



Fr. Sam's Christmas Message

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; on the inhabitants of a country in shadow dark as death light has blazed forth." Isaiah 9:1

I remember one day as a young boy in Kenya, I was traveling at night from the market centre in my village to home. Let me try to give you a clear picture of this small village in Kenya, Africa. My village is called Kalampton. It's a farm village where each house is about 5 acres or more from another house. There is no electricity or running water. All roads are dirt — no cement. Water comes from a common well or rain water. On this particular night it had rained and it was very dark. I could not see at all where I was going or stepping. There was a lot of mud because of the rain. I was walking with bare feet because at that time my shoes were for going to church -- not for everyday. I was walking very slowly and was being careful not to fall. Because I could not see very well, I collided with someone coming from the other direction. I was scared to death! I just started running and hoped I did not step in a hole.

I believe the people the prophet was addressing in Isaiah understood how important light was. The physical darkness I experienced in Kenya reminds us of a deeper reality of spiritual darkness. A lot of things have happened in the world this year. Several countries have struggled with political changes such as Egypt, Libya and some in the Arabs nations. These people have lived under a dictatorship for many years and they are now trying to find their way out of it. Here, at home, a lot of people are still looking for jobs, the economy has not been very promising and some have struggled to meet their utility, credit card or mortgage bills. There are those who have lost loved ones or are facing terminal illness. Someone

told me, "father, anything which could have gone wrong has gone wrong for me". It's like hitting a wall.

"The angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Look, I bring you good news of great joy, a joy to be shared the whole people. Today in the town of David, a savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.'" Luke 2: 10-11.

I have been blessed to celebrate several weddings this year. It has been a moment of joy for the couple and a sign of new beginnings. We have celebrated hundreds of baptisms in our church this year. Every time the child cries in church, it is a sign of joy. There is life and newness. In the midst of darkness there is life. Christmas reminds us of that. I love the spirit of giving that comes during Christmas. Most of us are very generous during Christmas. It began with Jesus himself — he gave himself to us. We are more like God when we give. Christ asked us to identify with the poor, those who are in need. He asked us to identify with those who are hungry, imprisoned, naked, strangers and sick. As we celebrate Christmas, let us remember what Christmas is all about — the son of God and the reasons why he came.

Last year I went to Kenya with one of our parishioners and this year I will again travel to Kenya with three other people from our parish. We shall leave on Dec 27th. They will return after two weeks, but I will remain for another week after that. The high point of my travel is when we celebrate mass with the whole parish (all 7 local churches will gather together in a soccer field to have mass). We shall be honored to open the church we helped roof last year and celebrate the mass in that church for the first time. They are still working on the walls and the floor, but they have a beautiful new roof. Thanks be to God! I'm so happy to share this moment with some of our parishioners as you are my primary family in the Lord. I will be back on January 18th. Please keep us in your prayers.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,

Fr. Sam