



Dear Friends in Christ,

It is an honor and a pleasure to wish you and yours a very Merry and Blessed Christmas as we bring to close this beautiful season of Advent and anticipate the celebration of our Savior's birth. I am so pleased that you choose to worship with us here at St. Anthony Parish. I pray that our celebrations together are joy-filled, hopeful, and meaningful. Christmas is such a special time of year. If we celebrate it well, it can make all the difference for the rest of the year.

In his classic Christmas story, *The Story of the Other Wise Man*, Henry van Dyke wrote of keeping Christmas not just one day but every day: "*Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world – stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death – and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem . . . all those years ago is the image and brightness of Eternal Love? Then,*" said van Dyke, "*you can keep Christmas, and if you can keep Christmas for a day, why not keep Christmas always?*" Why not, indeed?

This Christmas, and every Christmas, we celebrate the gift of "*God-with-us*", Emmanuel. This is the ultimate gift of Christmas that gives all our other days and nights meaning, purpose, and vision. May you and yours be truly blessed this Christmas. May the New Year bring you many opportunities to experience and treasure the gift of Emmanuel, "*God-with-us*", not for a day, or even a season, but for an eternity!

On behalf of Fr. Bazil, Deacon Ted, and our wonderful and dedicated St. Anthony Parish Staff, I wish for you and yours a very Merry Christmas and much joy, good health, and deep faith throughout the New Year.

Christmas Peace+

**Fr. Tom**  
**Pastor**

