



Christmas 2021

Dear friends!

“At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son...” (Heb 1:1-2).

With deep joy and gratitude, I extend to you and your loved ones my prayerful best wishes for a holy and blessed Christmas!

During this Advent Season, we have focused on **listening** to the Holy Spirit calling us to a deeper commitment to MISSION, PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNION. Throughout our process of discernment and consultation, it has been my hope that each of us would find opportunities to reflect on our own faith and the relationship we have with the Lord and with our brothers and sisters.

Last Christmas - the first of COVID Lockdown - seemed strange and unusual! Many of us did not think that it could get stranger! Well, it did! This Christmas is proving to be VERY different: with the parish priest recovering from COVID, the other parish clergy in isolation and public Masses suspended! It is over 20 years ago that I did not have to “work” on my birthday! But this time of forced quiet and rest has been good for me - I have been able to hear the sounds of God at this most wonderful time of the year! We all need to do this from time-to-time - listen to God! At year end, it is easy to hear only the noise of parties, holidays and champagne corks popping! So, I encourage everyone, to take some time over these days of the Christmas Octave, to listen to God - don't get sick before you are forced to slow down, breath and open the ears of your heart!

God continues to speak to us, even during our current challenges and concerns and his love is made manifest in the wonderful gift of his Son, Jesus - the Word made flesh! Christmas has a wonderful way of bringing joy and renewed hope into our hearts, our families and into our parish, even in the most difficult or unusual times! It is an opportunity to put aside past differences and old habits and begin anew that incredible relationship we have with the Lord and his Church!

I have been humbled and touched by the enormous number of messages of concern and good wishes I have received over the last week; thank you for your prayers, love, and support. These messages all tell the story of a community of diverse men and women united in the Lord and at home with one another. I do not think any pastor could wish for more!

I want to thank everyone who has been a part of our parish journey through 2021: the Parish Clergy, PPC, SLT, Finance Committee, Parish Staff, Ministry Teams, and everyone - young and old - who have joined us in person or online for all our many celebrations and activities. Next year, may we together strive to implement our Strategic Pastoral Plan and integrate the vision of Synod 2023. May we continue to grow in strength and grace so that we can be the presence of God in our society.

May the Christ Child bless you at this special time!
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Father Brett
Parish Priest

December 2021

Dear Parishioners of St Joseph

Christmas has many meanings for different people. Some of us will reflect on the past year and be taken up by the whirlwind of activity around the celebration of Christmas, whilst others will celebrate this time of the year by going on holiday and others sad because they have lost a loved one.

Wherever you find yourself, this is indeed a very special time of the year as we celebrate the birth of Christ. Let us not forget the significance of this most auspicious event as Catholics. In fact, this time of year is regularly referred to as “the holidays” when they’re really **Holy days**. There is so much religious significance to Christmas that we overlook. Let us be mindful and prayerful.

Recently I came upon the theory about the song, “The Twelve Days of Christmas.” It set me thinking that this would be a wonderful way to reflect on our faith in the days leading up to Christmas and beyond. It is said that this song was an English Christmas carol in the times when Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Per this theory, each gift on the list symbolized a different aspect of the Catholic faith:

- The **Partridge in the Pear Tree** is Jesus Christ.
- The **2 Turtle Doves** are The Old and New Testaments.
- The **3 French hens** are Faith, Hope and Charity, the theological virtues.
- The **4 Calling Birds** are the four gospels and/or the four evangelists.
- The **5 Golden Rings** are the first five books of the Old Testament.
- The **6 Geese A-laying** are the six days of creation.
- The **7 Swans A-swimming** are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven sacraments.
- The **8 Maids A-milking** are the eight beatitudes.
- The **9 Ladies Dancing** are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit.
- The **10 Lords A-leaping** are the ten commandments.
- The **11 Pipers Piping** are the eleven faithful apostles.
- The **12 Drummers Drumming** are the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle’s Creed.

Let us reflect on the meaning of our faith and use this time to renew our commitment to it!

We at St Joseph Catholic Church, are especially blessed to have a vibrant and supportive parish. Through this difficult year navigating COVID, we have so much for which to be grateful. Father Brett and Father Malusi have been simply incredible in ensuring that we have been able to worship and receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist whether online or in person. They have worked tirelessly to ensure that we continue with all the sacraments like Holy Communion through the GIFT Program, the Alpha interventions with the HOLY SPIRIT DAYS which are simply magical to experience, the RCIA program, the feeding of the Poor, the faith sharing and learning interventions such as “Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Light” and “No Greater Love, a biblical walk through Christ’s Passion.” We owe them a great debt of gratitude. Thank you, Father Brett, Father Malusi and Father Pierre. May the LORD bless all three of you always, never doubt that we your parishioners value you immensely.

We also cannot forget that Father Brett’s birthday is on Christmas Eve. Happy Birthday Father Brett. May you continue to enjoy health, joy and fulfilment.

On behalf of the PPC, I would like to wish all Parishioners a very blessed and merry Christmas. May the Light of the Lord shine on all of you through 2022.

God Bless
Teresa De Quintal
PPC Chairperson