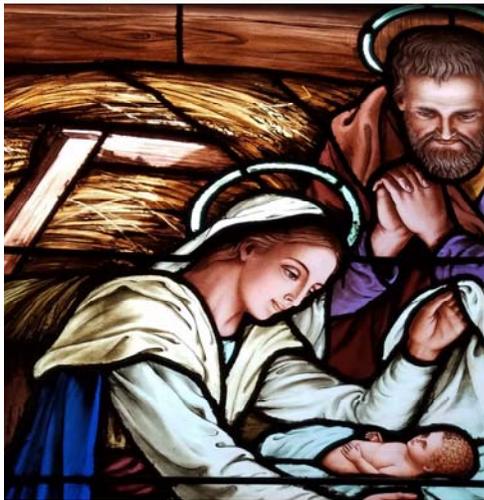


Christmas 2019



There was nowhere to house Joseph and Mary, so they had to turn to a stable filled with animals that had been brought in for the night. There, in the midst of the noise, the smell, and the dirt, the King of Creation was born, a tiny, fragile human.



AWAY IN A MANAGER, NO CRIB FOR HIS BED

**“I look at a baby born in a manger and I ask,
‘Would I be willing to do that?’ And the fact
that I’m not evidences the need for Christmas.”**

~ Craig D. Lounsbrough

Today is the day. The final symbol on our Jesse Tree is a baby in a manger. Jesus has been born, the Promised One from of old. We have romanticized the scene of Christ's birth through the years and made it look pretty and peaceful. However, there was nowhere to house Joseph and Mary, so they had to turn to a stable filled with animals that had been brought in for the night. There, in the midst of the noise, the smell, and the dirt, the King of Creation was born, a tiny, fragile human. Jesus was probably placed in a food trough filled with hay after His birth.

We often seek to become better, smarter, more influential, and more powerful. It is unlikely that any of us would set all of that aside for others. Our human nature usually takes advantage of the weak and powerless. We would not want to be weak and powerless ourselves.

The mystery of the incarnation — God taking on flesh and becoming human — is staggering. If any of us would have been all-powerful, do you think we would have cast off our power and glory to become a man? I am guessing the line for that would have been very short, actually, non-existent. Yet God, in all of His glory and splendor, elected to set all of that aside in order to be born as one of us.

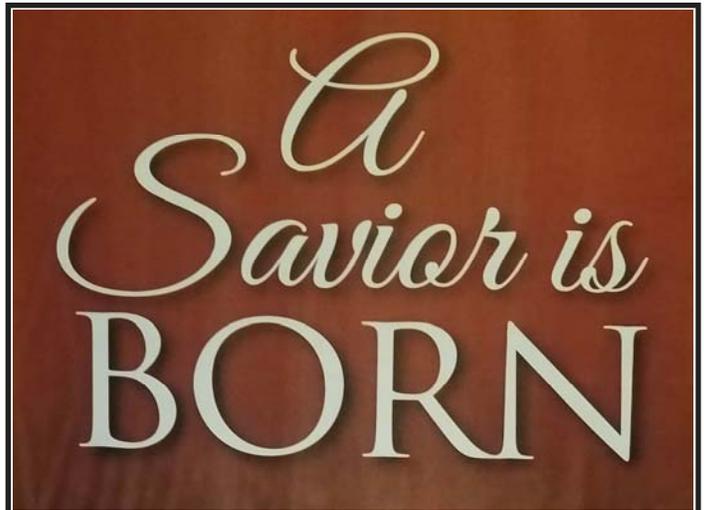
God knew from our history that we did not relate well with angelic or heavenly visitors. God knew that we would fare much better if He would come to us as one of us. That was a risky proposition, fraught with peril. It was a risk that God was willing to take, however. That is how much He loves us.

Today is a wonderful feast day of love. It is the celebration of the fulfillment of a promise made long before when God said that He would send a deliverer to His people. The long-awaited Messiah was born this day. When we exchange gifts with one another, we do so thinking about the great gift that was given to us by God, the gift of His very own Son.

Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth!

FAITH ACTION: Many go without gifts at this time of year. Think about making a contribution to a local soup kitchen or food pantry.

Fr. Mike



“Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10-11)

Merry Christmas! This Christmas season gives me great joy as it is the first Christmas that I am celebrating as a priest. This past year of 2019 has been a year of blessings for me as I graduated (after 23 years of being in school), being ordained a priest by Bishop Hying for the Diocese of Gary, and being assigned as your associate pastor here at St. Thomas More.

It is during this season of Christmas that we take time to look back on the year; counting the blessings that God has given us as well as remembering those times that have been difficult and remembering those whom we had lost throughout the year. Christmas is a time of remembering as well as a time of new beginning, as we celebrate the birth of our savior, Jesus Christ. We are reminded that God watches over us always and never abandons his people. That it is often in the small events and experiences of everyday life that we experience Christ active in our life. Just like 2,000 years ago when the Son of Man was born in a stable in the small town of Bethlehem to a simple and unassuming girl of Nazareth.

As we celebrate the birth of our savior always remember that God is with you, that he never abandons you even in the most difficult and painful moments in our lives.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New year.

In the Love of Christ,

Fr. Declan

To those who decorated the church, who sang in the choirs, who played instruments, who served at the altar, who proclaimed the readings, who led the singing, who distributed Communion, who greeted at the doors, who ushered: to all of you and any I may have forgotten to mention I give my heartfelt thanks.

I especially want to thank and acknowledge Fr. Declan, our Deacons, and MCs for their hard work and faithful service.

God bless you all!



Christmas, which we have been preparing for during Advent, is here!!!

Our Father loves us so much that He sent his only son to be born as a helpless child and to die on the cross for our salvation.

Christmas is a reminder of this mystery of salvation. Jesus is Emmanuel, "God is with us".

The true meaning of Christmas is often lost in today's society. Let us remember God's love for us

and imitate it in our daily life. The spirit of Christmas is not only for one day. It is every day if we love one another!!!

May you and your families be filled with love, peace and joy today and the days to come!!!

Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year to all!!!

Yours in Christ,
**Deacon Napoleon and Lynn Tabion
and Family**

As we prepare for the season of Christmas, we hear about the coming of Jesus. We hear about His coming to us as an infant in the manger, when there was no room for Him in the inn. We also hear about His second coming in glory. However, as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' first coming and to reflect on His second coming, it is important to remember that Jesus comes to each of us each day in many ways.



He comes to us in the Mass, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and in each of the sacraments we celebrate. He comes to us when we pray, and when we read the Scriptures. Jesus also comes to us each day in our family, friends, coworkers and the strangers we encounter each day. He comes to us in the poor and the sick, which we are charged to care for.

Someday, when He comes again, Jesus will ask each of what we did for our brothers and sisters, for that is what we did to Jesus Himself. My prayer for each of you this Christmas Season is that you, like Mother Mary, learn to recognize Jesus in each of His 'comings' in your life and that you welcome Him each time. Welcome Him at Mass, welcome Him in the Eucharist, welcome Him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and welcome Him in every person you encounter each day. If you are able to welcome Jesus each day, when He comes again He will welcome you to spend eternity with Him, and that is the best Christmas gift anyone could ever receive.

May God bless you and yours this Christmas Season,

**Miss Emily Hackett,
Director of Religious Education**

Brothers and Sisters,

It is in this beautiful season that we want to thank our parish family for your continued prayers and well wishes as Deacon Dan continues to battle his dreaded cancer.

Our prayer is that we make every day a Christmas Day – give from your heart, care for others and live in peace.

We wish all of you a wonderful and Blessed Christmas and the very best in the New Year.

**Lady Mary Lou Zurawski, LHS
Deacon Daniel Zurawski, KHS**



Promise

Christmas 2019 Promise Made, Promise Kept

God made a promise to His people. The promise was that He would send His Son to free us from the stain of sin. The Israelites waited a very long time for the fulfillment of that promise. They were looking for an earthly ruler that would free them from their oppression. They waited a long time and yet they still believed that God would keep his promise.

God looked for a vessel to bring His son into the world. He saw Mary as that vessel and made her free from original sin. In the Gospel of Luke, the angel Gabriel asks Mary to be the Mother of Jesus and she says YES. "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to as you say." Mary accepted God's will.

Because of Mary's yes, we have the birth of the Messiah today.

Let us say yes to our Lord and let Him into our hearts. Let us give thanks and praise for all of the many blessings that He has given us.

Let us also remember all those that are working today to protect us and keep us safe.

Christmas is the birth of Jesus Christ. Let us say yes, as Mary did, to accepting Him and thank God for keeping His promise to us.

Deacon Dave and Kathy Kapala



Advent is my favorite season. It speaks of hope during despair; it renews purpose amid turmoil; it heralds God's infinite love and salvation; and it reminds us that God's dream for humanity is growing towards fulfillment.

Advent calls our hearts to prepare for the coming of Jesus, our Savior. When we support the poor, the vulnerable, the suffering — acting together and stand with those without hope — we become channels of hope. In opening our eyes and hearts to the sufferings of our world, we awaken a hope that allows us to see things from the perspective of God.

As God abandoned His security to be with us, we must leave our comfort zones and discover His presence, beauty and love in the margins and shadows of life. If Jesus was born in a manger surrounded by lowly people, then we must discover Him again in unlikely situations and people.

Like Mary and Joseph who contemplated Christ born homeless and rejected, we can learn to recognize the same Christ who does not find welcome and hospitality, or a room in people's hearts.

Christmas tells us that our faith is a personal faith in God who comes to us in Christ at the incarnation so that we can relate to Him in a personal way. By looking at the baby Jesus, we see the peace and love of God in Him.

In God's gift of Jesus to us, we, too, are called to give up our lives to Him by living a life of love and peace. He has come to teach us and lead us all too true peace, joy, meaning and purpose in life.

Therefore, let us greet each other, "Holy and Merry Christmas."

**Merry Christmas to all,
Deacon Joe and Joyce Stodola**

Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?

This famous line was shouted by Charlie Brown in frustration over 50 years ago during *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. Linus responded by reciting the Gospel of Luke 2:8-14. Almost halfway through his reading, Linus drops his security blanket when he says "*Fear not: for, behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*" Some say the creator Charles Schulz, was sending the message that the birth of Jesus allows us to drop our fears, because we can put our trust and faith in God.

I find it amazing that the story continues to endure. Charles Schulz was adamant that the almost two-minute soliloquy remain. Per Schulz, "If we don't tell the true meaning of Christmas, who will?" 50 years later, there are network and television executives that must feel the same way.

It makes me think....

Am I as brave as Charles Schulz and the executives that continue to broadcast the message? Do I stand up for my Catholic faith?

Do I give everything to God or do I still hold onto my "security blanket?"

Do I live the true meaning of Christmas, today and every day?

I have some things to ponder over the next year. Maybe you do to.

Wishing you and your family all of the joys of Christmas and a year filled with faith, love laughter and an abundance of blessings.



**Noreen Bickel
School President
Parish Director of Finance**



2019

The
students and
teachers of St. Thomas

More School worship together.

Our school is special in many ways.

We offer a strong education filled with
love, respect, and humble

leadership. For me, Christmas is the time of
year to reflect and acknowledge the blessings in
life. I am grateful to be a part of and lead such a loving
community. Our mission to educate the whole Child in

the values of Jesus and Mary through faith,
academics, leadership, and service is carried out
daily by the dedicated faculty. We know and teach that Jesus
Christ is the center of all we do. We are all disciples with hope
to bring! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Principal of STMS

Dr. Samantha Hofferth-Francis

