

On behalf of myself and the staff here at Holy Family, I wish a Merry Christmas to all of you. May the time you get to spend with family, friends and loved ones remind you of the great love that God has for us all.

May you be given the gift of peace in your hearts and the warmth of love in your relationships.

So as the Christmas story begins to unfold for us today – as we will continue to read the story this coming week as we celebrate the feasts of Mary the Mother of God and the Epiphany, we come across a marvelous group of individuals:

- a teenage Mother
- a conscientious young carpenter.
- an egotistical emperor
- a bevy of angels
- a band of hardworking shepherds
- a trio of scholarly star gazers
- a psychopathic king
- and lest we forget – a baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes.

So I think this extensive cast of characters can lead us to conclude that God works through all kinds of people to bring about the Kingdom of God. *All kinds of people*: the young and old, the simple and sophisticated, the rich and the poor, the good and the bad.

Incredibly, each of the individuals we find in the Christmas story played a role in salvation history.

Some did this knowingly, others without a clue. Some did this through their love of goodness, others through their hatred and evil.

And the amazing thing is – God can use everyone to bring about salvation – even you and me.

And God can best use us for the building of the Kingdom if we make ourselves available by slowing down, quieting down and emptying out.

God can best use us to build the Kingdom if we are honest with ourselves and come to identify the ways that we need a savior in our lives.

God can best use us for the building of the Kingdom if we are willing to stand with like-minded people, those who, like ourselves, are doing their best to seek and find Christ in their hearts and in their lives.

God can use everyone to bring about salvation – the only question is this: “What kind of a role will we choose to play?”

Here at Holy Family we have spent four weeks with the intention of journeying to Bethlehem. And we will know if we have arrived at Bethlehem – and not just gotten to Christmas if we are able to sincerely pray on this day: “Thank you Lord Jesus – for freeing me from my sinfulness and selfishness. Now use me, in whatever way you need to build your kingdom.

May it be done to me – wholly according to your will. AMEN!”