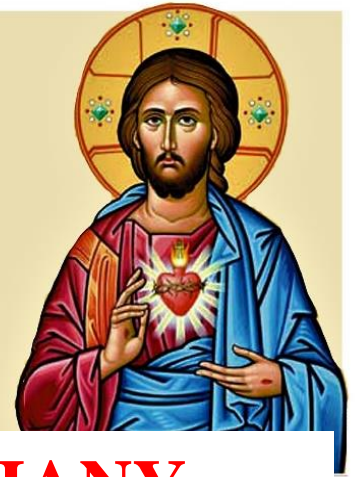


# SACRED HEART HEARTBEAT

ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH



## THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

January 4/5, 2020

### COMING SPECIAL EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

January 4/5 – Solemnity of the Epiphany

*In this Vicariate, this is a Holy Day of Obligation*

January 10 – Pilgrimage to the Baptismal Site

January 11 – First Communion Class resumes

January 11/12 – The Baptism of the Lord

January 13 – Meeting of the Parish Advisory Council

January 18 – Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity begins

January 22 – Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children

January 25 – Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul

January 30 – Birthday of His Majesty King Abdullah II

February 2 – Solemnity of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple

Candles will be blessed during Mass, and throats will be blessed after Mass

February 3 – St. Blaise, throats will be blessed after the morning Mass



Pope Francis'

MONTHLY  
PRAYER  
INTENTIONS

### FOR JANUARY

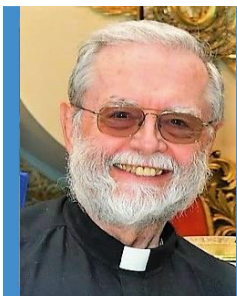
Prayer intention for Evangelisation

### Promotion of World Peace

We pray that Christians, followers of other religions, and all people of goodwill may promote peace and justice in the world.

### ADVENT BASKETS

As of January 1, there are still 30 Advent Basket cans outstanding. We would like to get as many in as possible soon so we can make a preliminary count and plan for activities in the next months. Cans may be brought to any Mass or dropped off at the Jesuit Center. Thank you for your generosity.



# RAMBLINGS

## OF THE REVEREND REDACTOR

I ran into a very dear friend of mine the other day. She is a serious and dedicated Catholic, full of energy and a spirit of giving all year long that makes most Christmas generosity seem pale by comparison. I asked her how she was doing – this was a couple of days after Christmas – and she said, “I hate Christmas.” I told her she was probably not alone in that feeling, although perhaps for different reasons.

You are allowed to hate Christmas. It doesn't make you a bad person, you are not turning into Ebenezer Scrooge or the Grinch, and you will not be denied entry to heaven. Part of the problem is that with everyone around you being jolly and happy and full of “Christmas cheer” – or pretending like mad, if they're not – most people don't feel they can express the opinion that they “hate” Christmas. So they smile and make the appropriate noises, and run the necessary errands, buy the important presents – and all the while their sole wish is for the whole season to be over and done with as quickly as possible.

It is important to be very clear about what you are hating. I suspect for most people who would share the sentiment, they don't hate Jesus. They don't hate the idea that God loves us and sent His Son to be our Savior. And sometimes they can't easily explain what it is they do hate.

For some people Christmas has unhappy memories. A loved one who died around this time, and perhaps even very recently. Other bad experiences associated with this time of the year may surface. Some find the pressure to buy presents difficult, and the traffic and the crowds and the constant barrage of advertisements can very effectively kill the “Christmas spirit.” Some people feel – not without evidence – that too much of the season is hypocritical. (Reminds me of a line from a Tom Lehrer song about Christmas: “The Christmas cheer you can't ignore - Your fellow man you must adore – you've time to hate him all the more, the other three hundred and sixty-four.”) Expectations are high as “Merry Christmas” gets repeated again and again.

I don't know why my friend “hates” Christmas; I suspect it was a combination of family pressures and the contrast between what Christmas used to be, what society used to be, and how very different things are as we ease our way into 2020. I know she doesn't really hate Christmas because decorating is a passion and her joy in life is too obviously giving things to others and doing things for others and that's not just at Christmas but throughout the year. I was flattered that she felt comfortable enough to say that to me, to vent her frustration.

But notice that in everything I have said – the Baby Jesus was never really mentioned. Whether we share my friend's frustration or not, it is too easy to be distracted by all the trimmings and parties and decorations that start in October and create great expectations for “Christmas” – and that word alone has a range of meanings today. It is important that the focus – the “real” meaning – remains the Birth of Jesus Christ. Without that, the presents don't matter, the tree isn't important, the parties are boring and it is very easy to find ourselves “hating” Christmas. If Christ is not the center of Christmas – for all the days of the year – you're in trouble.

So make sure you know what Christmas means to you – what you want it to mean – and keep that firmly in view. The reason for the season? God loves you so much that He sent His Son. That's the whole thing.

And let us continue to pray for one another.

Fr. John's Email: [pastorsh@jordanjesuits.org](mailto:pastorsh@jordanjesuits.org) Website: [Jordanjesuits.org](http://Jordanjesuits.org)

Fr. John's Mobile: 079 013-8985 (If no answer, leave a message.)

**Facebook:** If you are on Facebook, go to Parish Group and ask to be admitted to the group. You will be.



## 2020 CALENDARS

The 2020 edition of the Sacred Heart Parish Calendar is available and we are proud to note that the price remains the same as last year. And the year before that. A calendar is always useful, and they make great gifts. They also let people in other places know something of what your parish here is all about. Support our advertisers and the work of the parish. Available at all the Masses and at the Jesuit Center.

1 Calendar – 2 JOD

3 Calendars – 5 JOD (1 calendar is half off)

7 Calendars – 10 JOD (You get 2 calendars free!)

15 Calendars – 20 JOD (5 Free Calendars!!!)

Such a deal!!!

## MASS ATTENDANCE IN DECEMBER

	Sweifiah	Jesuit Ctr	Freres
Total	987*	353**	169
Average	187	14	34

\* - Includes Christmas Eve

\*\* - Includes Christmas Day

## WEBSITE TRAFFIC - DECEMBER

In the month of December we had 2,638 visitors who made 8,032 visits to one or more pages on our website. Both visitor numbers and the pages visited are about twice what they were for the month of November. Consistently most visits come from computers registered in the US, 2/3 of that number from people in Jordan and slightly more than one-third of the Jordanian visitors come from Germany. Google is far and away the major sources of referrals, with more coming through that servers than all others combined.

## OTHER STATISTICAL BITS

For those who like to keep track of such things, during Advent 57 people received the daily reflections, there are 51 who are members of our Facebook page "Parish Group," and 178 who receive HEARTBEAT electronically on a weekly basis. This year there are 14 candidates in the First Communion class, 13 individuals who serve on the Parish Advisory Council, and 27 who have indicated an interest in the Care for the Poor group.



## NOEL

Grim was the world and grey last night:  
The moon and stars were fled,  
The hall was dark without song or light,  
The fires were fallen dead.  
The wind in the trees was like to the sea,  
And over the mountains' teeth  
It whistled bitter-cold and free,  
As a sword leapt from its sheath.

The lord of snows upreared his head;  
His mantle long and pale  
Upon the bitter blast was spread  
And hung o'er hill and dale.  
The world was blind, the boughs were bent,  
All ways and paths were wild:  
Then the veil of cloud apart was rent,  
And here was born a Child.

The ancient dome of heaven sheer  
Was pricked with distant light;  
A star came shining white and clear  
Alone above the night.  
In the dale of dark in that hour of birth  
One voice on a sudden sang:  
Then all the bells in Heaven and Earth  
Together at midnight rang.

Mary sang in this world below:  
They heard her song arise  
O'er mist and over mountain snow  
To the walls of Paradise,  
And the tongue of many bells was stirred  
in Heaven's towers to ring  
When the voice of mortal maid was heard,  
That was mother of Heaven's King.

Glad is the world and fair this night  
With stars about its head,  
And the hall is filled with laughter and light,  
And fires are burning red.  
The bells of Paradise now ring  
With bells of Christendom,  
And Gloria, Gloria we will sing  
That God on earth is come.

The lovely poem to the left was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and was written by J.R.R. TOLKIEIN, the author of *The Lord of the Rings*. He was a Catholic, but seldom wrote publicly about his faith, and this poem was recently discovered in the 1936 edition of an annual publication of Our Lady's School in Oxfordshire.

On December 31<sup>st</sup> I got a phone call from a woman who said she was standing outside our door and wanted a stamp for her passport. I had no idea what she meant, so I went downstairs.

Her name is Joanna, and she walked to Jordan from Switzerland, on her way to Jerusalem. She is taking part in a pilgrimage program, and the stamp is the evidence that she reached different stages on her journey. It is a spiritual exercise – but she is on her 4<sup>th</sup> pair of shoes. We invited her in for coffee and a chat and a blessing for the remainder of her trip.

