**CHRISTMAS 2015, DECEMBER 25 Love begets love.**

**“For a child is born to us, a son is given to us.” Isaiah**

**Readings: Isaiah 9:1-6; Psalm 96:1-2,2-3, 11-12, 13; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14.**

The readings of Christmas are so familiar to all. Yet, they are most precious in their retelling. We do not tire of the angels, the shepherds, the light and the darkness, the wonder and the awe. The readings expel us from our present situation and declare, nothing will ever be the same. A child is born!

Isaiah announces that “the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light”. A light that brings people “abundant joy and great rejoicing”. The psalmist continues that we must “Sing to the Lord a new song, … announce his salvation day after day. Tell his glory among the nations; among all peoples, his wondrous deeds.” St. Paul, writing to Titus completes this story as he assures us that “The grace of God appeared to all” and calls us to “reject old ways” and to be “eager to do what is good”. Luke tells the story, THE CHRISTMAS STORY, the one we love, the one that makes us smile, the one that changed our world, the world, forever. “Mary gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger.” And then, the Angel appears to the shepherds assuring them and us of the “good news of great joy…a savior has been born for you.”

**REFLECTION AND ACTION**

Over the last couple of years, I have been blessed and my siblings have been blessed with several grandchildren. You may have even heard me say, “You can’t have too many grandbabies!” Each and every child born is a miracle of life, of goodness, of our history, of our future. Excitement peaks as the birth draws near or surprises us. After the birth, we marvel at the beauty of each child, the exquisite fingers and toes, the beautiful eyes, the similarity to mom or dad or both. We are awed as a child accommodates disabilities. We tell and retell the story of the labor and delivery, of the child’s accomplishments of cooing and feeding. Babies bring out the love in each of us. However, after I had my first child, I remember feeling that I couldn’t love more. I was sure I was at capacity loving my spouse and my son. Then came my second child and I experienced the miracle. I could love more, there was enough love for even for a third child and after many years, their spouses and grandbabies. Each child calls forth our capacity to love and expands our capacity to love.

I feel the same way about Christmas. “You can’t have too many Christmases!” Each Christmas as Mary lays our baby Jesus in the manger and we feel her loving caress as she swaddles him, feeds him and delights over him, we too delight because Jesus, is born for each of us. Each Christmas, the miracle of babies occurs. Our Vincentian hearts are opened and expanded to birth more of God’s love into the world. We are filled with love, our capacity to love expands and we are eager to do what is good, “Giving Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom God’s favor rests.”

**PRAYE**R M*ay you be forever a beautiful tree of life bringing forth fruits of love (I:46). St. Vincent de Paul*

During the season of Christmas, may our hearts be open to recognize God continuing to birth new love in us. Shine your light on us dear Jesus and overcome our darkness, so we may share your love with people who are poor, frail and oppressed. May our communities be changed by God with us and in us. Through God’s mercy and our service may we all come to know and witness to “Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.”