

2022 CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM FATHER SATISH, PASTOR

A New Era Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, but it also signifies the beginning of a new era! Time and history are calculated by B.C. and A.D., or anno Domini – “in the year of the Lord”. In the wider world BCE or Before the Common Era has come to replace “Before Christ”. For us Christians, however, the birth of Jesus defines history and is the beginning of a new epoch.

Perhaps it is fitting, then, that my first letter to our “Family of Parishes” comes at Christmas. Our five parishes – St. Anthony, St. Helen, Holy Angels, Immaculate Conception, and St. Mary – have entered a new era, a new epoch. History is being created. For the first time, each parish is celebrating Christmas not merely as a parish but as a Family of Parishes. Just like the birth of Jesus had implications that were not clearly understood at his birth, we too do not understand all the implications of our new-found identity. But as a people of faith, we embrace our new identity in the same way people of faith embraced the Savior of the world at his birth.

As wonderful as the Christmas story sounds, it is a complex and complicated story. Jesus’ family was on the move trying to complete a census when time came for his birth. When the time arrived, there was no room for Him. Ultimately, he was born in a stable and laid in an animal trough. Instead of royalty and the privileged, it was poor shepherds to whom his birth was announced. Instead of being raised in a palace, the family had to migrate and take refuge in a foreign land. Today, there is a tendency to romanticize this story, to read it like a fairytale; a tendency to decorate the real story with a lot of glitter, glamour, and lights. But we know the real story. It is a story of discernment, of carrying out God’s will, of making hard decisions. It is a story that invites people to faith, conversion, and redemption. Ultimately, it is a story of undying hope, lasting peace, and inexpressible joy.

I have no illusions that at the end of my life I will write a fairytale or some romanticized history of the “Family of Parishes”. Rather, our new identity is a complex and complicated reality. However, just like that first Christmas, this too is an invitation to faith, conversion, and redemption. The most important realization to which we can arrive is the realization that Christ himself is with us. Christmas is the assurance of “Emmanuel,” who is “God with us.” In fact, every Christmas is a reminder that no matter how complex and complicated things get, we are not alone. The Word has become flesh and now dwells among us. This is our hope! This is our peace! This is our joy!

It's Christmas 2022. We are on the cusp of creating history. As complex and complicated as it seems, let us begin this new era with faith. With Christ in our midst, I am certain that unending hope, lasting peace, and inexpressible joy are not far behind.

I wish everyone of you a blessed and peaceful Christmas. May the New Year be the harbinger of every blessing you have desired. Time and history belong to Jesus Christ. To him we do homage!

Fr. Satish Joseph Pastor, NE7 Family of Parishes