



ST TERESA'S

Newsletter

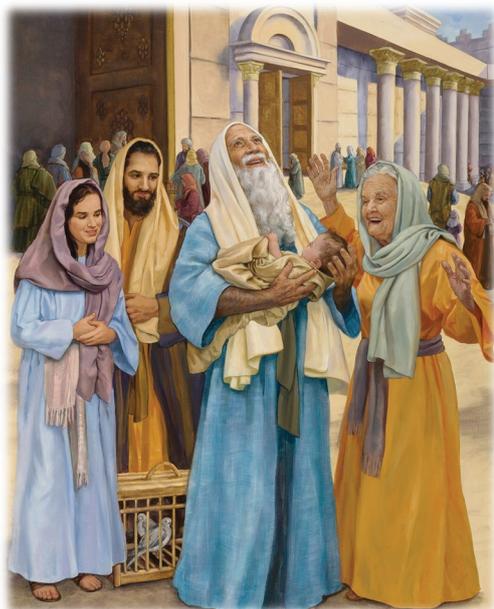
27th December 2020

My dear Friends

I do hope you have had a very peaceful and blessed Christmas Day. We might be tempted to think that Christmas is over for another year. But no, not at all. We are now in the Octave of Christmas, the eight-day period during which Christmas is celebrated. The Church's liturgy emphasises the 8 days of Christmas, from Christmas Day itself ending with the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God on the 1st January. Why does the Church do this? I think the Church is asking us to celebrate with great joy and gladness the Birth of Jesus and then at the end of this 8-day period of rejoicing to give thanks for Mary and her role in the Incarnation-her Yes.

Pope Francis says of the Christ-Child, *'In the Child given to us, the love of God is made visible.'* As I said in last week's newsletter, the greatness of Christmas is the gift of love. Please allow me to quote again from Pope Francis, in his Christmas homily of 2018. I think he says it so well. *'God does not love you because you think and act the right way. He loves you, plain and simple. His love is unconditional; it does not depend on you. You may have mistaken ideas, you may have made a complete mess of things, but the Lord continues to love you. How often do we think that God is good if we are good and punishes us if we are bad? Yet that is not how he is. For all our sins, he continues to love us. His love does not change. It is not fickle; it is faithful. It is patient. This is the gift we find at Christmas. We discover to our amazement that the Lord is absolute gratuity, absolute tender love. His glory does not overwhelm us; his presence does not terrify us. He is born in utter poverty in order to win our hearts by the wealth of his love.'*

I hope, as you ponder these words from Our Holy Father, you are filled with comfort, peace and consolation, more able to face the difficulties and stresses of daily life in the knowledge that you are deeply loved.



During this 8-day Octave the Church invites us to celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family. (always celebrated on the First Sunday after Christmas). We are invited to contemplate Mary, Joseph and the child Jesus- to acknowledge the whole family. The Gospel is the beautiful story of the Presentation of Jesus. (Luke 2: 22-40) Mary and Joseph take Jesus to the Temple to present him to the Lord (as all parents did when they had a new born child). We can surely share in their pride and joy as they fulfil this important ritual. We can also share in the joy of Simeon and Anna as they recognise in this small child the 'Christ of the Lord'.

Simeon cries out in amazement: 'My eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the nations to see, a light to enlighten the pagans and the glory of your people Israel.'

Were they dancing with joy? I like to think so! Except perhaps that Mary pondered in her heart the words of Simeon, 'And a sword will pierce your own soul too'. **We know** what they mean. That sword pierced her as she watched her son die on the cross.

On this lovely Sunday, just two days after Christmas Day, let us give thanks to God for our own parents and families. Our families are not perfect. We have all of us made mistakes and done things wrong. We have probably all said things we have regretted afterwards. But we owe everything to our family so let us say a huge thank you to God for each one of them and let us pray for each member that they too may be filled to overflowing with the Christmas gift of love. We can also remember those members of our families who have already gone to the Lord and say thank you for all they have meant to us. Let us also remember them with great affection, sure in the knowledge that we remain united to them and they to us in love.

As I said at the beginning of this newsletter, Friday 1st January- the Feast of the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God brings to an end the Octave of Christmas. We celebrate with great joy our Mother Mary- she is the Mother of God but also our Mother.

I take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy, blessed and peaceful New Year. We cannot know what this year of 2021 will bring. We are really walking into the unknown – so much uncertainty about this Covid 19 pandemic, especially now with the new strain.

As we walk into 2021 let us put one hand into the hand of our Father in heaven who loves us so much that he gave us his only Son. That hand will grasp ours firmly and fill our being with comfort, strength and consolation. And let us put the other hand into the gentle hand of our Mother Mary. She understands so much our worries, cares and concerns, our questions and anxieties. She will hold our hand so tightly and so lovingly.

My dear friends, holding these loving and tender hands, we can walk with trust and confidence into the New Year of 2021 knowing that we are never alone. God is always at our side and our Mother Mary accompanies us by her love and prayer.

I end this newsletter with the blessing of the first reading (Numbers 6: 22-27)

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace.

A Happy and Blessed year to you all.

Thank You all so much for your very generous Christmas offering. As I am sure you all know, the collection on Christmas day is a customary offering to the parish priest and in fact is a substantial part of his annual income. So I really appreciated your kindness and generosity. Thank you again from the bottom of my heart.

Fr Lijo



Parish Walk: In order to comply with the latest COVID regulations, the Parish Walk which was to have taken place on Dec 30th, has unfortunately had to be postponed.

Coffee and Company: if you would like some company whilst having a coffee just follow the link below on Tuesday December 29th at 10.30am. Meeting ID: 751 9816 7637 Passcode: hJzMJ8
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75198167637?pwd=ZXVSWGxmcHlSK3JHOVV0S3JqeVpyQT09>

MASS BOOKINGS for NEW YEAR 2021

Please: Do wear Masks – Do not come if symptomatic or self-isolating
For each booking: Names, which Mass, number of Seats, Phone number

In case you missed the booking:

For: 10am Mass on Wednesday 30th December

*Please **book** by 9am on Tuesday 29th December*

*We'll **confirm** by 6pm on Tuesday 29th December*

Email: stteresa.WEDNESDAY.masses@gmail.com

Text: 07761 301435 (or answerphone)

NEW YEAR'S DAY MASS at 10am

Feast of Mary, Mother of God

and

6.30pm Mass on Sat 2nd or 8am or 9.30am on Sun 3rd January

Booking: opens 9am Monday 28th December

closes 9am Thursday 31st December*Note different timing

Confirmation: on Thursday 31st December by 6pm

Email: stteresa.WEEKEND.masses@gmail.com

Text: 07761 301374 (or answerphone)

Looking forward with hope to a New Year!

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