

St .Michael the Archangel Parish

ST. IGNATIUS | HOLY REDEEMER

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December 23, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters of St. Michael the Archangel Parish,

It is said that around the Christmas of 1914 – five months into the First World War – numerous ceasefires occurred throughout the Western Front between French, German and British forces. Previously in early December with Christmas approaching Pope Benedict XV had urged leaders of all sides to come to a truce, “that the guns may fall silent at least upon the night the angels sang.” However, this plea fell on deaf ears. Nonetheless, at the frontlines there were accounts that soldiers from opposing sides were interacting with one another every now and then: from conversations to even visits to one another’s trenches. During these unofficial truces, soldiers would recover the bodies of their fallen brothers; souvenirs and newspapers were traded; and Christmas carols were sung in the midst of battlefield. Further, there is word that football matches were held during some of these truces. However, as time went on the First World War grew more intense. Further, military leaders criticized these truces as fraternizing with the enemy while artillery barrages discouraged any chances for the soldiers to interact with one another. And by 1916, after the brutal battles of the previous year the idea of coming together and enjoying one another’s company was no longer on anyone’s mind. The miracle of the Christmas truce was possible because at that time everyone shared common faith about the Nativity of Christ. And indeed, it was faith in Christ the Redeemer – a faith that led to an agreement that there should be a time for peace and joy on the day of His birth – that made it possible for everyone to come together in order to celebrate the Incarnation of Our Savior. Yet, the tragedy that the truce disappeared as the war reached its pinnacle reminds us of our Original Sin and the fallen nature of man. Human effort alone cannot bring about life in our world so rampant of death and darkness. We must always have Christ in our hearts to guide for He is the Son of God from whom flows rivers of living water (John 7:38). During this Christmas as we gravely reflect on our lives and about the world we live in, together we must acknowledge the need for our Savior. At the same time, nonetheless, we must light the candle of hope within us for despite our unworthiness God our Father has sent His Son to bring peace and reconciliation to this world. Let us rejoice this day not because it is the Holiday season but because Christ has come for us. Let us rejoice at the coming of our Redeemer.

Merry Christmas!

Fr. Chahm Gahng

