

St. James Catholic Church

148 Grenville St
Woodbridge NJ 07095-1812

Phone 732-634-0500
Fax 732-602-1487

December, 2008

Dear St. James Vietnamese Community,

Peace be with you as the Advent Season, and the beginning of the New Church Year, commences. I pray your community may continue to prosper and grow under the gentle and compassionate care of Fr. Peter and myself. I am blessed to be called to be the pastor of St. James Catholic Community and I am pleased that you are an important part of this community. I really appreciate your faithfulness and support over these past six years that I have been administrator of our parish.

I pray for you often as I know you are the present day descendents of the Catholics who have suffered torments of various kinds for your faith and fidelity to the cross of Christ, and bore witness to Christ's Church and true religion. I was happy that Pope John Paul II on June 19, 1988 declared one hundred seventeen Vietnamese martyrs to be among the ranks of the Saints.

Many of you are, in my eyes, saints of God for your love for our Lord Jesus and his Blessed Mother and for how you bear one another's burdens in love. I know you believe that true strength lies in self-surrounding love. I know that Jesus makes us true disciples in every trial we face.

My prayer for you this new year is: "By your perseverance you will secure your lives." May you persevere in the process of becoming the person of Christ." From the beginning of the world Christ has been suffering in all his people; for He is the beginning and the end, veiled in the law, revealed in the Gospel, one Lord, ever wonderful in his saints, in whom he both suffers and triumphs."

May you continue to know that joy which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit and the infallible sign of the presence of God.

I have seen and felt God's presence in you – in your beautiful and reverent celebration of the Holy Eucharist, in the lovely music your choir and musicians use to worship God, in the care of your leadership for all members, old and young, and your sacrifices to support your parish. Each time we unite in love, joy and peace in community with others, the living Lord is in our midst, a sign and foretaste of heaven.

I have very much enjoyed every time I have attended the New Year celebrations with your community. It is a friendly, festive day of joy and truly a family holiday! May the new year be a great festival of family reunions and celebrations with special foods, new clothes and new beginnings. The music, dance and storytelling made it a delight for me. The beautiful clothes and the spirit of happiness and joy lifted my spirits, renewed and refreshed me.

May your large church family pray for good fortune, prosperity, good health and happiness as you begin this new year. My best to each of you and know that I am grateful for all you do for our parish and our priests and people. God will reward all the good you do in secret. Let us pray for one another and for all who make up the blessed family of St. James Catholic community.

"Come, Lord Jesus, live in us and let us see you in each person we meet."

Blessings & Grace
Fr. Charlie Ciccarele
Pastor -