

PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE : CHRISTMAS AND THE HOLY FAMILY - *'God's Gracious Blessings!'*

26 / 27 December 2009

Dear Friends

As we celebrate Christmas and the Feast of the Holy Family, our minds turn to our own families and the great Feast of Christ's Birth, our reason for coming together, our presence at Mass a chance to be welcomed and touched by the Christian Community and to pray with our families and those we know.

Wherever or however you find yourself in these days – in your regular parish, visiting on holidays, coming together with family or friends, or simply returning to Mass for the first time in a long while – we hope that this Christmas will be filled with God's special blessings of peace and that you will enjoy happiness and good health in the New Year. At Christmas, we realise how much our God enjoys us, shown so beautifully in the gift of Jesus, his Word of love and joy. The approval of Blessed Mary MacKillop's second miracle paving the way for her being declared a Saint, and the declaration of Pope John Paul II as 'Venerable', are reminders that this is where God wants us – in this world and this Church – this is our time, the best time – each of us able to live and model the Christian life for one another.

Each of us is at a different stage on his/her faith journey. Some feel a close bond with the Parish Community and the wider Church, while others may feel at a distance. For those who have been away from the church, there are complexities and demands that can make regular worship difficult. Yet all of us are part of Christ and without your presence here, we are all the poorer.

Every one of us needs to go forward in our relationship with Christ. This can be done very simply by joining in the Parish Eucharist on Sundays, but also in other ways – by becoming involved in a school or parish group such as social justice, St Vincent de Paul, or various help groups that serve the community and care for those in need.

Whatever you choose, we pray that the joy and communion shared in these days will affirm you and help you to remain an active part of our faith community. May you enjoy God's most special graces at Christmas and be blessed personally and in your family with the rich gift of life given us in Jesus.

Fr Dave