

Christmas 2014 All Are Welcome

If you are a visitor to St. Mary's, welcome! If you faithfully celebrate the Eucharist with us each week, welcome! If you only come to Mass on Christmas and Easter, welcome! All are welcome in this house. All are welcome this day when we celebrate the birth of the Savior. All are welcome because God has welcomed us in Christ. God has offered the gift of salvation to all who respond in faith and truth.

If you are filled with grief and distress this Christmas, welcome to this place of comfort and peace. If you are alienated from God, welcome to this place of reconciliation. If you are angry and wondering why you are here this evening (today), welcome to this place where we celebrate the mystery of God's love. For on this Christmas day a child is born to us, a son is given to us, a savior who is Christ the Lord. On this Christmas we rejoice that we have seen a great light. We rejoice that the eternal Son of God became man that we might share in God's life.

If you are young and idealistic, welcome to this place in which we proclaim the good news by which you can live your life to the full. If you have grown old and cynical, welcome to this place, this place where the good news of the Savior's birth can fill you with peace and joy once more. If you are alone and lonely this Christmas, welcome to this place; for here the community of Christ's faithful embraces you with love and faith.

Through the gift of his Son, God has welcomed us into his new life. Through the gift of his Son, God has welcomed us into the community of his saints. This is why all are welcome here today and every day. We welcome you because God has welcomed us in Christ. We welcome you because God has made all things new in Christ. We welcome you into the new life of Christ that has been given us this day.

That first Christmas the angel said the shepherds, “Do not be afraid, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you, who is Christ and Lord.” Today we proclaim that good news once more, for the promises and mercies of God are not exhausted. The Savior who has been born to us is the very Son of God, the one—the only one—who can change and renew our lives. That is why everyone is welcome here. That is why no one is excluded from this place. That is why we celebrate Christmas again and again.

I pray this Christmas will be a time of grace and peace for you and those whom you love. I pray that it will be a moment of change and transformation in your life. I pray you will be welcome this day, and return again and again to share and enjoy the new life that is ours in Christ. On behalf of Fr. Santiago and Deacon Art I wish each one of you a Merry Christmas. Welcome to this place!