



✠ A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR ✠ HOLY FAMILY SUNDAY

30 DECEMBER 2018

CHRISTMAS: A NATIONAL HOLIDAY IN ... IRAQ!

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light” (Isaiah IX:1). They saw that great Light after fires burned through California. They saw that great Light after hurricanes blew through Florida and the Carolinas. They saw that great Light after a tsunami flowed through Indonesia. They saw that great Light after four people were murdered in a Catholic Cathedral in Brazil. And they saw that great Light after *brother handed brother over to death* (cf. Saint Matthew X:21) in Iraq! Yes, the people who walked in darkness have seen a great Light and that Light led all of them - Californians, Floridians, Carolinians, Indonesians, Brazilians, and Iraqis – to church on Christmas Day! And the many small steps they took to get there (like those Mary and Saint Joseph, the shepherds, and the Magi took to get to Bethlehem) manifested *the saving power of Emmanuel/God with us to all the ends of the earth!* (cf. Psalm 98) so much so,



that on the day before Christmas, the Iraqi government declared Christmas a national holiday; which is (as the Angel of the Lord declared to the shepherds): “good news of great joy for all the people!” (Saint Luke II:10)

It is the contemplation of God’s giant leap into the world, that continues to inspire the faithful throughout the world to take the many small steps that lead other members of the human family (like the Iraqi government) to the Light! As members of that human family, as believers who have seen that great Light for ourselves right here in Freeport, New York, let us pray in thanksgiving for our Iraqi-brethren who supported the 2018 Christmas-declaration! Let us pray too that the celebration of the “holiday”, may not become what it sadly has become in so many parts of the world: the celebration and glorification of commercialization, consumerism, and materialism. Perhaps on this Feast of the Holy Family, you will join me in adopting one or more of these **New Year’s Resolutions** so that the real *good news of great joy* in Iraq will not be the national holiday, but the birth of the One Who Himself is the great Light: Jesus!

1. **Go to Mass on Sundays and ALL Holy Days of Obligation** and pray for Christians in Iraq.
2. Keep the Commandments for the conversion of non-believers in Iraq.
3. Invite someone (spouse, sibling, neighbour, friend, non-Catholic, etc.) to Mass every Sunday.
4. Confess my sins (“*what I have done and what I have failed to do*”) in the Sacrament of Penance (**Saturdays from 1:30 P.M. to 2:30 P.M.**), (**Fridays 4:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.**).
5. Seek membership in a Church Liturgical Ministry (Usher, Altar Server, Lector, Altar Guild, Choir).
6. Volunteer in a Church Pastoral Ministry (Religious Education, Thrift Shop).
7. Offer more financial treasure to Our Holy Redeemer on a weekly basis.
8. Pray the Rosary – perhaps at 7:30 P.M. in church on the 3rd Friday of the month in church.
9. Read the Bible – perhaps for fifteen minutes a day.
10. Read Catholic Publications – perhaps *the Long Island Catholic, Inside the Vatican, National Catholic Register*.

Dear God, Please lay upon my heart the knowledge of what I should do, and in union with Mary “let it be done unto me according to Thy Word” and with help from Saint Joseph may I do as I have been told. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen!**”