

Buzz Report

Office of Spirituality and Formation for Ministry

December 2020





MERRY CHRISTMAS!

From the Desk of Sr. Kathy...

Merry Christmas!

During this past month, I have had some time to reflect on the past year. I remember reading a poem from the Spanish poet, Juan Ramon Jimenez...it goes something like this:

*I have a feeling that my boat
has struck, down there in the depths,
against a great thing.
And nothing
happens! Nothing ... Silence ... Waves ...
Nothing happens? Or has everything happened,
and we are standing now, quietly, in the new life?*

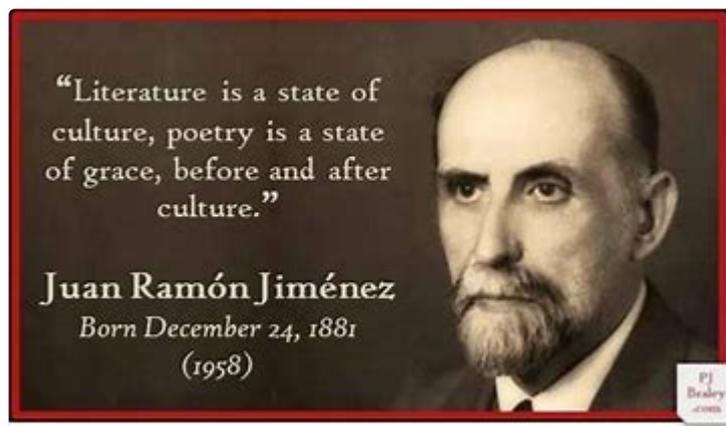
I have many feelings today. Thoughts of fear of what life will be like in 2021 and excitement that something new is about to emerge..."standing now, quietly, in the new life" I believe that as we await the commemoration of the newborn babe, we are all called to renew our faith and belief in God, Emmanuel, God with us. Jesus is ever beside us. Whenever you feel weak or insecure in your relationship with the Lord, share this with a confidant whom you trust. Ask for their advice.

Know that I will remember you in prayer during this beautiful season. May we together hold each other up...for those suffering or those who have lost a loved one this past year, for those who have no one this Christmas, for those who have no food or shelter, for those who feel unwelcomed by others who won't let them into their hearts. Believe that in 2021 something glorious is about to happen...a new relationship, a new position, whatever you most desire and it is Jesus' desire for you.... Believe my friends.

You may want to purchase Andrea Bocelli's latest CD, **Believe**, and listen to the beautiful music and words. May each of you experience the deep joy and peace of this Christmas season.

Peace and all good,

Sr. Kathy



Global News

Patris Corde

In a new Apostolic Letter entitled [*Patris corde*](#) ("With a Father's Heart"), Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows.

The Letter marks the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pope Pius IX's declaration of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. To celebrate the anniversary, Pope Francis has proclaimed a special "Year of St Joseph," beginning on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception 2020 and extending to the same feast in 2021.

The Holy Father wrote *Patris corde* against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of "ordinary" people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, "*the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence,*" who nonetheless played "*an incomparable role in the history of salvation.*"

At the conclusion of his Letter, he adds another prayer to St Joseph, which he encourages all of us to pray together:

*Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.
Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.*

[Read more.](#)



A Note About Papal Encyclicals

In our October Buzz Report, we highlighted the papal encyclical, *FRATELLI TUTTI* on fraternity and social friendship addressed by the pope to the whole Church. Encyclical letters generally address matters of faith or morals, encourage a particular commemoration or pious devotion, or deal with matters of Church discipline which are to be universally observed.

The letter (6) borrows the title of the "Admonitions" of Saint Francis of Assisi, who used these words to "address his brothers and sisters and proposed to them a way of life marked by the flavor of the Gospel" (Par 1). Many scholars believe this writing is a summary of the pope's thoughts from the past seven years. I recall reading an article last March from Vatican News about the Holy Father's message to the world concerning prayer. He said that "We are all in the same boat, fragile and disorientated, and called to row together. We cannot go

forward on our own, but only together, weathering the unexpected storm of the pandemic that is still shaking our lives and that has brought to light that common belonging from which there is no escape. Only recognizing each other as brothers and sisters, he added, can we start anew, affirming the dignity of every human person, and walking together in hope.

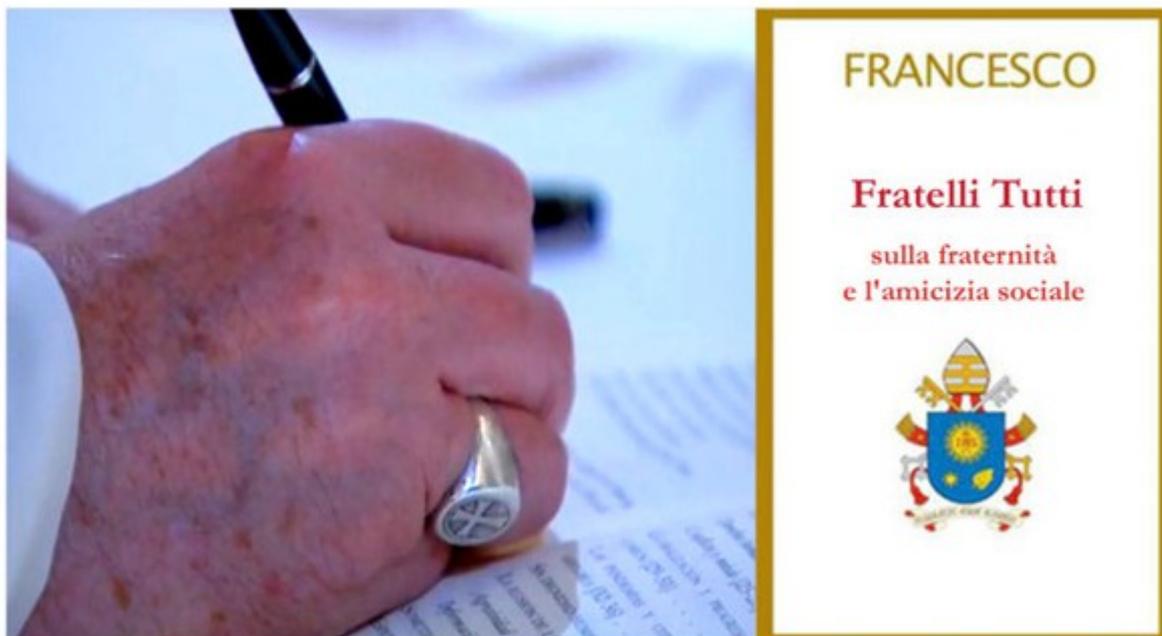
Hope will allow us to see beyond the pandemic, beyond fear and discouragement; it will help us overcome the temptation to invest in small and self-centered comforts and be open to the great ideals that make life more beautiful and the world more just.

Even a cursory reading of the Holy Father's latest encyclical might be good this Christmas of 2020.

Study of Fratelli Tutti

One of Sister Kathy's Franciscan sisters and former president of St. Bonaventure University, Sister Margaret Carney, prepared this Study Guide to **Fratelli Tutti**. It is from the Holy Father's latest Encyclical on Social Friendship. Please feel free to download from the following website.

<https://ln2.sync.com/dl/f800c9370/c37csxtg-nek6ps5q-mxvvmj72-6jmpwx33>



National News

DACA Reinstated

On December 4, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York ordered the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to reinstate the entire Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program by December 7, and to resume accepting first-time DACA applicants. Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville, auxiliary bishop of Washington and chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration issued the following statement:

"We welcome the full reinstatement of the DACA program and are particularly pleased that with this ruling, youth who are first-time applicants are allowed to apply for the program for the first time since

2017. The DACA program directly benefits immigrant youth, their families, and the communities we serve. To all Dreamers, the Catholic Church continues to stand with you and will advocate with you to ensure you reach your God-given potential here in the United States."

[Read more here.](#)



Local News

Christmas Day 2020 Spirituality Spot



Spirituality Spots with Sr. Kathy

To view her entire series, please click [here.](#)

Christmas Greetings from the Sisters of St. Francis



University of Dayton Offers New Cycle of Faith Formation Classes

The Diocese of Charleston has partnered with the University of Dayton virtual learning community to offer continuing education courses. For more information or to apply for a tuition grant, please contact Sr. Kathy Adamski, OSF at (843) 261.0498 or kadamski@charlestdioocese.org.

Registration for Cycle 1: January 3 - February 6, 2021 closes on December 30

[Click here for course descriptions or to register.](#)



Retired Religious Fund

Thank you so very much for your contributions to the Retired Religious Fund taken up on December 12-13 in parishes throughout the diocese. This fund contributes greatly to those communities who are taking care of those sisters who ministered for 50-70 years for their communities. Many of those sisters received a minimal stipend from parish schools and parish offices. For this reason, the national retirement organization has asked Catholics to contribute whatever you can. My community, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities is one such community that receives such monies. Some communities for various reasons do not have a need for this charitable foundation, but many of us do.

If it is in your heart, it is not too late to send your contribution to the

National Religious Retirement Office
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
3211 4th Street NE
Washington, DC 20017.



Photo courtesy of americamagazine.com

Prayers for the Season



Blessing of a Christmas Manger or Nativity Scene

In its present form, the custom of displaying figures depicting the birth of Jesus Christ owes its origin to St. Francis of Assisi, who made the Christmas crèche or manger for Christmas Eve of 1223.

The blessing of the Christmas manger or nativity scene may take place on the Vigil of Christmas or at another suitable time.

When the manger is set up in the home, it is appropriate that it be blessed by a parent or another family member.



All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:
Our help is in the name of the Lord.
R/. Who made heaven and earth.

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example:

Or Isaiah 7:10-15—The birth of Emmanuel.
Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.
R/. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen to the words of the holy Gospel according to Luke: **2:1-8**

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

The leader prays with hands joined:
God of every nation and people,
from the very beginning of creation
you have made manifest your love:
when our need for a Savior was great
you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin
Mary.
To our lives he brings joy and peace,
justice, mercy, and love.

Lord,
bless all who look upon this manger;
may it remind us of the humble birth of
Jesus,
and raise our thoughts to him,
who is God-with-us and Savior of all,
and who lives and reigns forever and ever.
R/. Amen.



Blessing of a Christmas Tree

The use of the Christmas tree is relatively modern. Its origins are found in the medieval mystery plays that depicted the tree of paradise and the Christmas light or candle that symbolized Christ, the Light of the world.

According to custom, the Christmas tree is set up just before Christmas and may remain in place until the Solemnity of Epiphany.

The lights of the tree are illuminated after the prayer of blessing.

When all have gathered, a suitable song may be sung.
The leader makes the sign of the cross, and all reply "Amen."

The leader may greet those present in the following words:

Let us glorify Christ our light, who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and forever.
R/. Amen.

In the following or similar words, the leader prepares those present for the blessing:

My brothers and sisters, amidst signs and wonders Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea: his birth brings joy to our hearts and enlightenment to our minds. With this tree, decorated and adorned, may we welcome Christ among us; may its lights guide us to the perfect light.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example:

Listen to the words of the Letter of St. Paul to Titus: 3:4-7

But when the kindness and generous love
of God our savior appeared,
not because of any righteous deeds we had done
but because of his mercy,
he saved us through the bath of rebirth
and renewal by the holy Spirit,
whom he richly poured out on us
through Jesus Christ our savior,
so that we might be justified by his grace
and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

Or Ezekiel 17:22-24 — I will plant a tender shoot on the mountain heights of Israel.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.
R/. Thanks be to God.

The intercessions are then said. The leader says:

Let us ask God to send his blessing upon us and upon this
sign of our faith in the Lord.

R/. Lord, give light to our hearts.



PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
R/. Amen.

—Attributed to St. Francis of Assisi

The leader says:

Let us bless the Lord.

All respond, making the sign of the cross:

Thanks be to God.

The prayer may conclude with the singing of a Christmas carol.



Catholic
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PRAYER RESOURCE

Book of the Month

With One Spirit: The Roman Missal and Active Participation by Jozef Lamberts

Commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the promulgation of *The Roman Missal* (1970), *With One Spirit* embarks on a significant investigation into the history of this text and the principles that impacted its development. In particular, Lamberts examines whether and how *The Roman Missal* encourages the active participation of the faithful in the liturgy demanded by the Second Vatican Council. Considering this pastoral and theological context, *With One Spirit* offers a commentary of the possibilities and limitations of the *Missal's* encouragement of active participation, and formulates suggestions and improvements to realize true communal Eucharistic celebrations.



Video of the Month

The Fourth Wiseman

Based on Henry van Dyke's classic, *The Story of the Other Wise Man*, this fictional story set in Biblical times is told in gently comic terms. A Magi named Artaban (Martin Sheen) sees a sign in the heavens that he hopes will lead him and his faithful servant to the Messiah. Artaban takes with him three precious gifts to present to the Messiah. For 33 years Artaban pursues Jesus, only to miss Him at every turn. Along the way, Artaban uses his gifts to help people in dire need. He now has nothing to present to the Messiah when he finds Him. The story culminates on Easter Sunday as Artaban, old and dying, finally encounters the new King, bringing peace to his life. A deeply moving experience examining what true faith really means. Director: Michael Ray Rhodes Starring: Martin Sheen, Alan Arkin, Eileen Brennan

This movie can be viewed on Prime Video or Youtube.



Factoid of the Month

Strategies for Improving Emotional Health

The National Institute of Health (NIH) offers the following three strategies during the month of December for improving your emotional health:

1. Brighten your outlook: Manage negative emotions and hold onto positive emotions.

- Remember good deeds;
- Forgive yourself;
- Spend more time with friends;
- Reflect on your beliefs about life's meaning; and
- Develop healthy physical habits.

2. Reduce stress: Learning healthy ways to cope with chronic stress can boost resilience.

- Get enough sleep;
- Exercise regularly: 30 minutes/day can make a world of difference;
- Build a support network;
- Set priorities;
- Try relaxation methods; and,
- Seek help.

3. Get quality sleep: Sleep affects both our mental and physical well-being. It is essential to allow your body to get the rest it needs to be the best version of yourself.

- Go to bed the same time each night and get up at the same time;
- Limit the use of electronic devices before bed.
- Relax before bed by meditating, reading or listening to calming music



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