

WELCOME TO ST. JOSEPH – ST. LAWRENCE PARISH
“Two Churches, One Parish”
Growing as Disciples of Jesus; Making Disciples for Jesus
Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph – December 27, 2020

St. Joseph of the Valley: 31151 207th Street, (Rural) Leavenworth, KS 66048
 St. Lawrence: 211 West Riley, Easton, KS 66020
 Parish Mailing Address: P.O. Box 129, Easton, KS 66020

Father Francis Bakyor, Pastor
 Easton Rectory Phone: 913-773-5712
 Father's cell: 913-235-6837

Father's Email: francis.bakyor@yahoo.com
 Website: www.sjslparish.org
 “LIKE” us on Facebook for new announcements

THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE:

TUES	<i>Dec. 29</i>	<i>06:00 pm</i>	<i>STL</i>	<i>NO MASS</i>
<i>Adoration will follow Mass until 7:30 p.m. - CANCELLED</i>				
THUR	<i>Dec. 31</i>	<i>05:00 pm</i>	<i>SJV</i>	<i>Parishioners of SJ-SL</i>
FRI	<i>Jan. 1</i>	<i>09:00 am</i>	<i>STL</i>	<i>Parishioners of SJ-SL</i>
SAT	<i>Jan. 2</i>	<i>05:00 pm</i>	<i>SJV</i>	<i>Joseph and Delvina Hattok †</i>
SUN	<i>Jan. 3</i>	<i>09:00 am</i>	<i>STL</i>	<i>Richard Heim †</i>

Confessions: SAT-4:30 pm at SJV; SUN-8:30 at STL

PLEASE NOTE:

Attendance for Masses is limited. We will be seating every other pew. We must continue to practice social distancing (of at least 6 feet). Masks are required to be worn. We are offering four Masses per week. Please do not feel obligated to attend weekend Masses — weekday Masses will work just fine if it fits into your family's schedule. Please see online info for restrictions and guidance.

Please sign up online for one of our Christmas Masses. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040a4aa9ab2aa1fa7-stjosephst> Some are full – so please check first!

Please pray for the sick, especially: Phil Bell, Susie Beying, Jennifer Brushwood, Carl Davidson, George Dean, Carolyn DeMaranville, Vince Eimer, Tom Flack, Tina Gaspard, Alan Halstead, Marly Heim, Frank Heintzelman, Jim Heintzelman, Lydia Heintzelman, Melanie Herken, Jon Highfill, Trista Highfill, Mark Hund, Arlene Jennings, Wendi Johnston, Michael Jones, Elmer Karczewski, Phillip Leon, Kelly Long, Joyce Lowe, Mary Meinert, Jeni Mettelstedt, Don Navinsky, Kay Nocktonick, Dannie Phillips, Adam Pineau, Mike Pursel, Mary M. Ruhlman, Kim Sachse, Tanner Siebenmorgen, Julie Simonis, Jim (Poly) Sloan, Gary Stafford, Aaron Welch, Louise Wistuba and Nick Yuska.

Prayer List for Our Soldiers: ARMY: 1LT Daniel Broaddus, Pvt. David Crook, Lexi (Skaggs) Hargis, Major Bryan Herken, SPC Derrick Hunt, SGT Colby Seifert, William Stradley. AIRFORCE: E-4 Robert W. Herken, TSGT Scott Loecher, E-3 Connor Schuler, A1C Noah Tattershall. NAVY: ADDA Jason P. Herken, YNS1 (SS) Kevin Lansing.

Prayer for Vocations: Brother Seelos (Tyler Lunsford).

OUR PARISH NEWS

COLLECTION: Thank you for your gifts to our parish! Collections received is \$7179 including \$335 for Utilities and \$135 for Retirement Fund for the Religious Special Collection. We also received \$40 for Mass Stipends and \$270 for Memorials. Last week's on-line collection was \$915.03. Thank you for your generosity.

THANK YOU! I'd like to thank everyone for their help with our angel tree. I am so proud to be a member of these two churches. Your generosity never ceases to amaze me. We had four 8 ft. tables stacked with your gifts and groceries. And the gift cards were amazing. Thank you everyone from the bottom of my heart. You all are wonderful people and I want to wish all of you the most Blessed Christmas possible. Ginny Mowery and Committee

NO WEEKDAY MASSES: Fr. Francis will be leaving to visit his family in Ghana on December 26th. We hope and pray for a safe journey for him. Therefore, there will be NO weekday masses from **Dec. 28 through Feb. 12**. Parishioners will be notified when the weekday masses will be resumed. We will continue to have weekend masses which will be said by a visiting priest starting the weekend of Dec. 26th. New Year's Eve mass will be at SJV at 5:00 p.m. and New Year's Day mass will be at St. Lawrence at 9:00 a.m. as formerly scheduled. Have a Blessed Christmas Season.

EMERGENCY CONTACT: If there is a need to contact a priest in an emergency situation during Father's absence, please call Sue Griffee at 913-773-8342 or Rita Herken at 913-647-0312 for assistance.

ENVELOPES: The weekly donation envelopes for 2021 are in the back of each of the churches for pickup for whoever wants to use them.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: We are soliciting volunteers who would like to serve as our Parish Director of Religious Education (DRE), leading the effort to teach our children about their Catholic faith. Please prayerfully consider this incredibly fulfilling role within our parish. We are also open to co-DREs if that is an approach that works for you. If you are interested please contact: Jason Nichols, phone: 913-683-2661 or email: jnichols@dfamilk.com OR Sharon Wagner, phone: 913-683-4495 or email: w5cattle@aol.com.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: We are searching for a volunteer to clean the rectory twice a month. POC is Sharon Wagner, phone: 913-683-4495 or email: w5cattle@aol.com.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY: The Finance Council is happy to announce that the parish will be accepting applications for one or more scholarships for Catholic school (K-16) attendance during the 2021-2022 academic year or Catholic camp attendance during summer 2021. The scholarship is made possible by donations specified for Catholic Education. Interested applicants should fill out the application form, attach either a report card or transcript, and provide contact information for a reference. Applications are **due by April 1, 2021**. The link to the application form is available on the parish website and parish Facebook page. If you cannot access the application form one of these ways, send an email to angela.broaddus@gmail.com to request the link. LINK: <https://forms.gle/TZprrU6dvCQ9wa9n7>

OTHER NEWS IN OUR ARCHDIOCESE

BABY SHOWER: The Knights of Columbus, Immaculate Council # 900 will be conducting their 21st annual Pro-Life Baby Shower throughout the month of January 2021. Donations of new and used clothing, diapers, baby formula or cash donations are very much needed and appreciated. Baskets will be located in the entries of area churches. The donations will then be given to Birthright of Leavenworth. For more information or questions, call Marty Moreno 913 702 4168, or Timothy J Lednický 913 240 4122. Thank you in advance.

NO COMMON GROUND ON ABORTION QUESTION

We all have laws we must follow - even minors have specific laws. Minors need parental consent to have their ears pierced. Minors need parental consent before care givers can give them an aspirin or their prescribed medicine. Minors need parental consent to go into the military. Minors need parental consent to marry. Why then, is Planned Parenthood so against parental consent before they perform abortions on minor girls? I will tell you why – they will lose money! Planned Parenthood is big business.

Good parents would never allow their daughter to have an abortion if they were aware of her situation! There is one law some people seem to have forgotten. It is one of God's Ten Commandments: 'Thou shalt not kill.' His laws were given to us all for all time. His laws remain unchanged, not subject to our whims or convenience. They supersede all earthly laws. God is our ultimate judge. There is no common ground here. You are either pro-life or pro-death. A baby is a gift from God to be loved and cherished - not to be thrown back in His Face. A baby has a right to life and a right to expect that we, our judges and our laws, will protect them.

STEWARDSHIP: "...as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must forgive." (Colossians 3:13)

Forgiving is one of the hardest things for people to do. We can't give what we don't have. We need to receive God's mercy and forgiveness first before we can give it to others. Go to the sacrament of Reconciliation and receive God's mercy and forgiveness. Then, share give the gift of forgiveness with someone – a family member, a friend or a co-worker. Pick up the phone or text someone right now.

XAVIER CATHOLIC SCHOOL: Did you know that Xavier Catholic School has mitigated COVID with great success? We were able to be in-person from August 2020 - December 2020, without going remote for all students Pre-K - 8. Enrollment information for Xavier Catholic School 2021-22 school year is coming soon!

JOYFUL HOMES - JANUARY 2021 THEME Joyful families aren't perfect, but they're affectionate! We want to set you up for success this year with a simple but effective way of inviting more joy into your family: AFFECTION. Find discussion questions, monthly scripture passage, a fun family date night and more here: archkcks.org/affectionate

NEW YEAR'S SPIRITUAL REFLECTION AND PLANNING RETREAT

To be held at Christ's Peace House of Prayer, 22131 Meager Road - Easton, KS, Friday, **Jan. 8th** starting at 5:30pm and ending on **Jan.10th** at 4:30pm. Set aside time this year to focus on spiritual growth, Create growth goals for various roles, Devise steps to reach goals and Write a vision statement for the year. The structure of the retreat will allow ample time for you to do work on your plan. We will be providing resources and ideas to incorporate in your plan. There will be time to brainstorm and share our plans with others as well as time to meet with a spiritual director if you prefer to speak on an individual basis. Private Time for Prayer/Reflection, Daily Eucharistic Adoration, Praying of the Liturgy of the Hours, Confession and Mass at the local parish will also be available. The suggested donation is \$170/Single or \$250/Couples for the Cabins and Courtyard Rooms or \$100 for the Single Guest Rooms (Meals Included). To attend, send an email to: info@christspce.com or call 913.773.8255.

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(FOR POSTING ON THE CHURCH INTERNET SITE)

THE CALIX SOCIETY (www.calixsociety.org) is a national association of Catholics in 12-Step recovery (AA, NA, OA, AlAnon, etc.). The Calix Society meets the first Friday of each month at Church of the Ascension in Overland Park. Since the first Friday of January is New Year's Day, the next meeting will be January 8th. For specific information on time and meeting format, call Neil at 913-645-7244, or Mary at 913-747-5039.

“PLANNED GIVING BRIEF: END OF THE YEAR TAX PLANNING”

Congress enacted two tax provisions to encourage charitable donations before the end of 2020. These include: 1. Increase in tax deduction for cash gifts: For donors that itemize their tax return, before the new legislation, the annual income limit was capped at 60% for cash gifts. The new legislation allows for charitable donations up to 100% of a donor's annual income. 2. New deduction: If you do not itemize when filing your tax return, to reduce your tax liability, you will be allowed to take a special tax deduction of up to \$300 for charitable donations. Visit the Archdiocesan planned giving website, CatholicPlannedGiving.com to learn more ways to maximize your financial resources to benefit your family, charitable giving, and make a grateful response to God for the abundant gifts in your life. As always, contact an attorney or tax advisor to learn what is best for your life.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES SNOWBALL 2021

Due to COVID-19, many businesses have closed their doors, and many jobs have been lost. As more and more families are facing financial hardships, they are turning to Catholic Charities for help. Your support to our mission has never been more critical as we continue to provide help, hope and hospitality across our 21-county service area. Snow Ball 2021 is sure to be unforgettable as the event shifts to an entirely virtual experience. Guests will host their own version of Snow Ball in their homes, much like the founders who started Snow Ball with a potluck dinner and a small gathering of family and friends over 47 years ago. Register now to join us on Saturday, **January 16, 2021**. Our hope is to expand, engage and celebrate hundreds of Snow Ball parties across the agency's 21-county service footprint and beyond! <https://catholiccharitiesks.org/special-events/snow-ball/> or Theresa Gaul 913.433.2068

MARCH FOR LIFE & TEENS ENCOUNTER CHRIST

We made the difficult decision not to take a delegation to March for Life in January in DC. But this opens up the possibility for teens to attend the Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) retreat. We will provide a small group retreat experience for high schoolers on **January 16-18, 2021** at Prairie Star Ranch (PSR). We will be following social distancing and other safety procedures that allowed Camp Tekakwitha to happen. TEC is a 3-day retreat based on the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. TEC involves 16 and older adolescents encountering Christ in a way that many have never experienced before. On a TEC retreat, you will have the opportunity to grow in your relationship with Christ through talks, group discussion, individual reflection, prayer, and sharing in the Sacraments. The weekend retreats are led by a team of youth, adults and a priest as spiritual director. To sign up go to: www.sunflowertec.org

KANSAS MASS, MARCH & RALLY FOR LIFE IN TOPEKA! The Kansas Mass, March & Rally for Life will take place this year in Topeka, KS on Thursday, **January 21st, 2021** to observe the National Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children and the 48th anniversary of Roe vs. Wade. Let's stand up for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life, in penance for the over 60 million lives lost, and to end violations to the dignity of the human person - both child and mother - committed through the act of abortion! 10:30 am Mass with the Kansas Bishops – www.livestream.com/ArchKCK/KSMassforLife 12:00 pm March to the State Capitol for the Kansans for Life Rally – In-person! Unfortunately, due to Covid gathering restrictions, in-person Mass attendance this year is by invitation only. All are invited to join in the March for Life from the Topeka Performing Arts Center to the Kansans for Life Rally at the State Capitol steps. Visit www.archkck.org/prolife for updated information and details on the day's event.

“EVERY DAY IN LOVE” If you ate too many cookies at Christmas, it won't ruin your health if you eat well the rest of the year. Unfortunately, you also can't expect one salad per year to make you healthy! It's the little things, done daily, that affect our lives. Start this new year right by taking 7 date nights with your spouse to learn some simple, effective daily habits that will fill your 2021 with love! 7 Thursdays, **January 21- Mar 4**, 7:30-9pm Live on Zoom, with recordings available to registered participants Scholarships available More info and register: archkcks.org/everyday Questions? Brad DuPont: bdupont@archkck.org

“COPING WITH LIFE ALONE” - PEER-TO-PEER GRIEF SUPPORT – NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE "Coping with Life Alone ©" is a Beginning Experience® grief support program that meets each week for 8 weeks. The program helps those who have lost a love relationship due to death, divorce or separation, move through the experience of grief and loss into a future with renewed hope. Upcoming program dates: **February 1 through April 5, 2021**, 10 sessions Monday evenings, 6:30pm to 8:30pm Cost: \$50 This session will be held online using Zoom and requires internet access. Please register in advance and receive the program workbook plus detailed Zoom meeting instructions by going to www.beginningexperiencekc.org For additional information please contact Donna at (816-305-3760)

ONLINE MASSES: For those who may not be able to attend our parish masses, here are some of the masses that are available to watch on line or on television:

- For regular TV - Channel 38 airs Sunday morning Mass at 7:00am each week.
- For Dish and DirecTV - EWTN airs Sunday Mass a few times throughout the day.
- For livestream – here are some you may wish to look up:
 - Church of the Ascension, Overland Park - Sunday Masses at 8:15am, 10:00am, 11:45am & 5:00pm - <https://kcascension.org/>
 - Queen of the Holy Rosary, Wea - Sunday Mass at 8:30am - <https://qhrwea.church/watch-daily-mass>
 - St. Michael the Archangel, Leawood - Sunday Mass at 9:00am - <https://stmichaelcp.org/ecatholic-live>
- Here you can find links to Holy Masses online from different parishes all around the world. There is a link to see the calendar with the Catholic Holy Masses live online. Click on the chosen hour when you want to see the Holy Mass online. <https://mass-online.org/daily-holy-mass-live-online>

PRAYER FROM POPE FRANCIS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick. At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith. You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need. We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us. He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

“THE HISTORY & LEGACY OF IMMACULATA HIGH SCHOOL” is now available for purchase from the publisher, Lulu.com. Access the link to order from Facebook pages “Forever Raiders”, “Immaculata High School Alumni” or “The History & Legacy of Immaculata High School”. Direct link is:

<http://www.lulu.com/shop/mary-ann-sachse-brown-and-marti-sachse-judson/the-history-legacy-of-immaculata-catholic-high-school-in-the-first-city-of-kansas/hardcover/product-24157407.html> This is a keepsake hardcover 120 page book with nearly 300 images. Available in color (best quality) or black and white.

NEW FOSTER CARE WEBSITE: You can make a difference in the lives of vulnerable children in Kansas! Sadly, every day in Kansas, children are removed from their homes by no fault of their own for a variety of reasons. Each of these children is a precious, unique gift from God who deserves a loving and safe environment where he or she can THRIVE! Because care of the orphan and works of mercy are part of the mission for all baptized Catholics, the Church is the solution to an overwhelmed Kansas foster system which is facing increased needs due to COVID-19.

Please visit the new Archdiocesan Foster Care Ministry Website at www.archkcks.com/foster to learn how you can help vulnerable children in our community and support the families who have answered the call to love and protect these children. If you are currently fostering or have adopted your child/ren from foster care, we want to connect with you to support you on your journey! Please join the Archdiocesan Foster Family by registering here: www.archkck.org/fostercaredatabase

THE CATHOLIC GUIDE FOR END-OF-LIFE AND ESTABLISHING OF ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

The Ethics Council that serves Archbishop Naumann has produced a comprehensive resource for end-of-life planning titled “Catholic Guide For End-Of Life and Establishing Of Advance Directives”. The purpose of the guide is to assist the faithful in making wise decisions in accordance with the teachings of our faith about complex treatments in grave illness or as life's end approaches. It also includes two Appendices for a Durable Power of Attorney and an Advance Directive form. For a free digital copy of the Guide, visit www.archkck.org/prolife-end-of-life-care.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM - ADULT TRAINING (VIRTUS)

Effective Immediately in light of the current health conditions, one prudent and preventative measure we are taking is to make the VIRTUS Protecting God's Children for Adults training available Online as an option. Effective immediately, due to COVID-19, the Archdiocesan requirement for attending a VIRTUS Protecting God's Children for Adults workshop live session will be suspended and the option of the online version of the module can be offered in lieu of live training. This is a temporary safety precaution, and parishes may still offer the live training session available as an option if they prefer as long as the local county and state ordinances in effect at the time of the event are followed. Please note, the training must still be completed prior to participants working around youth, but the requirement may now temporarily be met by completing the online Protecting God's Children module. Individuals needing to attend a session will be offered the option of the online module at the time of registration. They will still need to follow the background screening and policy completion process at the time of registration. Individuals who are already currently registered for an upcoming live session, may log back into their account and change to the online module. These procedures will be reviewed and updated periodically as needed and are in place to protect you, those you work with, and your family. Please stay safe and healthy and continue to pray for all our brothers and sisters in Christ! We are praying for all of you and your families. If you have questions, please contact Sandy Vielhauer at svielhauer@archkck.org or Jenifer Valenti at jvalenti@archkck.org. May God bless you and keep you safe.

PLANNED GIVING BRIEF: Our Catholic Church has spanned the centuries and the globe and through all previous pandemics and disasters has been a source of charity to all through its parish priests and religious. We invite you to make a grateful response to God for these gifts by planning a deferred gift to your parish. Visit CatholicPlannedGiving.org to learn how to accept this invitation.

Homily for Christmas Midnight mass, Year B (12/24/2020)

Texts:

First Reading. Isaiah 9:1-6.

Second Reading. Titus 2:11-14.

Third Reading. Luke 2:1-14.

Theme: *Rejoice, Christ the Savior of the world is born.*

Congregation: *St. Joseph of the Valley- St. Lawrence Parish, Easton/ Kansas.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We have come to celebrate one of the most important feasts in our Christian calendar. Unfortunately, it is also one of the most commercialized even to the point of losing its spiritual significance. We need to recapture the spirit of Christmas in the midst of this banal distraction as well as in the critical context of our lived faith experience.

Christmas is God coming to us in human form and showing us that we are loved inherently, abundantly and eternally. The incarnation was not an after-thought of angry God. Jesus was not Plan B as it were, because we had wrecked Plan A. Jesus did not come simply to rescue fallen humanity. He came to reveal the fullness of God's Love for us and for all creation. This means that in the incarnation, the depth of God's love is made known and we are the recipients of that love. Therefore, no matter who we are: male or female, black or white, straight or gay, rich or poor, high or low, citizen or refugee et cetera, God's love embraces us all without exception.

Christmas shows God to be a boundary breaker. In Jesus, God surrendered his own status and entered the created world. Paul says Jesus humbled himself by taking the form of a servant, and being found in our human condition, He humbled himself even more by accepting death on the cross. In the incarnation, God abandoned His own security in order to show us the depth of his love. Christmas teaches us about the love that dares to risk for the sake of the beloved. This pattern continued in his life and ministry.

Jesus constantly went beyond the borders of every kind and reached out to those at the margins of society as well as those considered outsiders. In so doing, he invited us to step beyond our fears, to expand our capacity for love and to break down the barriers of division and exclusion.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis has challenged us not to cling to our security, not to remain behind locked doors of our comfort and fear of change. He encourages us to be on mission. The Church at its best is the church in journey with others, sharing our treasures of the Gospel. It is the Church willing to suffer with others, willing as he said to be bruised and hurt, because it has been out in the streets with them. The Church is not an enclosure for the virtuous and the privileged. It is a field hospital for the sick and the wounded.

My dear friends,

As God abandoned his own security in order to be with us, so must we have the courage to leave our comfort zones and discover the presence, the beauty, the love of god in unfamiliar or even disordered places, in the margins and the shadows of life. If Jesus was born in a manger and surrounded by lowly people, then we must discover him again in the 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 on our shores, the same Christ who does not find a room in people's hearts. We cannot worship the Christ child in truth without embracing the most vulnerable.

As we pray for wisdom and courage in aligning the church culture and praxis to Christ's Kingdom vision, let us not be afraid to embrace the journey of self-emptying and downward mobility. We must die to the old ways of being church which is steeped in a culture of clerical power, dominance and upward mobility. We must commit ourselves anew to Christlike model of humility, inclusivity, compassion and powerlessness. Only then can the church be not simply a safe and healthy environment for the vulnerable but also an authentic sign of God's presence.

Tonight, we rejoice at the birth of the Emmanuel, the God who is with us. Let us pattern our lives on the incarnational journey from security to boldness, from wanting certainty to learning to live in vulnerable trust, from protecting our status to opening our hearts to those who are on the edges of society and the church. May we who receive the depth of God's love and mercy learn a radical new way of seeing, acting, and relating to all with the mind and heart of Christ.

Homily for Christmas Day, Year B (12/25/2020)

Texts:

First Reading. Isaiah 52:7-10.

Second Reading. Heb 1:1-6.

Third Reading. John 1:1-18.

Theme: Behold, The Word Is Among Us!

Congregation: St. Joseph of the Valley- St. Lawrence Parish, Easton/ Kansas

Today is Christmas day, the day we have long waited and prepared for. Christmas is a milestone in the history of our salvation. So, it is wonderful to know that God is with us. The central message of today's celebration is the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we have every reason to be happy because, the prince of peace is born.

Our first reading from Isaiah finds its sphere of accomplishment in the birth, ministry and life of Christ. Isaiah proclaims: "How beautiful on the mountain are the feet of the one who brings the Good News." Indeed, the Good News himself is among us. The onus now lies on us to spread it. It is the good news of love, peace, hope, happiness and salvation.

Therefore, all who have waited faithfully, patiently, and vigilantly must shout for joy because God is with us. Hence, Isaiah calls us to celebrate Emmanuel, God with us. It is a call to adore and worship the new born king. It is a call to be joyful and to spread the good news.

In our second reading, The letter to the Hebrews captures, and presents what God did for us today in a spectacular manner: God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets, but in our own time ..he has spoken to us through the son...He is the radiant light of God's glory and a perfect copy of his nature..." The letter to the Hebrews simply means that God has fulfilled the promise he made by revealing the hidden mystery of salvation to us.

Today, revelation has reached its climax. The hidden mystery of the old covenant has been revealed in the word made flesh. Therefore, we need no further revelation, because, God has revealed himself fully in Christ, the radiant light of the father's glory.

The gospel of John concisely gives us the synopsis of what happened today, the divine incarnation of God: "The Word was with God... The Word was made flesh, He lived among us, and we saw His glory." Today, God the Son has revealed God the Father. The Word which was with the Father as Spirit, is now with us both as flesh as well spirit.

What we celebrate today is love because: God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son (Jn.3:16). We must be ready to share this love. God send Christ out of love. Christ accepted to come to us because of his love for us. Also, Mary and Joseph cooperated with god to bring Christ int the world due to their love for humanity.

Today, we celebrate sacrifice. So, we too must be ready to sacrifice something for the good of our brothers and sisters as Christ did by leaving his heavenly throne in order to be with us. Today, we celebrate humility. We must learn humility from Christ, who, though was rich, became poor for our sake. Yes, he was born in the lowliest place, the manger.

Finally, today we celebrate the reign of peace, because the prince of peace is with us. Today is a day of joy. Therefore, let us "Sing psalms to the Lord with harp, with the sound of music, with trumpets and the sound of the horn, let us acclaim the King and the Lord," who is with us.

Fr. Francis Bakyor.