

**Merry Christmas!** Our Advent has stirred our hearts in readiness to celebrate this great feast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ. We have looked back upon history and the words of the Holy Prophets who prepared the way. John the Baptist was a prominent figure and voice calling us to 'Prepare the way of the Lord'. Now the Feast is here! Now is the time to celebrate the gift of our salvation and redemption! The traditional hymn 'O come, O come Emmanuel' finishes with the refrain... 'Rejoice, Rejoice...!' That is what Christmas is all about.

**The centuries of waiting for the promised one...**the Anointed One...have now come to fruition in the birth of Jesus of the Virgin Mary. It is hard for our culture to realize the wonder and mystery of this moment that is central to all time and history. The Lord God who made the universe and holds it in existence has embraced our human condition by taking on human flesh in all of its limitations. But He did so as to lift us up to share in His divine life and show us our true nature and destiny.

**The Gospel is filled with joyful good news for all of mankind.** We are the messengers of that joy...and we need to show it and invite others to embrace and experience that joy. We often find ourselves resisting happiness...true happiness...the very gift of God's love for us. The Christmas book this year invites us to reflect on our own lives and patterns that resist the greatest gift of all...enjoy reading.

**Again...Merry Christmas...and 'Rejoice, Rejoice!'**

**The weather report...**changed our plans to bring our 'Growing, Living, Building Together' campaign to completion. But that same weather changed many plans, parties, and family gatherings as well. So we will celebrate the culmination of our campaign...Commitment Sunday...on the weekend of January 7-8...the Feast of Epiphany. The Magi came bearing gifts...and we will all gather to bring our gifts to the Lord for this special project also.

Our project is really growing our community spirit, deepening our faith, securing our solidarity with one another. We want to continue growing, living and building God's dwelling place among us...with lives that are living stones for God's house. The outward symbol is the facility that should reflect our inner beauty, faith and love. May the Lord lead all of us to consider a spirit of generosity and gratitude...since we have been blessed to use our present facilities because of those who went before us...and shared, sacrificed, and gave of themselves. Now it is our turn...for the present and future generations!

**St. Luke gives us insight into the mystery of the incarnation in the Infancy Narrative...**the early part of his Gospel. He helps us better understand the Divine conception of the child Jesus in the womb of the Virgin Mary. He points to the place of the Birth of the Messiah... Bethlehem. He allows us to hear the voice of the Angel announcing this great truth to the shepherds...and the choir of angels singing God's praises... 'Glory to God in the Highest!'

**John's Gospel which is proclaimed at the Christmas Mass 'during the day' opens us to the mystery even further when he tells us...** 'In the beginning was the Word...and the Word became flesh.' Jesus existed before all time and it was through him that all things came to be. This particular passage of John's Gospel was called the 'last Gospel'...since in the former liturgy the priest would always read this passage before he would leave the altar. It is a wonderful proclamation of the mystery of our salvation and the wonder of 'God made Man' for us. Again... this is the cause of such great joy during this Holy Season.

**New Year's Masses...**which is next weekend...regular times for Masses...Saturday, December 31 at 4:30 pm...and the regular schedule for Sunday, January 1 at 8 am and 10:30 am.

**Parish Office closed** – Monday, Dec. 26... and...Monday, Jan. 2. (School resumes Thursday Jan. 5)