



May your heart be warmed  
by the season's **Joy**,  
touched by **Love**,  
and filled  
with **Peace**.

May Christmas shine  
brightly in your heart.

*May the Lord bless you abundantly!*

*Jr. Boh*

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## CHRISTMAS 2021



"Christmas is built upon a beautiful and intentional paradox; that the birth of the homeless should be celebrated in every home."

G.K. Chesterton

In July 2020, I stepped down from my administrative responsibilities at Immaculate Conception parish and became an officially retired priest.

What does that mean? I have no idea because at times I find myself as busy as I ever was. I have several things on my bucket list for retirement, and so far, I have not gotten to any of them. These include acrylic painting, writing books, and lots of reading. I hope by the time I write next year's letter, I will be able to report that I have succeeded in beginning some of these projects.

There were several significant things that happened this year. The first of these was that my twin sister Mary moved back to Denver in June after nearly 20 years of living in Arkansas. She now lives about 5 minutes away from me, and we connect, either by phone or in person, every day. Also we both live about 7 minutes from the home where we lived when we were growing up. And we all have the same zip code – family home, Brookdale at University Park (Mary) and Elijah House (me) – 80210. What goes around comes around. My old neighborhood, west of the University of Denver, still looks pretty much the same as it did when I was growing up, although there are bigger and more modern homes planted in the midst of our modest blue-collar neighborhood.

The second significant thing was I had my left knee replaced in July. I had my right knee replaced in 2016 and now the left. I was driving again within a few weeks, although I did about 12 weeks of physical therapy. I still find it difficult to walk up and down stairs without some kind of railing, bannister or human support. But I'll keep working on it.

The third significant thing was that I had my last ever colonoscopy. In 2006 I had colon cancer surgery which unfortunately resulted in contracting an infection that kept me hospitalized for over a month. Once you have cancer, it's always on your mind that it could come back, and so, for the last 15 years, every time I had to have tests done, my concern was whether or not the cancer had come back. This last test came back showing no signs of cancer at all. What a relief and what a blessing.

My classmate from Boston, Fr. John MacInnis, spent a few days here with me at the end of August. And on August 29 my only living uncle, Gene Puetz, died at the age of 100. Two days later, on August 31, my first cousin, Bob Nemmers, died. This has caused me to reflect very seriously about death. This year Mary and I made our final arrangements with Mt. Olivet cemetery, and I have put







together the plans for my vigil service and funeral Mass. It's something we should all do.

Let me tell you about the Prophet Elijah House. This is a residence building for retired priests on the grounds of St. John Paul II Center in Denver. There are 12 apartments and two guest rooms in the building. This is all independent living. My apartment is about 600 sq. ft. with kitchen, living room/study, bedroom and bathroom. There are currently eight priests living here, and we have had several priests come here temporarily for rehab after surgery, including the Archbishop. We have a midday meal together Monday through Saturday. We have a chapel where we say Mass every day at 8:30 a.m., and we gather in our social room for evening prayer at 5:00 p.m. There is a good spirit of camaraderie around here.

I have stayed busy doing "supply" service around the area. I have said Masses and heard confessions in 12 different parishes this year. I've done 10 funerals, three weddings and four baptisms. I haven't done any long distance traveling other than to say Masses. And I celebrated my retirement Masses at Immaculate Conception in Lafayette on November 7, followed by a reception organized by the amazing and wonderful staff at ICC with the help of many of the remarkable parishioners.. I had a graced time with a lot of people who have been supportive of me over the years. What a blessing!

What will the new year bring? I hope we will see more civility in our society, in our government and in the Church. I hope that we will see a lessening of violence in our schools, homes, churches and streets. May we all become bridge building working for unity rather than wall builders putting up barriers separating us from each other. May we become more serious and diligent about climate change and caring for our common home, mother earth, May we spend more time in prayer and reflection, growing in intimacy with our Lord and being guided and strengthened by the Holy Spirit to help create the world as God meant it to be.

A few last thoughts on the lighter side. The good Lord didn't create anything without a purpose, but mosquitoes come close. Opportunity may knock once, but temptation bangs on your front door forever. God Himself does not propose to judge a man until he is dead. So why should you? God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called. The Will of God never takes you to where the Grace of God will not protect you.

*May the Lord's blessings be yours in abundance in this Christmas season and throughout the New Year.*

*Fr. Bob*

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