

CHRISTMAS 2023

# A SAVIOR IS BORN!

MY DEAR SISTERS AND BROTHERS IN JESUS,

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!** I have a lot of memories of Christmas seasons spent in my younger years. Those memories make me feel nostalgic – and yet they always put a smile on my face. I remember our Christmas tree that was made of branches from an ordinary tree in the backyard. (We did not have fir nor pine trees in our area.) My mom would decorate it with “faux snow” she created out of dried soap suds, and the dust from the suds would make us sneeze every time we got close to the Christmas tree. She would hang plenty of hard candies from the branches, but we were not allowed to pick them until Christmas morning. And then we had a beautiful tradition of holding Novena Masses (9 days) before Christmas. We would wake up at 3AM and walk 3 miles to the church to celebrate Holy Mass at 4AM. It was called “Simbang Gabi” or Misa de Gallo (Dawn Mass as the rooster crows). Christmas season was always a fun and exciting time.

Something I did not understand about Christmas back then was the fact that Jesus was born in a manger. I thought the word “manger” was something beautiful because it was part of a song. Only later did I realize what a manger was: a feeding trough for animals! The new-born King was placed in a trough! It was a picture of poverty – the poverty of God. They always say, “there is no place like home”. Home is the place for comfort and safety. Yet, when the Savior of the world was born – the one to whom everything belongs – there was no room available for Him. Mary gave birth in an animals’ den, and her Baby was put in a trough. The circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus says a lot about His life and mission.

Jesus, the Savior, born not in a comfortable home but in a manger speaks to us about life’s meaning and purpose. When Jesus came into the world, he offered a reversal of values and called us to look for things that do not perish: the treasures of the Kingdom of Heaven. His poverty was not limited to just being born in a manger. His true poverty was brought about by the rejection that He faced while He was on earth. St. John put it this way, “He came to what was His own, and His own people did not accept Him.” (John 1:11) The Gospel of St. Luke was not just about God’s Son being born in a poor place but a revelation of what was to happen to this child when He grows up and embarks on His ministry. People who once followed Him would reject Him. (Sadly, some people still reject Him, believers and non-believers alike. Some do not even want to hear the words “Merry Christmas” these days. We pray for them.)

As Christians, we are not to be driven by the values of this world. We are in the world but not of the world. We must break away from those ideologies that do not conform with the words of Jesus. He came into the world to **SAVE THE WORLD**, not to condemn the world. But He came **NOT TO CONDONE** the world either. Jesus may have been born in a manger, yet His poverty and humility showed us the way to live our lives. I am glad we still celebrate Christmas every year. We get reminded that **JESUS** is the **REASON FOR CHRISTMAS**. He took upon Himself our humanity, so we may experience the blessings of His divinity. It is all because of His great love for you and for me. So, let us rejoice and be grateful – we have Jesus who was born to save us. **HAVE A BLESSED AND MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

In Jesus and Mary,  
FR. ROMY

# CHRISTMAS 2023



## GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

**Help and encouragement after the death of a loved one.  
GriefShare is a special weekly seminar and support group designed to help you  
rebuild your life. We know it hurts, and we want to help.**

January 2nd - March 26th 2024 at St. Theresa Parish  
Tuesdays, 12:00PM-2:00PM or 6:00PM- 8:00PM

Register: [griefshare.org](http://griefshare.org)

For more information call Maureen Schaaf at 602-840-0850 ext. 113 or email [mschaaf@stphx.org](mailto:mschaaf@stphx.org).

## Families for Caring Christmas Program

Thank you to each and every one of our generous parishioners who added to Christmas joy by giving to our less fortunate neighbors through our giving tree and delivering gifts. Merry Christmas to you all!



Thank you to all of our parishioners who support our St. Vincent de Paul Ministry! Next weekend, December 30 and 31, will be the 5th Sunday of the month when SVdP collects donations to assist the needy within our parish. Thank you for your continued generosity with helping our neighbors in need, as the 5th Sunday collection is SVdP's main source of funds. Because of your monetary and food drive support over the last 3 months our SVdP conference was able to help 501 neighbors with \$18,355 in food, \$15,575 in rent, and \$4,700 in utilities. Next weekend, donations can be given to SVdP volunteers who will be at the doors of the Church after each Mass. Checks should be made payable to "St. Theresa SVdP." Donations can also be placed in the poor boxes in the church or mailed to:

St. Theresa Parish - Attention: St. Vincent de Paul  
5045 East Thomas Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85018

It is through your gifts that our hands are filled with these gifts. St. Theresa Parish Community... you have provided help, created hope, and served many!

## 2023 Parish Year-End Giving From an IRA

There is an excellent charitable giving option that St. Theresa Parish families have used for their annual tithing to the Parish. If you are 70 ½ or older and must take required minimum distributions from a traditional IRA, a qualified charitable distribution (or QCD transfers) from your IRA allows you to support St. Theresa Parish without recognizing the income or paying any income tax. Please contact your accountant or Cheryl Lienau at 602-359-0570 if you want to explore this gifting option. Thank you for your ongoing generosity and support of St. Theresa Parish and the many ministries that serve our parish community and beyond.

**If you are visiting us for Christmas Mass,  
consider making St. Theresa Parish your spiritual home.**

**All Are Welcome!**

**If we can answer any questions for you, please contact us at 602-840-0850  
or email us at [info@sttheresaphx.org](mailto:info@sttheresaphx.org).**

## CHRISTMAS 2023



### St. Theresa Parish

5045 East Thomas Road ~ Phoenix, Arizona 85018

[stphx.org](http://stphx.org)

• **Pastor:** Fr. Romy Dionisio • **Associate Pastor:** Fr. John Udochukwu

• **Deacons:** Colin F. Campbell & Mark Kriese

#### LITURGY SCHEDULE

**Sunday Mass:** 4:00PM Saturday (Vigil Mass); 7:00AM, 9:00AM, 11:00AM and 5:00PM.

**Weekday Mass:** Monday through Friday at 6:30AM and Saturday at 8:00AM.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation:** Wednesday 5:00PM-6:00PM, Saturday 9:00AM-10:00AM, and by appointment.

**Eucharistic Adoration:** Thursday from 9:00AM-9:00PM in the Convent Chapel

#### Special Thanks To Our Bulletin Advertisers

We would like to extend a “special thank you” to all of the parishioners and friends of St. Theresa Parish who support the publication of our parish bulletin by placing an advertisement for their business or professional services in our weekly bulletin. It is through their generosity and support that we are able to share with you important parish news along with various ministry opportunities in our community and the Diocese. Thanks again to all of our bulletin advertisers for your continued patronage – may God bless you and your businesses!



**2024-2025 Applications Open Now!**

**Preschool through 8th Grade**

**For more information please contact Kathleen Peterson in the School Office at 602-840-0010.**

[STCS.US](http://STCS.US)