



# Glory to God

in the highest, and on earth peace,  
good will toward men. *Luke 2:14*

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Christmas season brings back memories of childhood with beloved family and friends. In a sense, we return to a familiar place on December 25, as well as during the four preceding weeks (known as Advent) when we celebrate the birth of Christ at Bethlehem.

We are privileged to share in the wonderful human efforts to acknowledge our Christmas celebrations. Throughout the world, over the course of centuries, many have recognized the meaning of Christmas by writing hymns to be sung, inspiring artwork, or decorating Christmas trees to honor the birth of Christ the Savior.

In Chicago, no less, we are graced by such undertakings. Right alongside our beautiful lakefront, at the Griffin Museum of Science and Industry, the exhibit "*Christmas Around the World and Holidays of Light*" beckons us to behold the meaning of Christmas. Over 50 trees are at the museum highlighting the universality of our celebration. One of the trees at the museum is decorated according to the Hungarian tradition, with "szaloncukor" and "mézeskalács". We say to each other, "Boldog Karácsonyt" (Merry Christmas) as we are invited into the "sacred presence" of such a beautiful display.

Another Christmas decoration besides the tree, is the creche or manger depicting Christ's birth. May dear friends, you are invited to join our community this Christmas to see not only our nativity scene but also worship with us to thank the Lord for his coming among us. As Pope Francis tells us "Life was made manifest (1 Jn. 1:2) to us by the mystery of the Incarnation" (*Admirabile signum*).

St. Paul once wrote "He loved us (1 Jn. 1:2). Ultimately, if we are truly searching beyond the superficialities of life, we see that Christmas is a time of encounter, when our God who is love is reaching out to us to love us. In this time in history, we are awakening to the fact that the baptized are called to be mission disciples (Pope Francis' *Evangeliu Gaudium*) who not only experience God's love but invite others into this great mystery. Further, in his recent encyclical on the Sacred Heart, *Dilexit Nos*, Pope Francis reiterates this insightful point of God's deep love for humanity.

Again, as always, I appreciate any gesture of generosity towards St. Stephen of Hungary Mission for such financial assistance affords us the capacity to continue as a presence in the Chicagoland area and beyond.

The Mass schedule for Christmas and New Year's Day is:

- Wednesday, December 25th- 10:00AM
- Wednesday, January 1st - 10:00AM

Wishing you All a Blessed Christmas and a prosperous, Happy New Year for 2025!

Father James