



Grand Prelate's Monthly Message

JANUARY 2024

Happy New Year, Sir Knights,

2023 has come to a close and we are now in a new year. We have just finished celebrating Christmas, and commemorating the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. That incredible moment when the invisible God becomes visible in Jesus and changes everything.

Now, as we move into 2024, let us not get caught in the trap of leaving Jesus in the manger. To understand the significance of his birth, you must understand his life, and move from the cradle to the cross, to the resurrection, and to the life-changing significance that this holds for every single person alive today.

Perhaps the best way to do that is to follow the advice of legendary football coach Vince Lombardi. In July of 1961, Lombardi kicked off the first day of training camp for the Green Bay Packers with the words, "Gentlemen, this is a football!" He then had everyone open their playbooks and start on page one, where they worked on the basic fundamentals: blocking, tackling, passing, etc. The point, to get back to the basics and build from the ground up. To keep the center thing the center.

For us, that center is Jesus. To get back to the basics, we need to go back farther than the birth of Christ, and the genealogies shared with us in Matthew and Luke's Gospels. Instead, go to John's Gospel, which begins with "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1). This is a statement that pre-dates time itself. And it gives us a plan for keeping to the basics: The Word of God. Let us commit to making the Word of God something that we focus on during our daily lives. In doing so, we will be able to keep Christ in the center of our lives.

We have just celebrated the assurance that the baby born in the manger would be Immanuel, God with us (Matthew 1:23). God's abiding presence is not restricted to Christmas. That promise of God being with us in the beginning of Matthew, is still there when the book ends in chapter 28, when the Great Commission assures us that Jesus is with us still, and will be until the end of time.

So, as we leave Christmas and the old year behind us, we can move forward into the new year, knowing the Jesus is still with us, and that should give us the confidence to serve others as we carry the Light of Christ into the world.

Always and All Ways in Christ,

Rick Saunders
Grand Prelate