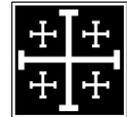




ST. LEO'S JOYFUL NOISE

WINTER 2021 EDITION



PASTOR'S CORNER

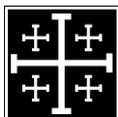
Happy New Year! Hope you and your family had a safe, healthy and joyful Christmas and New Year celebration. In his Christmas message to our priests our Bishop, Most Rev. Mark Brennan, describes Christmas as a season we celebrate "... a love-letter written by God in the flesh of the Son". Christmas is really a joyful and peaceful season we celebrate the greatest gift God has ever given to humanity – the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who came to save us from our slavery of sin. The focus of this newsletter is to explore how we can extend the joy and peace of Christmas to our lives and those around us.

Without a doubt, the coronavirus pandemic has upended our lives in unimaginable ways, even the traditional ways we celebrated the Christmas and New Year holidays in the past. In speaking with some parishioners my understanding is that some families, in adherence to the advice of our health officials, elected to celebrate the holidays restrictively with only immediate family members in the same household, while others decided to maintain their families' age-long tradition of celebrating Christmas with extended family members. Whichever way you and your family celebrated the holidays, my prayer is that the pandemic did not deter you and your family from celebrating Christmas and New Year joyfully and peacefully. Though I received some invitations to join some families for the holiday celebrations, I stayed home after our liturgies of Christmas and New Year celebrations in adherence to the advice and guidelines of our health officials. Celebrating the holidays mainly at home for the first time availed me the opportunity to reflect and be grateful to God for the opportunity to celebrate the anniversary of His Son's nativity and the beginning of another calendar year in good health and safety. Reflecting on the blessings of the newborn Jesus and the blessings He brought into our lives spurred me into thinking about millions of people, who have been afflicted with the deadly coronavirus, and the hundreds of thousands of people we have lost to this virus. Learning about how some families who are grieving the loss

of beloved family member(s) during this pandemic was an emotional and humbling experience for me. By celebrating the nativity of Jesus, even when grieving the loss of a beloved family member, the grieving families helped to reinforce my faith in God by reminding me that irrespective of what is going on in our lives, the newborn Jesus came to bring peace, joy and consolation in our lives. Hence, if we could have faith in the peace and joy He has come to bring us, our lives would be better.

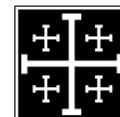
Understandably, Christmas and New Year celebrations are supposed to be the most joyful and peaceful seasons of the year. Unfortunately, the hateful rhetoric in our public discourses and sporadic instances of violent demonstrations we have gone through lately, beginning with the release of the November 3, 2020 election results to the insurgency in our nation's Capital on January 6, 2021, have not brought peace and joy into our lives as we would imagine. As a person of Faith have you ever found yourself in a quandary - trying to understand how we degenerated to this point in our history and what we are doing to snap out of this menace, which does not unite us, rather, further divides us? I strongly understand and believe in the clarion call for unity and healing in our nation. However, we cannot achieve national unity and healing if we remain inexorably affixed to our respective political views and positions. The need for change of minds and hearts on both sides of the political spectrum is highly needed now more than ever in our history. I really hate to think that without them the peace and joy, brought by the Christ Child nestled at the manger in Bethlehem and which we earnestly long for at this time, may not be achieved. My prayer and hope is that all of us would cooperate in restoring peace and joy in our country. Continue to stay safe and healthy. Do not forget getting vaccinated (when the vaccine becomes available to your particular demographic) as this is part of our social responsibility in tapering down the scourge of the virus. Thanks so much for your prayers and thoughtfulness and be assured of my thoughts and prayers. Remain blessed.

--Fr Alfred Obiudu



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FEATURED MINISTRY

Food Pantry

In conjunction with the Ladies Aux. Knights of Columbus, the Food Pantry is open again! The first Food Distribution was on Dec. 19 and 40 bags of food including a turkey or a ham were distributed, and when those ran out, a gift card was provided to purchase a meat of their choice. We will start distributing at least once a month with the next scheduled distribution January 23.

Thanks to all of the parishioners of St. Leo's for their generous donations of gift cards, monetary donation, and food. With this generosity we can continue to man the Food Pantry. A big shout out to the volunteers who help with the food distribution!

Boy Scouts

Boy Scout Troop 23 and Cub Scout Pack 23 have regular meetings, held weekly in the hall for the Troop (ages 11-18) and the Pack (k-5th grade) on Wednesday evenings, starting at 6:30pm. Focus includes youth leadership development, citizenship, and skill building. Scouting is outing!

AMAZON SMILE

St. Leo's received **\$134.50** for the 3rd quarter and **\$1,298.81** for an all-time total. This is an easy way to support St Leo's. Make a point in the new year to use *smile.amazon.com* if you are ordering anything thru Amazon. Every little bit helps!

GIFT CARD PROGRAM

Did you know Martin's gift cards can be used for grocery pick up? You can place your order on line and pay with a gift card! If you are doing Martin's pick up, please consider using gift cards.

FIRST COMMUNION RECEIPIENTS

The following received their First Communion: Jared Wilberger, John Millay, Gabriel James, Owen Niedowoski, Owen Gress, Brian Martinez, and Katherine Nagy.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

A big thanks goes out to Maddie and Ed Carter and their team of helpers for the many years they manned the food pantry. Their team have supported hundreds of families over the years. St Leo's certainly appreciates their dedication to this very important ministry.

VICARIATE COUNCIL REPS

Congrats to Dave Torlone and James Rand, St. Leo's representatives for the Vicariate Council. They will meet with the other representatives from surrounding parishes and from that meeting, three will be voted to serve on the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

The Diocesan Pastoral Council will meet with Bishop Brennan in an open forum of dialogue and communication bringing any pastoral concerns from the Vicariate Council. We wish them the best of luck in their new roles.

CONGRATULATIONS LITTLE ONES!!

Congratulations to our new little ones. Benjamin White was baptized on September 26 and Isaiah Early was baptized on October 17.

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Got some scoop? The editors of **Joyful Noise** are Sheri Lincecum or Karen Bageant. Email us at joyfulnoise@stleo.com.