



strengthening our faith

by rebuilding our heritage

December 2021

My dear parishioners,

I'm sitting here at my desk—it's freezing outside—working on our Advent liturgies and trying to think about my Christmas letter to you.

I cannot predict what the rest of Advent or Christmas will look like this year. My thoughts center around a theme presented by Janet Schaeffler in her Advent 2021 booklet:

“... One thing we do know—and feel—is that we have lived the Advent theme of waiting for many, many months: waiting for hugs, for the vaccine, to see family and friends, to celebrate weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, and memorial services



The waiting of Advent—in addition to remembering the waiting of the Old Testament people for a Messiah—is about how we wait in the everydayness of our lives. Even when we aren't in the stronghold of a pandemic, waiting is always with us: waiting for a phone call, a perfect job, a diagnosis, a healing.

Advent waiting, though, is not passive. We're always called to be more, to be a part of the solution. Meister Eckhart said, 'What good is it to me for the Creator to give birth to the Son of God if I do not also give birth to him in my time and my culture?'

What if instead of waiting for good-enough things to happen to us, we could be the good thing to happen to someone else who's waiting? What if we could cure our own waiting-room addiction by making room in our life to be the good others are waiting for? What if Advent living isn't about what we can expect from life but what life can expect from us?"

"Waiting in Wondrous Expectation," by Janet Schaeffler, OP (Twenty-Third Publications ©2021)

Sr. Schaeffler's reflection really strikes home. Advent is an active time. We're always **called to be more**, to be a part of the solution. This is true in both our country and our Church. What do the social teachings of the Church say about issues facing our nation? The life of a Christian? Pope Francis plans to bring bishops, religious and lay persons together to hear what they think about those questions on a much broader plane. He is starting by asking US—you and me—what we think! Parishes are now planning for or are offering listening sessions in preparation for the large Synod that will take place. I hope you will take advantage of the opportunity to share your thoughts when St. Matthew's conducts listening sessions in February 2022.

Meeting Jesus, Nurturing Hope

This year we still need HOPE . . . **This year we really need JESUS.** As we approach this Christmas season, we need to make an inner journey on the landscape of our hearts that takes us to meet, to encounter, the Lord Jesus. We can reorient our lives by deepening our intimate communion with God, considering God's vision of what our world is like, rethinking our values. This **new reality** causes us to look more carefully to see Jesus in our brothers and sisters, to make sacrifices towards keeping us all safe, to strive to come ever closer to Jesus.

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.

Giving Hope and Recognizing 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 not just our common mission, but our shared Cathedral parish mission of bringing life to Jesus' command to love one another. During this new reality we must come together to enable our parish - a beacon of hope in downtown Washington, DC for 181 years - to continue the work entrusted to us.

Amid this new reality, our **homeless neighbors** still need food, clothes, rental assistance, and much more. We have children in our English and Spanish **religious education programs**, and adults in our **RCIA program** wanting to

become Catholic. Regular and thorough cleaning of the Cathedral is more important than ever to provide a **safe space for worship** during this time. To meet these needs, staff members who lead our ministries and maintain parish operations must be paid and their benefits funded. Insurance premiums and loan payments must be made, and other regular expenses paid.

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**. So many of you are generous donors; I am so grateful. We are so happy to have all of you as parishioners, but we need all of you to become donors. You may be struggling as we are, but it is true that a little makes a big difference if all chip in. We simply cannot meet our basic operating needs without you.



Make a one-time
gift using PayPal.

Your gifts are the lifeline for our parish! **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 <https://membership.faithdirect.net/enroll/DC284>. You also may donate via **PayPal**. Just scan the QR code at left or visit our website at www.stmatthewscathedral.org – choose *Make a Gift* on the website front page, then choose *Donate* under *Make a One-Time Gift*. You will be remembered at our Christmas season Masses. Thank you so much. Muchas gracias.

Adopt-a-Family: A Special Way to Give Back

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 assist with 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 by Monday, **December 13**. You also may donate online using **PayPal** (see paragraph above). To receive confirmation of receipt of your Adopt-a-Family donation, email Norma Canedo-Estrada at ncanedo@stmatthewscathedral.org.

Advent Offerings

We are happy to invite you to these Advent liturgies and events.

- **Advent Communal Penance Service**, "Come Home for Christmas" | Tuesday, **December 14** at 12:10pm in the Cathedral, Msgr. Jameson, presider and homilist (Confessions in English and Spanish)
- **Evening Penance Service (in Spanish)** in the Cathedral, with Confessions in Spanish and English, Fr. John Benson | Tuesday, **December 14** at 7pm
- **Holy Land Gifts Sale** by Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation | Saturday & Sunday, **December 18/19** in the East Conference Room after all Masses
- **Eucharistic Holy Hour with Confessions** | Monday, **December 20** at 6pm in the Cathedral

Christmas Masses

Celebrate Christmas with our St. Matthew's parish family! All Masses are open to the public. Visitors are welcome! Face coverings continue to be required inside the Cathedral regardless of vaccination status.

Christmas Eve, December 24 | 4:30pm & 7pm (bilingual in English and Spanish)
10pm (Cardinal Gregory) (livestreamed on ADW YouTube channel)

Christmas Day, December 25 | 9am, 11am
1pm (Spanish) (livestreamed on Cathedral YouTube channel)

Christmas Flowers

Our Cathedral always looks beautiful for the Christmas season, though we plan to decorate more modestly this year. **Will you help us** with the cost of the flowers, plants and trees? You may mail your Christmas flower offering to the rectory, drop it in the baskets at the doors as you leave on Sundays, or donate via PayPal (specifying "flowers" in the Notes or Comments section) or via FaithDirect.

May the birth of Christ be a time of great hope and God's blessing for you and your family this year and always, and may your generosity be greatly rewarded.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. W. Ronald Jameson
Rector