

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

“The Mercy of God is revealed in the face of Our Lord Jesus Christ,” said Pope Francis in his presentation of the Year of Mercy. “For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince of Peace.” (Is 9:5) It is a child in a manger that comes to us to proclaim the Good News of the Love and Mercy of God!
To proclaim our salvation!

As we gather to celebrate Christmas, another year has passed with many events, public and private, touching our lives in different ways. No doubt this year has brought joys and sadness in different measure to each person, all colouring our memories of 2018.

Traditionally, we see Christmas as a time of peace and joy, a time to celebrate with family, with friends and loved ones. We do hope that your Christmas will have something of that peace, joy and celebration. Such joyful celebrations may not be possible for some. You may have lost a loved one since last Christmas, or you may be overburdened by money worries, family problems or for many other reasons. If you are, we want to assure you that, as a parish community, we do care and offer you our support.

I would like to thank all of our parishioners for your commitment to our parish this past year. The giving of your time, talent and treasure to the Lord continues to bear fruit for the Kingdom of God. I would also like to extend my gratitude to all who worked so hard to make our Christmas celebrations truly wonderful. Thanks to all who were involved in decorating our church and setting up for the different liturgies, this season and throughout the liturgical year. And a special thank you to the devoted members of the various ministry's in our parish and especially to those few who work quietly, behind the scenes.

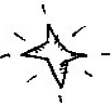
Maybe the Christmas message this year is a challenge for all of us to become more involved. It is not so much a question of giving more; it is a question of giving more of ourselves. After all, that's what God was doing when he got involved with us and our world at the first Christmas. God will fill us with his peace if there is room in our lives for him.

Thank you for helping us along the journey. May you be blessed with peace and joy at Christmas and in the New Year.

Did you know

- A census was usually undertaken for purposes of taxation but also at times for other ends, such as conscription or forced labour.
- A problem of timing exists within this text. Most scholars agree that Jesus was born about 6–4 bc in the reign of Herod the Great (Herod died in 4 bc). However, Quirinius was not appointed as governor of Syria until about eleven years later. After his appointment, he did in fact supervise a census of the region.
- This story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, being laid in a manger and visited by the shepherds is unique to Luke. Matthew's birth story is quite different. Jesus is born at Joseph's house because the couple lives in Bethlehem. In Matthew, the family is visited by the Gentile Magi—the wise men from the East. What is important to understand is that both evangelists seek to say something about who Jesus is. They construct their particular stories of the birth to present a theological understanding of the identity and mission of this child
- The birth of Christ is celebrated on this date, not because we know it to be the actual birth date of Jesus, but because, in the Northern Hemisphere, 25 December marks the lengthening of daylight after the winter solstice. This was celebrated as a pagan feast in honour of the 'unconquered sun' but came to mark the Christian festival of the birth of the 'light of the world'.

DEAR God



Remind me that
the greatest gifts
are wrapped in
people
not paper

Amen



Parish Office

Please note, during the holiday period the parish office will be open on the following days.

26th and 27th of Dec 18 —Closed
28th Dec 18 —Open
31st Dec 18 and 1st of January 19— Closed
2nd January 19 —Open
3rd January 19 — Closed
4th January 19 —Opened
7th January 19 —OLOP office is opened but SSPP will be closed.
8th January 19 —Normal office hours resumes.

Fr Jerald ,the Parish Council, Liza and Cheryl would like to wish all of you, our fellow Parishioners, a blessed and peaceful Christmas. We have so much to celebrate, and so much to be thankful for at Ss Peter and Paul Church.

We would like to wish each of you a wonderful New Year.

May each day of the New Year

Bring happiness, good cheer

And sweet surprises...

To you and all your dear ones!

The beauty of
Christmas
is not in the
presents but in
His presence.

Matthew 1:23