Excerpts from the CCCB Christmas Message 2019

Dear Friends,

Reconciliation is a much used word in our present-day culture, but we seldom ponder in our hearts what a treasure and mystery reconciliation really is. In the Christmas season, its meaning and implications are vividly concrete as the birth of Christ brings a new light and a saving grace to our capacity to be reconciled and be reconcilers in our daily life.

In this liturgical season, we enter the Gospel scenes with new insights as we see and hear the angel choirs in the heavens and witness the shepherds experiencing a life-changing moment; in contrast, the inn does not have room for Mary and Joseph. The shepherds hasten to the manger to see what they are told, amaze others when telling them what they see, and when returning home, glorify and praise God for what they saw and heard.

Reconciliation, as an essential dimension to human dignity and human relationships, means reaching out to all who are in situations of division, exploitation, marginalization and rejection. For Canadians in the present day, the ministry and message of reconciliation in a specific way impacts on Indigenous realities, on questions relating to earth as our common home, and on the indignities done to human life and the human person.

Jesus was placed in a manger at birth, a sign of how throughout his mission and ministry the world did not know him, his own people did not accept him, and he had no place to lay his head. In the midst of all the division, exploitation, marginalization and rejection, the Word became flesh and lived among us. It is the lesson of Christmas.

The Most Reverend Richard Gagnon
Archbishop of Winnipeg, President of the CCCB

Pastor’s Message for Christmas 2019

Dear Parishioners:  Alleluia!  “To you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.” (Luke 2:11)  God is one-with-us; Jesus is Love made real!  Welcome everyone!  We have many friends & neighbours present, students returning home – we have so many reasons to celebrate and we are so happy to see everyone here!  Our Bishop has called the entire diocesan Church to a Year of Prayer, so timely as we move into a Family of Parishes, from Goderich down to Grand Bend.  I know Bishop Fabbro’s dearest wish is that we become missionary disciples, that each one of us take responsibility for the arc of the Gospel in our lives:  I believe that the presence of the wider community today is an important sign of our openness to God.  Jesus calls to us from his manger bed, and sends us out, “glorifying and praising God for all [we have] seen and heard.” (Luke 2:20)  I am so thankful for seeing our local Churches drawing together:  last week’s Living Nativity was a treat and I look forward to St. Peter’s Lutheran hosting the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.  (Join us, if you believe in lunch!)  I thank our CWL Councils for their leadership in our parishes’ food drive for the Blessings Store and the Christmas Bureau campaign:  God bless the women who make such charity and love possible!  Our Christmas celebrations are a result of the good work of many people:  our Music Ministry, the sacristans, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, altar servers, decorators, cleaning staff and of course, our parish secretary Lori LaPorte.  Thank you one and all for your extra efforts at Christmas!  (My own personal thanks for your generous cards and gifts, prayers and Masses for my birthday and Christmas presents:  God bless you for your kindness.)  My homily this Christmas takes its focus from Pope Francis’ homily last year (http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20181224_omelia-natale.html):  pray that we can learn from – and live like – Bethlehem!  A blessed & Merry Christmas to you.

Fr. Matt