



strengthening our faith

by rebuilding our heritage

December 2023

My dear parishioners,

As you read this, we are well into our Advent journey, a unique kind of trip. It is not exactly a business trip, although we will profit from the journey. It is not exactly a vacation, although we will be refreshed and recharged if we go. **It is an inner journey over the landscape of our hearts that takes us to its center to meet this mysterious other whom we know as God.** We have the opportunity to reorient our lives by deepening our intimate communion with God, considering God's vision of what our world is like, rethinking our values and changing our behavior because of our relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Encountering Jesus in Our Midst

A central message of Advent is hope. I share at right a beautiful seasonal reflection on hope, by Sr. Janet Schaeffler.

We continue to need **light** and **hope** and **unity**. We cannot do without Jesus; he is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is the one we can't let go of. It is my wish this Advent and Christmas that you will be free from discouragement and assured that Jesus is always by your side, showering you with deep, lasting hope.

Hope for our Shared Mission

Just as each of us seeks the treasures of Christ in our own lives, so we also are called to share Jesus with others. **You, our parishioners, are the key to fulfilling our shared Cathedral parish mission** of bringing life to Jesus' command to love one another. We must come together to enable our parish - a beacon of hope in downtown Washington, DC for **183 years** - to continue the work entrusted to us.

Our **homeless neighbors** still need food, clothes, and rental assistance. Children are enrolled in our English and Spanish **religious education programs**, and adults in our **RCIA program** are seeking to become Catholic. Cathedral maintenance and cleaning is important to provide a **safe space for worship**. Staff members who lead our ministries and maintain parish operations must be paid and their benefits funded. Insurance premiums and other regular expenses must be paid.

"A THRILL OF HOPE"

by Janet Schaeffler, OP (Twenty-Third Publications) © 2015

*"A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices ..."
Often when we think of a "weary world," we realize how much it describes our world today: fractured relationships, disappointments, worry, illness, grief, hunger and homelessness, violence, international conflict and war, political and interracial unrest.*

Yet this line—"a thrill of hope the weary world rejoices"—from our much-loved Christmas hymn "O Holy Night," describes the world of Jesus' time as well as our time too.

In our journey to wholeness—to holiness—we as a human family are always struggling with our imperfections, our selfishness, and our need to be first, powerful, and in control. Yet, in the midst of that, there are always thrills of hope—hope because God lives within our midst, hope because many, many people respond to the call to be hope-filled, caring people for others.

When asked why he called the Second Vatican Council, Pope St. John XXIII replied, "To make the human sojourn a little less sad." He knew that it was the role of the church, the role of Jesus' disciples, to walk with others in heartfelt hope and compassionate caring, especially amid the challenges of life.

. . . . In a troubled, imperfect world, our Advent-Christmas season reminds us that we have reasons to be grateful and rejoice—because of the One who brings us hope by becoming one of us, intimately walking our journey with us.



Nothing is Impossible with God!

We continue our work while placing hope in the message that Mary received - nothing is impossible with God. We need your help. If you currently support St. Matthew's financially, we thank you. If you use FaithDirect or donate via PayPal, thank you. If you do not, **PLEASE** enroll or begin giving today.

Consistent, regular giving is vital to our existence and sustainability – and **I ask that everyone give something**. We simply cannot meet our basic operating needs without you.



Make a one-time gift using PayPal.

Please consider making a special gift this year. Your whole gift goes only to the parish. You may mail your offering to the rectory, drop it in the offertory basket, or give via **FaithDirect** at membership.faithdirect.net/enroll/DC284. You also may donate via **PayPal with debit and credit options**. Just scan the QR code at left or visit stmatthewscathedral.org/support. You will be remembered at our Christmas season Masses. Thank you so much. Muchas gracias.

Adopt-a-Family

This year St. Matthew's is providing local families in need with gift cards for purchasing their own Christmas gifts or to meet urgent needs. You can make a monetary or gift card donation to the Adopt-a-Family Christmas Gift Card Drive (Visa, American Express, or Mastercard, \$25 or \$50) dropped off at the rectory office, preferably by Friday, **December 15**. You also may donate using **PayPal** (see paragraph above). To receive confirmation of receipt of your donation, email Ricardo Tobar at rtobar@stmatthewscathedral.org, who will be happy to acknowledge your gift.

Celebrate with Us

Our Advent and Christmas brochures (English and Spanish), sent to you last month, can be found at stmatthewscathedral.org/Advent&Christmas. Highlights include:

- ~ ***Come Home for Christmas***, Advent Penance Service, Tuesday, **December 19** at 12:10pm, with eight priests available for Confession
- ~ **Christmas Eve Masses** – Sunday, **December 24** at 4:30pm (4pm prelude) (Contemporary Choir) & 10pm (bilingual in English & Spanish) (9:15pm prelude) (*Schola Cantorum*) (**Cardinal Gregory**)
- ~ **Christmas Day Masses** – Monday, **December 25** at 9am, 11am & 1pm (Spanish) (Spanish Choir)

Christmas Cards and Christmas Flowers

Christmas cards featuring the Cathedral's Crèche (in boxed sets of 10 with envelopes) are sold at the rectory office. We appreciate help in defraying the cost of the Christmas flowers, plants and trees that beautify the Cathedral. You may mail your Christmas flower offering to the rectory, drop it in the offertory collection, or donate online via PayPal or Faith Direct.

I hope to see you at Mass this Christmas. I will continue to remember you in my prayers each day. May the birth of Christ be a time of great hope and blessings for you and your family.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. Msgr. W. Ronald Jameson
Rector