

St. Thomas

THE Apostle

CATHOLIC CHURCH

"God's people in *Extraordinary* variety"

Serving Hyde Park's Catholic Community since 1869

December 29, 2019

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Parish Offices: Hours:
Weekdays: 7am-3pm
Sunday: 9am-11am
 Located at 55th & Woodlawn
 5472 S. Kimbark Avenue
 Chicago, IL 60615-5297
 Phone: (773) 324-2626
 Fax: (773) 891-0602
parishoffice@stapostleparish.org

Fr. Christopher Kituli
 Extension 107

Deacon: Deacon Kurt Davis

Parish Office:
 Lisa J. Couch, secretary
 (773) 324-2626
 Parish Voicemail box, ext. 0

Director of Parish Operations
 Paula Jones, ext. 109

Music Ministry Ed Martin

Liturgist
 Jennifer Davis, ext. 102

Bulletin Editor Lissa Romell

Parish School
 Timothy Gallo, *Principal*
 5467 S. Woodlawn Avenue
 Chicago, Illinois 60615-5299
 telephone: (773) 667-1142
 Fax: (773) 891-0602
www.stapostleschool.com



Please don't forget the poor boxes.



St. Thomas the Apostle Parish

Mass Schedule

Sunday
 8:30am & 11am

Monday-Friday
 8:30am

Saturday
 8:30am & 4pm

Holy Days
 8:30am

Confession

Saturdays, 3-3:30pm.

Baptism

Please contact the Parish Office.

Marriage

Please make arrangements eight months in advance.

Membership

Please register at the Parish Office

Come visit us at www.stapostleparish.org



Today's Readings:

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 ♦ Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 ♦ Colossians 3:12-21 ♦ Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Grace Nobu (s.i.), †Shirley Dillard, †Stephan Albert

We encourage you to prepare yourself for next weekend's liturgy by reading and praying the scriptures (visit www.usccb.org).

Next Sunday's Readings: Epiphany of the Lord

Isaiah 60:1-6 ♦ Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13 ♦ Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6 ♦ Matthew 2:1-12

Weekday Mass Intentions

Weekday Masses are held in the Daily Mass Chapel at 8:30 a.m.

MONDAY, December 30

1 Jn 2:12-17 ♦ Ps 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10 ♦ Lk 2:36-40

I write to you, young men, because you are strong and the word of God remains in you... 1 Jn 2:14

†Dr. Herman Neal, †Gabrielle Perrin

TUESDAY, December 31

Readings: 1 Jn 2:18-21 ♦ Ps 96:1-2, 11-12, 13 ♦ Jn 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Jn 1:1

†Lorraine Sauerbier, †Gabrielle Perrin

WEDNESDAY, January 1

Bl. Virgin Mary, Mother of God

Nm 6:22-27 ♦ Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8 ♦ Gal 4:4-7 ♦ Lk 2:16-21

Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Lk 2:19

Carmen Orendain (s.i.)

THURSDAY, January 2

Sts. Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen

Readings: 1 Jn 2:22-28 ♦ Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4 ♦ Jn 1:19-28

Let what you heard from the beginning remain in you. 1 Jn 2:24

†John H. Moore, IV

†Gabrielle Perrin

Octavius Behzadi (Birthday blessings!)

FRIDAY, January 3

Readings: 1 Jn 2:29—3:6 ♦ Ps 98:1, 3cd-5,

5-6 ♦ Jn 1:29-34

I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from the sky and remain upon him. Jn 1:32

†George & Delores Harvilla

†Jeffrey Paul, †Gabrielle Perrin

SATURDAY, January 4

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Readings: 1 Jn 3:7-10 ♦ Ps 98:1, 7-8, 9 ♦ Jn 1:35-42

The LORD will rule the world with justice and the peoples with equity. Ps 98:9

†Fe Antiqueno, †Gabrielle Perrin

Thank You from Our Domestic Violence Outreach

In October, 25 parishes in the Archdiocese of Chicago Domestic Violence Outreach network (ACDVO) collected needed supplies for victims of domestic violence and their children. They received toiletries, children's socks, Pampers, Pull-Ups, shampoo, toothpaste, and many other generous gifts.

ACDVO partnered with Safe Haven Network (SHN), an organization that supports victims of domestic violence and their pets, which can also suffer from abuse. SHN collected the bins from parishes, sorted items and distributed them to 17 shelters in the Chicago area. The campaign raised awareness of domestic violence as well as bringing in thousands of donated items for victims.

Jessica Katz, SHN Director, said, "This year's collection far exceeded those of previous years, thanks to the parishes. Having churches in so many different areas meant that donors in every neighborhood in Chicago and many suburbs could participate—and they sure did! Each of the shelters received between 8-10 large boxes of supplies; they were overjoyed and very grateful."



Our Hospitality Ministry will be on break until January 12.

A BIG THANK YOU to our Hospitality Ministry for their faithful service and welcoming presence.

This Week's Calendar

SUNDAY, December 29

Holy Family

MONDAY, December 30

Parish Office open 9am-11am

TUESDAY, December 31

Parish Office open 9am-11am

WEDNESDAY, January 1

Solemnity of Mary (Holy Day of Obligation)

Parish Office closed

Mass: 10am

SATURDAY, January 4

3pm: *Confessions*

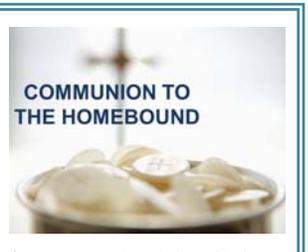


We're so glad you're here and invite you to journey in faith with us. We believe the church is the sacrament of God's saving presence in the world.

Our goal is to provide a spiritual home where all are welcome, where the healing, reconciling, liberating love of God flows through us to all people.

If you have any questions about our parish, look for the members of the Welcoming ministry. They are wearing green sashes and are here for you!

Would you like to become a parishioner? Please contact one of our ushers or call Lisa at the Parish Office, 773-324-2626.



If you or a loved one wish to receive communion at home or in a nursing home, please call Lisa at 773-324-2626, & she will arrange for a Minister of Care to visit.

A Word from Fr. Chris: Feast Day of the Holy Family

Dear parishioners and friends of Saint Thomas the Apostle,

On this day, the Sunday within the Octave of Christmas, we honor the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The feast of the Holy Family is a feast for our families too, since the Holy Family is the patron and model of all Christian families. Today should be a huge family feast, since it is devoted entirely to the Holy Family as a model for Christian family life. To understand our part in this feast day, lets us focus on the hidden, day-to-day life of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

What was it like to live day in and day out in the household of St. Joseph? What was it like to have Jesus for a son, Mary as a wife and mother, and Joseph as a father and husband? Their home would have certainly been a sacred place and a dwelling of true peace and unity. But it would have also been so much more.

The family home of Jesus, Mary and Joseph would have been, in numerous ways, just like any other home. They would have related together, talked, had fun, disagreed, worked, eaten, dealt with problems, and encountered everything else that makes up daily family life. Does this remind you of a family you know, probably one you belong to?

Of course, the virtues of Jesus and Mary were perfect, and St. Joseph was a truly "just man." Therefore, the

overriding characteristic of their home would have been love.

But with that said, their family would not have been exempt from daily toil, hurt and challenges that face most families. For example, they would have encountered the death of loved ones. They would have encountered misunderstanding and gossip from others. They would have had to fulfill all daily chores, earn a living, put food on the table, attend gatherings of family and friends and the like. They would have lived normal family life in every way.



The Holy Family
By Jacqui Miller

This is significant because it reveals God's love for family life. The Father allowed His Divine Son to live this life and, as a result, elevated family life to a place within the Trinity. The holiness of the Holy Family reveals to us that "Every Family" is invited to share in God's divine life and to encounter ordinary daily life with grace and virtue.

Some families are strong in virtue, some struggle with basic communication. Some are faithful day in and day out, some are broken and deeply wounded. No matter the case, know that God wants to enter more deeply into your family life just as it is right now. He desires to give you strength and virtue to live as the Holy Family. Surrender yourself and your family, this day, and invite the Holy Trinity to make your family a holy family.

Happy New Year 2020 to all. ~Fr. Chris

The Charismatic Prayer Group will not meet today, Sunday, December 29th nor on Sunday, January 5th because St. Thomas School will be closed during Christmas Vacation.

We will resume our regular Sunday meetings at 12:30 in STA School, room 110, on Sunday, January 12th. All are welcome for lively worship and prayer.



Dates to Remember

December 21-January 5

NO SCHOOL

Christmas Vacation

January 6

School Resumes

January 7

All School Mass at 8:30 am

January 10

Spirit Day & Community Celebration

January 14

All School Mass at 8:30 am

January 15

STA Advisory Board Meeting at 7:15 am

Visit STA!

Tours and shadow visits are offered for prospective families on Wednesdays & Fridays from 8:30-9:30 am & 9:30-10:30 am.

Please sign-up in advance on our school's website:

www.stapostleschool.com

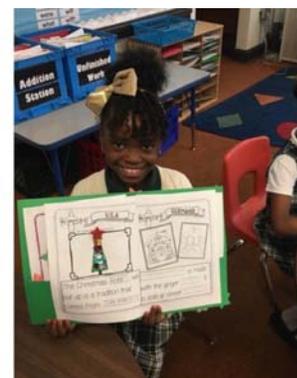
Facebook: @stapostleschool



Christmas Around the World

During the month of December, the 1st grade classes studied different Christmas traditions around the world. They began their unit by learning about the Christmas traditions that we celebrate in the U.S. by doing a family report on the traditions that the students celebrate at home. The students then learned about the 7 different continents and they began their travels to Germany for St. Nicholas Day. Throughout the unit, the teachers encouraged the children to use their imaginations to "hop onto Santa's Sleigh" to travel to 7 different countries (Germany, France, Mexico, Sweden, Nigeria, Australia and the United States). While visiting each country, the classes read about the country's different customs, practiced their expository writing skills by completing a scrapbook page and participated in different traditions from each country through song, stories, food and craft. For example, the students created poinsettias when they visited Mexico, ate Yule Log cakes in France and learned about the story of St. Lucy in Sweden.

These lessons and activities were woven into their subjects like reading, writing, social studies and religion throughout the day. They ended the unit with a Posada, a traditional Christmas celebration in Mexico. While visiting Mexico, the students helped to plan the Posada and created a piñata design for the party. They enjoyed food, drinks and the piñata at the posada. They also re-enacted the Nativity story during this celebration.



Prospective Family Open House

Open House

St. Thomas the Apostle School

5467 S. Woodlawn Ave.

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

6:00-7:30 pm

Sign-up on-line: www.stapostleschool.com



Fifty-third World Day of Peace

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
53rd WORLD DAY OF PEACE
1 JANUARY 2020

PEACE AS A JOURNEY OF HOPE: DIALOGUE, RECONCILIATION AND ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION

1. *Peace, a journey of hope in the face of obstacles and trial*
Peace is a great and precious value, the object of our hope and the aspiration of the entire human family. As a human attitude, our hope for peace is marked by an existential tension that makes it possible for the present, with all its difficulties, to be “lived and accepted if it leads towards a goal, if we can be sure of this goal, and if this goal is great enough to justify the effort of the journey”. Hope is thus the virtue that inspires us and keeps us moving forward, even when obstacles seem insurmountable.

Our human community bears, in its memory and its flesh, the scars of ever more devastating wars and conflicts that affect especially the poor and the vulnerable. Entire nations find it difficult to break free of the chains of exploitation and corruption that fuel hatred and violence. Even today, dignity, physical integrity, freedom, including religious freedom, communal solidarity and hope in the future are denied to great numbers of men and women, young and old. Many are the innocent victims of painful humiliation and exclusion, sorrow and injustice, to say nothing of the trauma born of systematic attacks on their people and their loved ones.

The terrible trials of internal and international conflicts, often aggravated by ruthless acts of violence, have an enduring effect on the body and soul of humanity. Every war is a form of fratricide that destroys the human family’s innate vocation to brotherhood.

War, as we know, often begins with the inability to accept the diversity of others, which then fosters attitudes of aggrandizement and domination born of selfishness and pride, hatred and the desire to caricature, exclude and even destroy the other. War is fueled by a perversion of relationships, by hegemonic ambitions, by abuses of power, by fear of others and by seeing diversity as an obstacle. And these, in turn, are aggravated by the experience of war.

As I observed during my recent Apostolic Journey to Japan, our world is paradoxically marked by “a perverse dichotomy that tries to defend and ensure stability and peace through a false sense of security sustained by a mentality of fear and mistrust, one that ends up poisoning relationships between peoples and obstructing any form of dialogue. Peace and international stability are incompatible with attempts to build upon the fear of mutual destruction or the threat of total annihilation. They can be achieved only on the basis of a global ethic of solidarity and cooperation in the service of a future shaped by interdependence and shared responsibility in the

whole human family of today and tomorrow”.

Every threatening situation feeds mistrust and leads people to withdraw into their own safety zone. Mistrust and fear weaken relationships and increase the risk of violence, creating a vicious circle that can never lead to a relationship of peace. Even nuclear deterrence can only produce the illusion of security.

We cannot claim to maintain stability in the world through the fear of annihilation, in a volatile situation, suspended on the brink of a nuclear abyss and enclosed behind walls of indifference. As a result, social and economic decisions are being made that lead to tragic situations where human beings and creation itself are discarded rather than protected and preserved. How, then, do we undertake a journey of peace and mutual respect? How do we break the unhealthy mentality of threats and fear? How do we break the current dynamic of distrust?

We need to pursue a genuine fraternity based on our common origin from God and exercised in dialogue and mutual trust. The desire for peace lies deep within the human heart, and we should not resign ourselves to seeking anything less than this.

2. *Peace, a journey of listening based on memory, solidarity and fraternity*

The *Hibakusha*, the survivors of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, are among those who currently keep alive the flame of collective conscience, bearing witness to succeeding generations to the horror of what happened in August 1945 and the unspeakable sufferings that have continued to the present time. Their testimony awakens and preserves the memory of the victims, so that the conscience of humanity may rise up in the face of every desire for dominance and destruction. “We cannot allow present and future generations to lose the memory of what happened here. It is a memory that ensures and encourages the building of a more fair and fraternal future”.

Like the *Hibakusha*, many people in today’s world are working to ensure that future generations will preserve the memory of past events, not only in order to prevent the same errors or illusions from recurring, but also to enable memory, as the fruit of experience, to serve as the basis and inspiration for present and future decisions to promote peace.

What is more, memory is the horizon of hope. Many times, in the darkness of wars and conflicts, the remembrance of even a small gesture of solidarity received can lead to courageous and even heroic decisions. It can unleash new energies and kindle new hope in individuals and communities.

Setting out on a journey of peace is a challenge made all the more complex because the interests at stake in relationships between people, communities and nations, are numerous and conflicting. We must first appeal to people’s moral conscience and to personal and political will. Peace emerges from the depths of the human heart and political will must always be renewed, so that new ways can be found to reconcile and unite individuals and communities.

The world does not need empty words but convinced witnesses, peacemakers who are open to a

(Cont’d on p. 6)



“Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you.”
~Matthew 2:13

| Offerings for 12/8/2019 | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Offertory | \$6,104.16 |
| Give Central | \$3,033.00 |
| Building Fund | \$1,322.00 |
| Christmas | \$1,400.00 |
| Flowers | \$647.00 |
| Funeral | \$1,500.00 |
| Candles | \$126.75 |
| Rent | \$3,356.45 |
| Mass Offerings | \$50.00 |
| Misc. | \$123.00 |
| Hospitality | \$154.75 |
| Total | \$17,817.11 |
| Offerings for 12/15/2019 | |
| Offertory | \$5,808.02 |
| Give Central | \$2,063.00 |
| Christmas | \$2,140.00 |
| Candle Offerings | \$347.00 |
| Flowers | \$286.00 |
| Funeral | \$800.00 |
| Building Fund | \$205.00 |
| Misc. | \$452.50 |
| Total | \$12,101.52 |
| THANK YOU!! | |

Please Remember in Prayer: Parishioners & friends who are ill:

Estrella Alamar, Dorla Allen, Lucas Allen, Romulo Barreno, Dorothy Bonds, Romy Crena, Esther Dionisio, Marilyn Epps, Sebastian Farmer, Fr. Jack Farry, Joseph Foley, Joan Gallagher, Lina Garcia, David Giles, Pamela Granicz, Kathleen Holden, Wm. G. Howard, Maria Jimenez, Olga Jimenez, Carolyn Jones, Connie Jose, Charlie King, Mary Lerps, Mark Lewis, Corrine Lipinski, Linda Loggins, Ruth Magana, Mankowski Family, Norma McCall, Anastacia I. Mebane, Clara Morgan, Chris Mureiko, Maribeth Murphy, Caridad Neal, Carmen Orendain, Edmond Peirre, Agnes Pelt, Sr. Jamie Phelps, David Nathaniel Robinson, Dick Russel, Nelson R. Sample, Elizabeth Scott, Zahari Simmons, Bobby Sims, Olustee Smith, Coletta Tinley, Charles Walker, Sr., Jo Washington, Julia Washington, Richard West, Mavis Willis, Marie Bijou Wong, Joan Yedinak

For those who have died.

| | Jan. 4-5 | Sat. 4:00 PM | Sun. 8:30 AM | Sun. 11:00 AM |
|------------------------------|-----------------|--|--|--|
| Eucharistic Ministers | | Tom Anderson (BC) Michael Wilson (CL) Rebecca Gray Smith (CR) Teresa Vazquez (BL) | Sharon Dobbs (BC) Donald Ayers (CL) Curtrice Scott (CR) Jim Rydel (BL) Agatha Ngwueke (BR) Kirk Willis (CL) | Lena Williams (BC) Dorothy Bennett (CL) Betty Brewer (CR) Paula Jones (BL) Elizabeth Watson (BR) Gwen Anderson (CL) |
| Lectors | | Sandra Ham (Lector 1) | Agatha Ngwueke (Lector 1) Cathleen Chopra-McGowan (Lector 2) | BeLinda Mathie (Lector 1) Joanne Glass (Lector 2) |
| Altar Servers | | Anna Stephanov Kaylee Williams | Matthew Lodato Nicolas Lodato Mary-Julie Ngwueke | Judith Lake Ulysses Marquez-Valcrzuela |
| Ordinary Minister | | Kurt Davis | Kurt Davis | Kurt Davis |
| Usher | | Oscar Lanzi (1) Earl Conner (2) | Johnson Sinoiki (1) Claire Lipinski (2) | Allen Hawkins (1) Athanase Gahungu (2) |

World Day of Peace (Cont'd from p. 5) dialogue that rejects exclusion or manipulation.

In fact, we cannot truly achieve peace without a convinced dialogue between men and women who seek the truth beyond ideologies and differing opinions. Peace “must be built up continually”; it is a journey made together in constant pursuit of the common good, truthfulness and respect for law. Listening to one another can lead to mutual understanding and esteem, and even to seeing in an enemy the face of a brother or sister.

The peace process thus requires enduring commitment. It is a patient effort to seek truth and justice, to honour the memory of victims and to open the way, step by step, to a shared hope stronger than the desire for vengeance. In a state based on law, democracy can be an important paradigm of this process, provided it is grounded in justice and a commitment to protect the rights of every person, especially the weak and marginalized, in a constant search for truth. This is a social undertaking, an ongoing work in which each individual makes his or her contribution responsibly, at every level of the local, national and global community.

As Saint Paul VI pointed out, these “two aspirations, to equality and to participation, seek to promote a democratic society... This calls for an education to social life, involving not only the knowledge of each person’s rights, but also its necessary correlative: the recognition of his or her duties with regard to others. The sense and practice of duty are themselves conditioned by the capacity for self-mastery and by the acceptance of responsibility and of the limits placed upon the freedom of individuals or the groups”.

Divisions within a society, the increase of social inequalities and the refusal to employ the means of ensuring integral human development endanger the pursuit of the common good. Yet patient efforts based on the power of the word and of truth can help foster a greater capacity for compassion and creative solidarity.

In our Christian experience, we constantly remember Christ, who gave his life to reconcile us to one another (cf. *Rom 5:6-11*). The Church shares fully in the search for a just social order; she continues to serve the common good and to nourish the hope for peace by transmitting Christian values and moral teaching, and by her social and educational works.

(Cont'd on p. 7)



As the end of the year approaches, we often reflect on the many blessings bestowed upon us. During this time, it is common for parishioners to take the opportunity to thank God for these blessings by gifting a portion of their abundance to Saint Thomas. Year-end giving offers income tax deductions, capital gains savings, and other financial benefits while also supporting Saint Thomas – oftentimes for years to come.

World Day of Peace (Cont'd from p. 6)

3. Peace, a journey of reconciliation in fraternal communion

The Bible, especially in the words of the Prophets, reminds individuals and peoples of God's covenant with humanity, which entails renouncing our desire to dominate others and learning to see one another as persons, sons and daughters of God, brothers and sisters. We should never encapsulate others in what they may have said or done, but value them for the promise that they embody. Only by choosing the path of respect can we break the spiral of vengeance and set out on the journey of hope.

We are guided by the Gospel passage that tells of the following conversation between Peter and Jesus: "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven" (Mt 18:21-22). This path of reconciliation is a summons to discover in the depths of our heart the power of forgiveness and the capacity to acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters. When we learn to live in forgiveness, we grow in our capacity to become men and women of peace.

What is true of peace in a social context is also true in the areas of politics and the economy, since peace permeates every dimension of life in common. There can be no true peace unless we show ourselves capable of developing a more just economic system. As Pope Benedict XVI said ten years ago in his Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, "in order to defeat underdevelopment, action is required not only on improving exchange-based transactions and implanting public welfare structures, but above all on gradually increasing openness, in a world context, to forms of economic activity marked by quotas of gratuitousness and communion" (No. 39).

4. Peace, a journey of ecological conversion

"If a mistaken understanding of our own principles has at times led us to justify mistreating nature, to exercise tyranny over creation, to engage in war, injustice and acts of violence, we believers should acknowledge that by so doing we were not faithful to the treasures of wisdom which we have been called to protect and preserve".

Faced with the consequences of our hostility towards others, our lack of respect for our common home or our abusive exploitation of natural resources – seen only as a source of immediate profit, regardless of local communities, the common good and nature itself – we are in need of an ecological conversion. The recent Synod on the Pan-Amazon Region moves us to make a pressing renewed call for a peaceful relationship between communities and the land, between present and past, between experience and hope.

This journey of reconciliation also calls for listening and contemplation of the world that God has given us as a gift to make our common home. Indeed, natural resources, the many forms of life and the earth itself have been entrusted to us "to till and keep" (Gen 1:15), also for future generations, through the responsible and active participation of everyone. We need to change the way we think and see things, and to become

more open to encountering others and accepting the gift of creation, which reflects the beauty and wisdom of its Creator. All this gives us deeper motivation and a new way to dwell in our common home, to accept our differences, to respect and celebrate the life that we have received and share, and to seek living conditions and models of society that favour the continued flourishing of life and the development of the common good of the entire human family.

The ecological conversion for which we are appealing will lead us to a new way of looking at life, as we consider the generosity of the Creator who has given us the earth and called us to a share it in joy and moderation. This conversion must be understood in an integral way, as a transformation of how we relate to our sisters and brothers, to other living beings, to creation in all its rich variety and to the Creator who is the origin and source of all life. For Christians, it requires that "the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them".

5. "We obtain all that we hope for"

The journey of reconciliation calls for patience and trust. Peace will not be obtained unless it is hoped for.

In the first place, this means believing in the possibility of peace, believing that others need peace just as much as we do.

Here we can find inspiration in the love that God has for each of us: a love that is liberating, limitless, gratuitous and tireless.

Fear is frequently a source of conflict. So it is important to overcome our human fears and acknowledge that we are needy children in the eyes of the One who loves us and awaits us, like the father of the prodigal son (cf. Lk 15:11-24). The culture of fraternal encounter shatters the culture of conflict. It makes of every encounter a possibility and a gift of God's generous love. It leads us beyond the limits of our narrow horizons and constantly encourages us to live in a spirit of universal fraternity, as children of the one heavenly Father.

For the followers of Christ, this journey is likewise sustained by the sacrament of Reconciliation, given by the Lord for the remission of sins of the baptized. This sacrament of the Church, which renews individuals and communities, bids us keep our gaze fixed on Jesus, who reconciled "all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross" (Col 1:20). It requires us to set aside every act of violence in thought, word and deed, whether against our neighbours or against God's creation.

The grace of God our Father is bestowed as unconditional love. Having received his forgiveness in Christ, we can set out to offer that peace to the men and women of our time. Day by day, the Holy Spirit prompts in us ways of thinking and speaking that can make us artisans of justice and peace. May the God of peace bless us and come to our aid.

May Mary, Mother of the Prince of Peace and Mother of all the peoples of the earth, accompany and sustain us at every step of our journey of reconciliation.

And may all men and women who come into this world experience a life of peace and develop fully the promise of life and love dwelling in their heart.

From the Vatican, 8 December 2019

Franciscus



*For unto us a child is born...
and his name shall be called...
Prince of Peace. ~Isaiah 9:6*