



St Finbar's Dominican Community

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*“What a marvel!
What an exceptional design!
God alone could conceive this plan:
To bypass the structures of power
To come as a peacemaker
Poor and powerless
In humble state
In childlike trust
Wrapped in swaddling clothes
Weak with the weak
Poor with the poor
A manger for his abode.
Can we see the Prince of Peace?”*
(From the poem “The Prince Of Peace”
by Robert Rivas O.P)

My dear family and friends,

It's Christmas and I am happy. I want you to be happy too. Drink your ginger beer, eat your pastelles and fruitcake, carve your turkey and serve it with home-baked ham and cranberry sauce as well as your own pepper sauce — hot and spicy. If we don't get the taste of Christmas, then Christmas is not Christmas.

It's Christmas! You have worked hard cleaning, cooking, baking, concocting beverages, poncha crema and sorrel. This year you ought to consider adding an Aperol Spritz and Sangria to your feasting; of the latter I am now becoming a connoisseur!

It's Christmas! And the church door is wide open. Don't miss the kernel of your celebration. The baby is waiting. His arms are wide open to welcome you. Go and embrace him. He has a gift for you. What is your gift for him? What a marvel! God so humble and so close! Let the amazing grace and gift of salvation surround you this Christmas.

It's Christmas! I have not stopped praying for you and will continue to lift you up in prayer always. *"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of"* (Tennyson). Do not lose heart when tested, tried and challenged. Be courageous and faithful. Trust God, who has strong arms to carry you. I have prayed for you in my Christmas Novena of Masses. You will be in my heart on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

When the New Year begins, I will place you in the hearts of Jesus and Mary to watch over you with love and tenderness throughout the year, 2023. While I place you in their care, should you need me at any time, **I AM HERE FOR YOU. MERRY CHRISTMAS. FELIZ NAVIDAD Y PROSPERO AÑO.**

+Robert
(Uncle, brother, son and friend)!