

Christmas Message 2022

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ:

There is an old Advent hymn composed in the ninth century sung by the faithful for over a thousand years. It contains a haunting melody with words that evoke a people longing, a people waiting, a people hoping. A hymn that captures the hunger of the human heart for light, for love, for God. It was written in the Latin and named Veni veni Emmanuel but is known to most as O come O come Emmanuel. The first verse offers up a mournful cry for God to come and ransom us from captivity. The captivity of our lonely exile in this world. An exile at times fraught with despair and disappointment. The despair of a world longing for peace. The closing refrain ends with these words REJOICE! REJOICE! Emmanuel shall come to you.

Today we can REJOICE. Emmanuel has come. He comes to our families. He comes to the sick and abandoned. The Christ Child is born. God with us. And He frees us from our captivities.

It is with gratitude I thank all families and friends of the parish for your constant devotion and faith. The parish is beginning to grow stronger as it strives to cautiously rebuild after two years of a pandemic that brought grave sufferings to many families. Let us continue to pray for the health and healing of all.

The parish is slowly returning to the ministries in which it is involved. Many committees and councils and volunteers are beginning to return to serving the needs of others. One of which is the Stewardship Council for which I am very grateful to Fernando Subang for taking on the role of Chair. The Indigenous Council continues to meet and maintain and build friendship with our Indigenous brothers and sisters of our Jesuit parishes on Manitoulin Island. The Council has been meeting to reflect on a study project called Indigenous Voices. The Refugee Council has also been working hard to bring a family in a refugee camp in the Congo to Canada. It is possible that the family could be arriving in early March of the new year. Let us continue to pray and help this family come to Canada. Let us rejoice for the many in the parish working hard to make this possible.

Most of all I thank all staff, volunteers, families, and friends of the parish for your generosity. With special thanks to all who helped make One Heart One Soul campaign possible. Phase 1 of the renovation and building project is near completion. It is the hope of the Renovation Committee that the Parish Hall will be ready for use in March. Due to the supply chain demands we must wait for a new furnace. However, the renovation work is going very well. We can rejoice. When the Hall reopens a celebration dinner will be planned for our families. As well, a major dinner/dance fundraiser is being planned in the late Spring. The fundraiser is called the Holy Rosary Moon in June Gala! I encourage all to contribute and participate. Tickets will soon be available at the parish office.

Once again thank you to all who have been generous in your prayer and resources these past years. According to tradition the Christmas Masses will be offered for the living and deceased loved ones of our families. Let us give thanks to God for his Son Emmanuel. He has heard the cry of our longing for Him to come. He is born. It is Christmas. And we can REJOICE! Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

With my blessing. Fr. Vernon P. Boyd, SJ Pastor