



Greetings!



Merry Christmas, Grace & Peace to all.

Christmas, what a wonderful time of year this is. It is a time of joy, reflection and anticipation as we welcome our Lord himself among us. It is a time of rejoicing and a time of preparation. So, I ask you, how do we prepare to welcome our Lord? For many, a lot of time is spent, shopping, buying, wrapping gifts, decorating, cooking, baking and wishing everyone you meet, “Happy Holidays”? Well, that is what the retailers want us to do anyway. Now don’t get me wrong, shopping, buying, wrapping gifts, decorating, cooking, baking and whatever else is not bad in and of itself. But as you can see it is very easy to lose site of the meaning of Christmas when Merry Christmas is replaced with Happy Holidays.

So, what do we, as disciples of Jesus Christ, do during this Holy Season? We look at the gifts our gracious God has given us and we return those gifts with an increase back to the Lord. We realize that God is Love and that we are loved by God. So much so, that he sent his only begotten son, our Lord Jesus Christ to show us the way. And so, we kneel before this small child, our Lord, and give him praise, not because we are required to, but because we are compelled to.

As you go through this Blessed, Holy and sometimes really, really hectic season, try and remember what it is we are celebrating. Make every effort to keep Christ in all your celebrations. For good stewards are industrious and reliable servants, prudently using and multiplying the gifts entrusted to them by God. Always active and ever reaching out their hands to the poor and extending their arms to the needy. Something we do very well here at St Raphael! “Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou has been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many; enter into the joy of thy master.” Mathew 25:21. Catholic Family Bible.

Items of interest this month:

New Translation of the Roman Missal: Yes, it is here and we are doing GREAT! Well, maybe there was a bump or two. But that's ok. :-)

Capital Campaign: If you were unable to make one of the receptions, no worries, informational packets were sent out to all households. Thank you, Volunteers for all your hard work!

Stewardship Renewal: Our Stewardship Renewal was a great success with better than 700 stewardship cards returned. Our Ministry Chairs are now very busy contacting interested parishioners. If you haven't heard from a Ministry Chair as of yet, please be patient, you will hear from them soon.

Catholics Coming Home: Catholics Coming Home is a program designed to reach out and invite non-practicing Catholics to return "home". Seven weekly sessions beginning on February 1 are schedule to provide updated information on the basics of Catholicism in a non-threatening, support-group format. Please contact Deacon Larry Gregg for more information.

Ignatius Spiritual Exercises: The Ignatius Spiritual Exercises will be held every Tuesday for 9 weeks beginning on February 14th. There is a 10 AM morning session and a 7 PM evening session. You may contact Andy Kereky for more information.

First Reconciliation: All second graders are preparing for first Reconciliation which will take place on January 7th.

Prayer Intention: Please pray for those Church Family members who may not attend Mass regularly.

Stewardship, a Way of Live
God Bless
Joyce Wager
Stewardship Director