

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – DECEMBER 23, 2018

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

The joy of the Christmas Season is upon us. One of the defining characteristics of Pope Francis is his emphasis on the Joy of the Gospel. Even amidst the complexity confronting the Holy Father, his countenance and his words always convey joy as well as peace.

This is not a superficial joy. It comes from the strong realization that God is every with us. It reflects that the Holy Spirit is given to each one of us as a special advocate. It remembers that Jesus remains with us in the Sacrament of Sacraments, the Eucharist.

The Book of Genesis noted in its story that when Adam was the only human person, he was lonely. So God created for Adam a companion which was the beginning of family. Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving are family feasts. We do not walk alone but walk with family. God's intention was that a family should bring joy.

Children are often the joy of the family. St. Joseph School is the joy of our parish. The second Exhortation of Pope Francis is entitled, *The Joy of Love*. Just as a child brings joy into a family, so does the presence of Jesus bring joy into our church and our lives.

Missy Campbell has put together a 2018 year book of St. Joseph Parish. It should help you remember all the good things that have happened. Look at the list of baptisms, the list of marriages, and even the list of those who have passed from human hands to God's hands. These people form the great cloud of witnesses described in the Letter of Hebrews. They now have a joy beyond our understanding.

This season our prayer is that the Lord be present in your home, present in the blessing before meals, present as you say 'good night'. Joy to the World was the song of the angels, may it be our song also.

Immigration to the Catholic Faith

A few months ago we began another session of the Immigration Toward the Catholic Faith. I am pleased to tell you that four people together with their families have joined our church. They have been received into the Church, confirmed and received the Eucharist. Let us welcome Amy Chamberlin and her husband Bill; Jesse Kameron and her husband Tom; Amanda Calkins and her husband David, and Kallie Walker. We will begin another session of Immigration Toward the Catholic Faith on the 2nd of February, 2019. Already we have two people signed in for this Directed Reading Course.

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.
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