



Who's Coming to Christmas?

Who are you inviting to your house for Christmas this year? Or, if you are celebrating at someone else's home, *who* are you bringing to the table?

We all know it's a wonderful, magical time of year . . . and a hectic, frustrating, stressful time of year. It's dark early, it's cold, it's foggy, rainy or snowy. We are trying to fit our work, our family and our finances into a finite space on the calendar. Guess what? It doesn't all seem to fit!

God, in His infinite wisdom, looks at our chaotic world, steeped in war and darkness, poverty and disease and sends to us exactly *Who* we need. God sends us Emmanuel . . . God with us . . . the Light of the World . . . the freshness of new life . . . a Savior . . . a baby!

The Advent Season began on December 3rd; a Liturgical New Year . . . a new beginning for all of us. Just as the baby in the manger is embarking on a brand-new life, so too, are we.

Happy New Year! Out with the old and in with the new. It is time for us to review who we've become in the past year. What do we like about ourselves? When did we get it right, and when did we get it very wrong? What do we want to change?

Pastoral Council
Mission San Antonio de Padua
Fourth Quarter, 2023

Honestly, we know ourselves pretty well, sometimes better than we wish we did. We know what areas of our personalities and our lives need work. That doesn't mean we're always willing to put in the effort.

As we approach the manager this year, let's also approach our own lives with the same awe and wonder. We are amazing, vibrant, exciting miracles! Our Catholic Baptism made us part of the awesome family of God – as priest, prophet and king. What are we doing to address these titles, these responsibilities, in our lives?

When we watch the news and fret about the horrors in the world, what do we do to bring a little peace, forgiveness and compassion to our little corner of the world? What do we do to reconcile the relationships in our own families and circle of friends? How are we sharing the *good news of Christ Jesus* to a world in desperate need of good news? How would someone witnessing our daily interactions with others see Christ our King's family resemblance in us and our behavior?

Christmas, seen through the eyes of a child, is a wonder to behold! It is filled with anticipation, promise and possibilities! So, too, are our lives with the dawn of each day!

Let's take a few moments (or longer if you can manage it) to review *who* we are this Christmas. Let's take advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation to own our mistakes, express our regret and sorrow and get busy making amends in our new liturgical year.

We know how God responds to the darkness . . . He sends the Light of the World! We know how God responds to division and hate . . . He sends inclusion and Love!

We are being invited to the manager once again, at the darkest time of the year.

Let's review our thoughts, actions and behaviors to see what shape they are in. Let's adjust the attire of our person, so that it mirrors the Light we are coming to receive.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. We know who we are coming to greet in the lowly manager . . . our Savior, Jesus Christ. Let's put in the effort to concentrate on *who we are bringing to the table*.

May God bless you and your loved ones with a very Merry Christmas and may all of you continue to be blessed abundantly in the New Year! Joan Steele, Mission Administrator

NEW

It's a *new* Liturgical Year. It's a *new* calendar year. We have *new* things that we were gifted during the Christmas season of giving. Winter season is newly upon us.

But the biggest question is - are WE new?

In John (3:1-5) Jesus tells a Pharisee named Nicodemus that "no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above (or again)" Nicodemus asks "How can a person once grown old be born again? Surely, he cannot reenter his mother's womb and be born again, can he?"

Jesus explains, "I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit."

The first letter of Peter addresses Christians as those who "have been born anew."

In our Catholic religion, Baptism is where we are washed with water and receive the Spirit. This makes us a new creation. Born (new) in Spirit.

For many of us it has been years (and years) since that Baptism and 'new' birth took place. How are we doing today with living in the Spirit and as a new creation? Have we let complacency in? Have we forgotten those baptism vows that we renewed in Confirmation?

When you wish someone, or are wished by someone, a Happy New Year, I hope that each of us remembers that new creation we became. That the 'New' we should be celebrating is the recommitment to the new creation that began with our baptism, was renewed with our confirmation and, hopefully, remains new in us each day.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Georgia, Parishioner

Outreach Ministry

Mission San Antonio de Padua supports several outreach programs. We are looking for someone to help us grow this ministry. It won't take a lot of time; you do not need any training and you will be answering God's call to minister to your brothers and sisters.

Programs:

Communion Service for the Homebound: Please let us know if you need communion brought to you. Receiving the Eucharist is fundamental to our Catholic beliefs.

Prayer Circle: Are you willing to pray for those in need? Do you need special prayer? The prayer circle is a great way to reach out and reach up! You don't need to be able to travel, prayer requests can be shared within the group via the telephone or email. Join in to add your voice of prayer for those in our parish family who are in need.

Meals during a family illness/hospitalization: Would you be able to provide a meal for someone who is in need? Are you in need of some help while you deal with health issues?

Carpooling services for Mass: If you need a ride to Mass or if you can provide a ride, this might be the ministry for you.

If you are interested in lending a hand, or would like to be remembered in any of these ministries, please contact Joan at the office.

Please note: To see Gift shop schedule please visit the website below.

Mission San Antonio

Website: www.missionsanantonio.net

Email: office@missionsanantonio.net

(831) 385-4478