



## FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE

Today, with the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord we conclude the joyous season of Christmas. May the truth of Emmanuel, God with us be our truth shared with our sisters and brothers in our lived faith in Jesus Christ.

Many thanks to all who made the liturgies of the Christmas season joyous and prayerful. Thanks to the members of the Art and Environment Committee for creating the beautiful setting to enrich our prayer. Thanks to John Chapman for coordinating the music, the cantors and musicians for raising our voices to the Lord in sung prayer. Thanks to Bill Gorczynski, Gustavo Garcia and Nataliya Senechyn for helping keep the grounds and church open and safe for our shared prayer. Thanks to Lake Forest Flowers, John Looby, and Eileen Looby Weber for enhancing the sanctuary with the beautiful crèche and trees and flowers lifting our spirits to God in joyful prayers this Christmas season.

We did and will continue to take precautions so that all parishioners, visitors, family, and guests are able to worship together during these trying days. You are asked to please use your masks whenever you are in the church with others. Thanks to all of you who have generously supported the Church of St. Mary with a contribution to the parish at Christmas. May each and every one of the parishioners prayerfully reflect on their support of the Church of St. Mary, not only at Christmas, but throughout the year.

Catholic Relief Services works with organizations around the world to help poor and vulnerable people overcome emergencies, earn a living through agriculture, and access affordable health care. (Information about their many services are available at **CRS.org**) The agency focuses on faith, action and results:

**Faith:** Faith is our foundation. We have faith in the people we serve and our shared ability to build a more just and peaceful world.

**Action:** The desire to serve is not enough. We must act collaboratively to bring about real improvements in peoples' quality of life and genuine engagement in building peace and justice.

**Results:** Demonstrated through measurable outcomes, our actions must be effective in alleviating human suffering, removing root causes and empowering people to achieve their full potential.

The following Prayer of Epiphany was shared with people from Catholic Relief Services:

*Lord of all nations,  
We longed to see your face, to hear your voice.  
We kept the faith, and reached out in prayer  
but too often, we failed to find you.*

*And then, one day at a time,  
you placed yourself within reach  
in the person of a child as vulnerable as any of us.*

*King and peasant beheld you—man and woman, slave and free  
Jew and Gentile, for you had come for all.*

*“Epiphany” we called it. A living manifestation of the God we call upon.*

*We have since known other epiphanies:  
we have met you in the faces of our brothers, the grace of our sisters,  
the hand that reaches out, the heart that weeps for the other,  
in the strength of one who protects, in the gentleness of one who forgives.  
We have seen your face. We have heard your voice.*

*As broken as we are—as scared and hollowed and sinful—  
may others see something of you in us, may they hear the sound of your voice.  
May you be revealed to all nations, all peoples on earth, and may epiphanies abound.*

*Be born in us, O Lord. Amen.*

May God bless you in 2022!