



**Christmas Blessings To All St. Mary & St. John Parishioners,
& Visitors Worshiping With Us This Holy Season**

It is my sincere prayer that your participation in these sacred liturgies for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Christmas Eve or Day, The Feast of the Holy Family, and New Year's Solemnity of Mary will strengthen your faith life.

It is also with great privilege and joy that as your Pastor, I wish all of you a most blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year! On behalf of Fr. Joseph Gray, Deacon Ken Snyder, Deacon Mike Moreno and our staff at both parishes, we extend our wishes for the greatest gift of all, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior.

We are not just commemorating historic events that took place 2000 years ago in the little village of Bethlehem of Judea. In Advent, we prepare the way of the Lord in joyful expectation of the Messiah. We must understand that our whole life should be an "Advent" - in vigilant expectation of Christ's final coming. Now that Advent is coming to a close, we prepare to welcome the infant Christ Child into our hearts, homes and lives through the liturgy of the Church.

The third coming of Christ is here and now - we welcome the Savior of the World. Through the gathered community, the living word of God in Sacred Scripture, and most profoundly in the sacrifice offered on the altar, we become Christ to the world.

2020 has been dedicated as the year of the Most Holy Eucharist for the Diocese of Kalamazoo by Bishop Paul J. Bradley.

May this be a year of renewal of our worthy reception of most Holy Communion. In Holy Communion we receive the true body, blood, soul and divinity of our Savior Jesus Christ. Communion is not a symbol, but a reality for us to behold by faith.

The forces of evil and darkness can never overcome the light of those who live by faith and are strengthened by the Sacraments of the Church, especially by the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion. The Prince of Peace came down from heaven out of sheer love for us. What will your response to the greatest gift of all be? Eucharist means "thanksgiving" - may we be more grateful to Jesus for His love of us, his beloved children.

*In His love,
Fr. Craig*