

MESSAGE FROM THE LAPTOP

UNTO US, A CHILD IS BORN!

Sunday Greetings Family of HNOJ & HC:

Today we gather to celebrate the **Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord**. This year, it comes so soon following the Solemnity of Mary, The Mother of God, and our “limited” New Year’s celebrations to boot. Everything is so compact this year due to the way the calendar falls that we do not even get a moment to breath and savor the prospects that this year 2021 hopefully will bring. **One of the elements to this start of the New Year is the inauguration (no, not of what’s his name) of our new Sunday Mass schedules for Holy Cross and Holy Name of Jesus.** The year 2020, which we have just endured and now count in the rear view mirror of life, is certainly one for the books. Who would have thought at this juncture last year all that we would be challenged with? The aspect of the Covid-19 virus was a news piece out of Asia and moving into Europe. But we were not expecting the tremendous fallout that would happen in the month of March and affect us for months on end. The vast shutdowns of many elements to life, including the abrupt ceasing of Lent and the complete loss of the Easter season was unreal. The inability to celebrate sacraments such as First Eucharist in the month of May as well as Confirmation in May or June was unsettling for all concerned. Would we be able to celebrate these sacraments once summer rolled in or would they have to be put off till who knows when was wonderfully accomplished in the summer months due to the hard work of both Religious Ed directors working with the First Communion families to accomplish ceremonies in July and August. In similar respect, the generous offer of Bishop Gerardo Colacicco, forgoing any summer break, to make himself available for Confirmation was deeply welcomed.

Just when it seemed that the lazy, hazy days of summer would offer a bit of relief to the Covid-19 stranglehold on much of our livelihoods, the parish of Holy Cross was thrown into utter shock and sorrow with the passing of Fr. Michael Cedro in August. No one could have, in a million years, have ever seen that coming. The news that reverberated across the Interstate 84 divide to Holy Name, so soon after I had celebrated Mass, was unfathomable at first hearing. The message off of social media, that was phoned to me via one of the parish office staff who was just with me at Mass, I needed to confirm with Bishop Lagonegro was surreal. The days of wake and funeral were a fitting tribute to a good priest and wonderful person. But what came about a few weeks following the funeral was something I half expected would happen. The call from the Archdiocese to take administration over Holy Cross while continuing as Pastor of Holy Name of Jesus was not a shock to me. As is so obvious to we New Yorkers, who are watching our great state losing population numbers year after year, the continuing trend of the retirement of the priests from the grand years of rich and robust classes that filled this Archdiocese to the thin classes of recent times, it was only a matter of time that, what you and I have been working with for these past months would have to come about.

As I have stated in previous Laptops, the call to lead two parishes came just at the time when books for Masses for this new year were just about ready to open. As other of my brother pastors, who have been tasked with a second or even third parish have had to do, I had act quickly to set the year 2021 in order so as to be able to work with a Mass schedule for the two parishes that would afford me the ability to handle as one priest. Event though we have Bishop Colacicco in residence at Holy Cross, Fr. Nick making himself available Sunday to Sunday and Fr. Chris with us till Ash Wednesday, Bishop Colacicco will not be available most Sundays, Fr. Chris will be asked by the Cardinal to return to vocation work or something else and Fr. Nick may be needed by the Carmelites in some other capacity. Thus, we begin today to enter a new chapter in the life of Holy Name of Jesus & Holy Cross that, I pray, we will get beyond the narrow parochial attitudes of place and see the whole entity as our parish that worships with two sites, offering Mass that seeks to address the spiritual needs of the Body of Christ in a realistic and sacred fashion.

Next week, I will continue with some more thoughts as we gather for the Baptism of the Lord and would like to address some elements toward **PRAYERFULNESS IN CHURCH AT THE CONCLUSION OF MASS.**

That is all for now. **GO FORTH AND ANNOUNCE THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD. MANY BLESSINGS FOR THE WEEK!!!!**

Fr. Mike