
2018 Christmas Letter from the Dean

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Dear Holy People!

According to our collected gospel accounts, the Holy Family of Jesus did a lot of travelling during the time of the birth of Jesus.

We hear that Mary and Joseph had to leave Nazareth and travel to Bethlehem, the town of Joseph's family, in order to be registered. There, apparently, Jesus was born. Before they could all return to residence in Nazareth, however, they fled to Egypt, thereby escaping the persecution of Herod. The story is that after Jesus was two years old, the Holy Family lived again in Nazareth.

In our Christian tradition, each of these places that Jesus and the Holy Family touched, became holy. Those places are remembered because holiness touched them. Even today, one can find shrines and holy remembrances in those places, even in Egypt.

In a similar way, the Cathedral of St. Philip is a holy place, because Jesus has been here. Jesus, and a holy family, have touched us here, with holy people. At the recent annual meeting of our parish, I described the Cathedral as a "sacred destination," a "holy place" where angels descend and ascend, like they were seen on Jacob's ladder. Further, the Cathedral of St. Philip is a holy place because pilgrims both visit here, and they are sent out from here.

Thank you, then, for helping make the Cathedral of St. Philip a holy place. It is your presence and your prayers which have made this place holy. Your joy at weddings and your sorrow at funerals make this place holy. Your weekly worship here, your daily errands here, your Saturday market support here, your meetings here, your service here – all make this place holy.

And people, from Atlanta and from the world, do travel to the Cathedral of St. Philip in order to find holiness. They attend services and conferences here. They listen to sacred music here. Sometimes they visit simply in order to be quiet amidst the chaos and clutter of the world.

Thank you for your part in making the Cathedral a holy place. Finally, of course, your gifts make this place holy. We so need those gifts. In the Church, the gift of money is not simply another financial transaction. Your gift is a commitment and confirmation that the Cathedral of St. Philip remains strong as a holy place.

So, please give generously to this holy place during this holy time of year. We usually need many, many, large gifts in November and December in order to balance our budget; and this year is the same. Again: your gifts —of whatever size—

enable this place to remain holy, holy for us and holy for others, too. Please give generously!

Thank you, in holiness!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

The Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip

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