

CHRISTMAS LETTER 2018

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It is a pleasure for me to offer heartfelt good wishes for a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year to you and your families. In this blessed season, I invite you to offer your warm prayers for those members of our beloved parish who are prevented by illness from attending our Christmas celebrations. Let us also remember all those of our community who have gone before us and, by the intercession of Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, and all the saints, have come to the fellowship of eternal bliss. As well, let us offer our solidarity to those all over the world who need the rebirth of joy, hope and peace.

The Nativity of our Lord expresses God's deepest desire for nearness with us, as He "looked favorably on His people and redeemed them" (Luke 1:68). His unlimited love for us and all his creatures made His incarnation take place, so that we can know the possibility of the salvation and forgiveness of sin (Luke 1:77).

This is the new testament that was proclaimed by the prophet Jeremiah: "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah" (Jeremiah 31:31). Through His nativity Jesus shows us the Father as a God of Mercy and of Forgiveness who believes in the goodness that He initiated in the human being from the beginning of the creation.

God's approach in Jesus Christ should influence our approach toward ourselves and others. Therefore, as we continue the journey of mercy and forgiveness, we must trust in the goodness that God plants in our hearts to enable us to elevate our spiritual life. When we experience the fullness of His grace, the enlightenment of His words, and the overflow of His love, we will recognize how much we have received and how much we might give in response.

Jesus' nativity is filled with the presence of the cross. The events surrounding His nativity predicted the passion that He had to face on the cross: Herod's persecution, the escape to Egypt and the simple and humble birth at Bethlehem. This context filled the nativity with the spirit of giving that Jesus had to live for our sake.

Throughout Christmas, we are invited to consider the experience of the incarnation in our faith journey. As we contemplate His selfless love and his remarkable nativity, we learn to go fearlessly to every length possible to reach others. Disappointment might confront us, but relying on his love we will never be discouraged. By being attentive to God's approach, we will discover His profound invitation to seek changes in the direction of our lives so as to be rooted in his love. We will then feel the powerful moment of renewal and revival that we can only call "God's Intervention".

This Christmas, I invite you to listen to the story as if you have never heard it before. Allow the arrival of Christ to soften your heart and awaken your hope. He is with us in our joys and sorrows, our victories, our frustrations, and our darkness. He is Emmanuel, God-with-us. Do not be afraid to be joyful. May this encounter kindle exuberant joy and lasting peace in your hearts.

Fr. Karam Alraban,
Parish Administrator