

Eastside Catholic Parishes of Snohomish County. *Parish Family #8*

**St. Mary of the Valley Monroe, St. Michael Parish & Catholic School & Holy Cross
Lake Stevens & Granite Falls – February 1, 2025**

Dear Parishioners,

Voices of bishops, pastors and the pope are aligning around ancient messages from the Old and New Testaments that call us once again to the truths of the Christian faith.

On Christmas Eve, Pope Francis in his homily spoke to opening the portal of the heart in celebration of a year of jubilee. Leviticus is not often my go-to book. It details priestly order, with instruction about what is clean and unclean so that the faithful are prepared for living a faith that is righteous and pleasing to God.

In chapter 25, there is instruction for living a rhythm of sowing, reaping, followed by a time of sabbatical, giving the land a rest and giving opportunity for the aliens among the people and their livestock to glean and feast. And there is a call to Jubilee.

“You shall count off seven weeks of years, seven times seven years.” In the fiftieth year, the horn shall sound and “you shall hallow the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land and all its inhabitants. You shall not cheat one another, you shall not rule with harshness, you will have your fill and live securely in the land.” Reconciliation, forgiveness of debts, release of the captives, welcome to the immigrant are part and parcel of Jubilee.

Pope Francis said, “when we are reconciled with God, then we can be reconciled to others. God can untie every knot.” Then he threw open the doors of Saint Peter’s Basilica and thousands of people streamed in for the Midnight Mass. They came in their native dress from all parts of the world, all walking together in hope. Hope was his primary message of the night. He said that in the world there are “those who make profit from hurt.” But hope will not disappoint.

Epiphany is the telling of the revelation of God in Christ, experienced by the wise men. Upon hearing that one called King of the Jews had been born, Herod in great rage, decreed that all children in and around Bethlehem were to be killed. The wise men advised Mary and Joseph to take baby Jesus to Egypt. They left by another way and stayed in Egypt until

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Herod died. The Holy Family was a refugee family, they were aliens in the land of Egypt. We can all give thanks they found safe harbor there.

Treatment of aliens, immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees is in the news. We have a broken immigration system in the US that has kept migrants, immigrants, and refugees in the shadows of society in a state of perpetual fear.

Many of these people have come fleeing extreme poverty, hunger, political and religious persecution, war, cartel and gang violence, and the effects of climate change. Some are actively recruited by large US companies who need their labor. They help sustain the US economy.


Migrants, immigrants, and refugees serve our families, caring for our children and our elderly, cleaning our homes, landscaping our properties, picking our crops and crabs, building our roads and the houses we live in. They are our neighbors, our friends, and members and pastors of our churches.

We are living in a dark time that more than ever calls us to be the light of Christ, people of faith who take our membership vow ‘to resist evil in all its forms’ with utmost seriousness.

This weekend as we celebrate the Presentation of the Lord, bless our children and bless our candles, we are reminded that the light has come into the world, a Savior is born.

May the light of Christ shine through our words and actions. May Christ be with us in our community.

God Bless,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Jay Di Falco". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.