been nice for Mary and Joseph to have found a more fitting place to welcome their and our Savior, but our loving Father supplied what they needed, a humble, quiet and private place away from the hustle and bustle. Maybe that's what's behind this pandemic, is it coincidence that the year is 2020? It's helped us to see the world, the economy, and, especially people and the jobs they do, differently; it has become clear to us that everyone is essential. Being forced into a quiet time has allowed us to see – according the internet meme, who else turns down the music while driving so you can see more clearly? I hope we can continue to take advantage and listen to God speaking in the silence.

As a parish we have continued to grow this past year, in spite of, and maybe because of the challenges we've faced. There are new faces appearing at the weekend Masses, and hopefully this will continue. The parish has begun new programming – kudos to us, as we had it planned before Bishop Riesbeck revealed to the Diocese it was something he wanted to see; Alpha is not only being offered for adults, but for our youth. Renee continues to explore and recommend other material and programs to engage our high school age youth. We also have a new Marriage Preparation program, and a new Baptism Preparation program. This important work of evangelization and catechesis cannot be carried out without the generous support of you, the parishioners; unlike the government we cannot force you to give, God's way is to leave it to the freedom of each individual.

If we take the time to look, we can see we still have blessings; God is still with us as promised (cf Matthew 28:20). Fr. Dass and I wish you a healthy and happy Christmas, and abundant blessings for 2021.

Fr. Dass and Fr. Paul