

Dec. 9, 2018

Thoughts from the pastor,

Just over two weeks to Christmas. Mary & Joseph would be getting ready for their trip to Bethlehem. I'm guessing they packed lighter than I do when I am traveling. Considering the terrain they would have to go through they would have been able to do 5-10 miles per day. It would certainly have been difficult for Mary to walk. Even if she rode a donkey like so many pictures show, it would still have been slow going. Donkeys don't walk very fast. I mention this because we tend to get stressed out with all the preparations we have for Christmas. We have all sorts of things to be worried about. They would have had to worry about robbers. Hopefully they traveled with relatives to their destination. There would have been a fair number heading to Bethlehem. I know this because we hear that the inn was full. This would have given them safety in numbers on the way, even though it didn't help them once they got to Bethlehem. I love thinking about these kinds of things.

As you are figuring out the last of your Christmas giving, I thought that I had better give you an idea of what is happening in the parish. We just ordered two big air-conditioning units for the Parish Hall. We probably won't be needing them for a couple months, but they won't be installed for a few months anyway. We had a couple bids for them but the price we accepted was for \$72,000. The good news is that we have that much in savings. The bad news is that the roof over the Parish Hall is starting to leak as bad as the church before the new metal shingles were put up. We have been waiting on finishing that work in order to see what was needed vs. what we hoped for. Now those two things are coming closer and closer. We had hope to do the whole thing in one piece with the flat roof over the Church, which insurance will pay for. We also hoped that part of the Parish Hall roof would last longer. It won't. The high end of this project would be about \$250,000. We only have one fourth of that left in savings after the air-conditioners, which have to be replaced. So if you are looking for a place for a nice Christmas gift, this would be spot. Otherwise I will keep moving my computer so raindrops don't keep falling on its keyboard. The Parish Hall is 19 years old.

Another thing that we have been waiting on was skylights. These will be paid for by the insurance from the hailstorm but have been slowed down because we couldn't find a company to make them and guarantee them. The company that made the ones we have was finally tracked down and have let us know that they will do their thing again.

The air-conditioning work won't happen for a while. The roofing work will now have to be soon. To save my computer, I will give the first \$1,000. I will be working with the Archdiocese to get permission to get a loan if that becomes necessary, which may be the case. That is just part of my Christmas message. The rest will be from Jesus and is better news. He has come to save us. He just isn't bringing cash.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank