



FROM THE VINEYARD

Newsletter No. 240; December 22, 2023

JUST IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS, it's an all-Christmas edition of "From the Vineyard!"

I published my **Christmas message** online earlier this week, and it will also appear in parish bulletins this weekend.

Dear Friends in Christ,

An Advent season of just three weeks has not given us very much time to heed the call of St. John the Baptist to "prepare the way of the Lord." This shortened runway has probably meant that we have been busier than ever in the lead-up to Christmas, maybe even more frazzled than usual, and not as ready spiritually as we would like to be. The Christmas rush seems to get ever more rushed, and we do our best to manage it all.

What a consolation then, to remember that Christmas is not so much about what we do, but about what God has done for us. Cardinal John Henry Newman (canonized in 2019) once wrote in a sermon that the special charm of Christmas is that Christ comes to us as our guest. And in that coming, Newman notes "He brightens everything. He does not take away, he adds. He makes the world our home, for he deigns to be the light of it."

In this busy season, with all that is pressing in on us, may our hearts be attuned to Christ who comes to us as the Son of God, the Word made flesh, the Savior of the World. Let us open our hearts in welcome because, ready or not, here He comes! May His coming fill our families, churches and communities with light and joy this holy season.

WE HAVE REACHED THE FINAL TWO NIGHTS OF SIMBANG GABI, the Novena of Masses celebrated by Filipinos around the world before Christmas. Father Tom Lynch will celebrate the Mass tonight at Immaculate Conception Church in Peterborough, and I will be on for tomorrow evening. All are welcome to the Mass at 6:30 both nights with a festive meal to follow.

SINCERE THANKS TO THE 4TH DEGREE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, Aubrey Allen Assembly, #2571. I was delighted to join them for a pre-Christmas dinner at Bishop Doyle Hall last night, where the food and the company were excellent. I was very happy to share the convivial atmosphere with Father Ray Rick, pastor of St. Paul's in Lakefield and Chancellor of the Diocese who, among other duties, is the "Faithful Friar" (chaplain) to this assembly.

OUR LIVESTREAMING ISSUES at the Cathedral of St. Peter-in-Chains were sorted out a couple of weeks ago (thanks to Fr. Craig Cruikshank) and we are ready for a busy You Tube schedule during the Christmas season, which you may access here. And although this is the off year for the live Cogeco broadcast, Your TV will rerun last year's Christmas Mass.

A VERY BLESSED AND MERRY CHRISTMAS to you all, with prayers for much health and happiness throughout the Christmas season and in 2024.

Fraternally, + Daniel