



**Holy Family Parish**  
**4011 Co. 416 – 20<sup>th</sup> Road**  
**Gladstone, MI 49837**

**MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

Dear Parish Family Members,

As we prepare to celebrate another Christmas with great joy and festivity we also have more relief this year than last year. In other words, our concern over the COVID is almost gone away from us, though the virus is still around us.

Unfortunately the heavy commercialization of this season is pushing Jesus out of the manger and many want to celebrate a Christmas without giving him a part in it. Millions of Christians in our country will celebrate the Christmas this year also with decorated Christmas tree and exchange of gifts. But Jesus will not be part of those celebrations. In future the young children may not know anything about Jesus Christ and Christmas; rather they will consider this day as the feast of the Santa Claus. As we, the faithful, come together at this time of year – a time for family and friends – it is good for us also to spend some time reflecting on the **“reason for the season” – Jesus Christ, the Lord!** It is important that we welcome Him to our homes and to our celebrations, remembering that, we celebrate Christmas not as a secular holiday, but as a proclamation of our faith that God so loved the world that He sent His only Son.....and that the Word became flesh of the Virgin Mary and dwells among us. As Matthew says, **“He is Emmanuel means God is with us,”** In a world that wants to make Christmas only about presents, and food and Santa Claus and self-indulgence, we, as good Christians are not ashamed to profess our Faith: **Christmas is about the Incarnation of the Lord and our salvation history.** We are not ashamed to say **“Merry Christmas,”** though some of your friends may wish you, “Happy holiday.” We are not ashamed to send

out “religious” Christmas cards to our friends and family members who celebrate the birth of our Savior. We are not ashamed to have the “Manger Scene” in front of our homes, or in our homes and in our streets. We are not ashamed to give witness to Jesus in the midst of so many counter-testimonies. We have no hesitation to put a sign in our front yard with the appeal to everybody, **“Keep Jesus Christ in this Christmas.”** We are proud to be disciples of Jesus and we want all to rejoice with us as we celebrate His birth!

As we prepare ourselves for the celebration of Jesus’ birth, putting up the tree, doing the baking and cooking, going shopping and wrapping the gifts, decorating the house with lights and all the other many things that go into making this such a special family time of year with our own cultural traditions, it is good for us to remember that mere material preparation will never make Christmas meaningful. We need a spiritual preparation as well. We are ready to spend hundreds of dollars as part of our material celebration of the Christmas. But the most important preparation is needed in our life for which we don’t have to spend a penny. *The best preparation is to make a good confession* so that we can worthily receive Him in the Eucharist at Christmas Mass. If you have not made a confession for long time, please make use of this opportunity this year. These days, the area churches conduct Communal Penance Service for your convenience and our **Penance Service at Holy Family is on Tuesday Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> at 6.30 pm. Kindly make use of this wonderful opportunity to reconcile with God and our fellow beings so that we can welcome Jesus into hearts worthily.**

To all of you and your families, I extend the greetings to each one of you. Be sure that each of you is in my prayers and thoughts in this Holy Season, and my wish is that your hearts may experience the joy of the presence of the new Born King.

**May the Virgin Mary and her Infant Son, Jesus, the King of Peace, fill your hearts and lives and homes with the choicest of blessings at Christmas and throughout the New Year!**

**With Love and Prayers**

**Fr. Sebastian**