

Christmas Message: 2025



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“Emmanuel” ‘God is with us’

The tendency to use names that are expressive of human reality to indicate some peculiarity or trait of character is very unique within each cultural milieu. The family names we use today originated from words that once carried particular meanings. All Biblical names have a meaning, and when you read the Scriptures, it will always help you have a better understanding and appreciation of the uniqueness of names.

Emmanuel, “God is with us” opens practically the Gospel of Matthew. In the last verse of the Gospel, Jesus declares to his disciples “I am with you always; yes, to the end of time” [Mt 28:20]. Matthew tells us indirectly that the greatest revelations among others given to us by Jesus Christ is the stupendous fact that God is present to all of us—always present and will always be present to us. The question arises: Do we realize that God is always in our lives, in our world and in all the circumstances of our daily lives?

God is present - even in our struggles. He never promised us a stress-free life. Rather, he is with us and will always assist us in overcoming our difficulties and challenges. Thus, we have no reason to despair in any situation because “God is with us”. He is Emmanuel. He is with us, lighting up our lives.

During the Christmas season, we see in Christ the one who has come to share in our suffering humanity. People come to him with great expectation and with hope that he will assist them in overcoming their sufferings and pains. We recall the inexhaustible and gratuitous love of God. The Christmas period is an opportunity to know that Christ has come among us [John 10:10]; a time to remember that God shares our joys and sorrows; a time to rejoice in hope of eternal life that Jesus brings to each of us. Another opportunity is being offered to us to show greater love and solidarity to those in need of our assistance. It is a season when Christ faithful are called to show a greater sense of responsibility in our dealings with one another.

This joyful period amid our current situation calls us to a sincere acceptance of God’s will and to re-dedicate ourselves once more to his service in this changing world. Conscious of the globalized and pluralistic nature of our present society, we are reminded to bear authentic witness to the Gospel truth and values—in humble



acceptance and surrender to the will of God who created and called us as his sons and daughters, irrespective of our imperfections.

Once again, in the spirit of Christmas, may I extend my warmest wishes to each of you. Christmas is a time of love and shared moments of joy, and it is my deepest desire to celebrate this special occasion with you, my esteemed members of our parish community. This celebration reminds us of the profound values that unite us in our common mission of sharing the message of the Gospel. The bonds we have formed and the collaborative efforts we have initiated through various pastoral activities this year have strengthened the fabric of our parish community. Through our collective efforts and commitments, we have continued to give birth to many initiatives that have enriched our faith, strengthened our Christian community and reinvigorated our common desire to be effective means of God's mercy and forgiveness to one another.

Thus, may this season of Christmas be a time of peace and goodwill for you and your loved ones. May this spirit of joy and harmony prevail in your homes and among everyone you may meet during this season, fostering a sense of unity and understanding.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the meaningful works that have been accomplished in the service of our Christian community. Your dedication to the mission and shared values of our community has made a positive impact on the lives of many. As we look forward to a new year filled with possibilities, may the joy of Christmas inspire us to continue our shared mission of fostering unity and peace throughout our parish community.

Thank you for your tireless efforts, commitments, and contributions to our shared mission and values. To our numerous volunteers—both visible and invisible—we pray that the newborn Christ will bless you, your families, and friends. May this Christmas be the gentle dawn of a new chapter in your life—where hope blossoms, joy takes root, and every day feels like a fresh beginning. Just as the season renews the earth with light and warmth, may your heart be renewed with peace, love, and endless possibilities. Wishing you a Christmas filled with new life and a New Year brimming with beautiful growth.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Fr. Francis Chidi Ezenezi

Pastor: Saint Peter the Apostle Roman Catholic Parish

North Bay, ON

December 22, 2025

