

Brothers and sisters,

Peace to you in this holy season, and, once again, merry Christmas! Remember that Christmas is a liturgical season that lasts until the feast of the Baptism of the Lord on January 13 – so keep celebrating, giving gifts, singing carols, lighting candles, eating cookies, and making merry. If anyone knows how to live it up, it should be Catholics!

This Sunday the Christmas story continues with the mystery of the Epiphany. In the early Church, the Epiphany was actually a bigger deal than the Nativity. Why? Because at Christmas, God was seen in the flesh for the first time by a few Israelites: Mary and Joseph, some shepherds, a few other townfolk. But at the visit of the magi, the incarnate savior is seen by the first Gentiles (non-Jews) from far away nations, meaning that the light of Christ begins to shine to the entire world. Bonus fact: Did you know the gospels do not tell us how many magi visited the holy family? There were three gifts given, but there could have been many more visitors than the three customarily seen at the Christmas crèche.

The Epiphany is also a time for us as disciples to put in our faith into action regarding the crises of mass migration, homelessness, and food insecurity. We call to mind that as soon as the magi departed from Bethlehem, Jesus became a refugee whose family was forced to flee to Egypt. The nation's bishops have marked each annual Epiphany as the start of Migration Sunday and National Migration Week. Never since the end of the Second World War have so many people been displaced from their homes by poverty, war, and persecution. In 2016, the estimated number of migrants and refugees was sixty-five million persons. While people of good will can disagree about the best methods to address this tragedy, the biblical injunction continues to guide people of faith: "welcome the stranger." For us, the question is not 'if?' we should do anything to respond, but rather 'how?' and 'where?'

Related to this is the crisis of homelessness and food insecurity. The encampments at Hiawatha Avenue and elsewhere made big headlines last Fall. Housing vacancies in the metro area continue to remain in the low single digits. I am grateful that our church has already been educating for change through events like the presentations by parishioner Craig Klausing and Mike Rios-Keating of Catholic Charities, here at Corpus Christi. It is also very encouraging that our Giving Garden contributed over 6000 pounds of food to Keystone Community Services last year, and that countless bags of food are donated each month at Corpus Christi and Saint Rose. I would be remiss not to mention our Holy Hammers–Habitat for Humanity as well, and the good work by parishioners involved with organizations like Catholic Charities, the Knights of Columbus, and other charitable groups.

In 2019, may all of us put out faith in action anew. Let us begin by being thankful for the roof over our own heads, by welcoming the stranger already near to us, and stewarding the gifts God has given us that are meant to serve and lift up others. Take a moment of prayer this week to ask how God wants to turn your faith into action, especially toward the needs of our local community in and around Roseville.

In the love of Christ,

Father Max Paveglio