

My Dearest In-Christ,

It is with a heart filled with gratitude, joy and appreciation that I wish you all a wonderful Merry Christmas and a prosperous Happy New Year 2026. May the love, peace and joy the Baby Jesus brought to the world be yours in abundance, Amen!

I truly thank God for all we were able to accomplish this year 2025. We were able to feed the hungry, thanks to our Food Pantry and all the volunteers. We assisted our brothers and sisters in need with their electric bills and other bills, thanks to our Saint Vincent De Paul Ministry. We shared our faith with our young children and those inquiring about the Catholic faith, thanks to our OCIA team and Faith Formation teachers. Through our liturgical celebrations, we drew our parishioners into worship and adoration of our Mighty God, thanks to our choirs and liturgical ministers. We are grateful for The Charismatic ministry and Rosary ministry who in a special way provided opportunities for our families to pray, praised and worship our Living God. Special thanks to Our Women Altar Society who provided warm receptions for grieving families to help them celebrate the life of their loved ones who passed into eternal life with God. Our Knights of Columbus made sure that every activity in the parish received great attention and necessary supplies, and for that we thank them dearly.

This is what it means to have a striving parish. As your pastor, I am truly blessed and thankful to all our people who gave their Time, Talent and Treasure to keep our parish running smoothly. I love the saying "it takes a village to raise a child." In our case, it takes the whole parishioners' participation to have a vibrant community and parish. Our Ministry Fair Drive provided a great opportunity for everyone to get involved. I am truly grateful for all the people who helped to make it such a success. Please if you have not already found your niche, be sure to let me know and I will help match your talent to a specific ministry.

Christmas is a season of joy and happiness. I pray that you and your family will experience a special joy at this Christmas no matter where you gather. I also pray for peace, not just for us, but for the whole world. Throughout the Advent Season, the Church has been singing O come, O come Emmanuel; to ransom the captive Israel. We too join her voice to sing the redemption song not for captive Israel, but for those held captive by sin and addiction of any kind. We pray for healing for our sick brothers and sisters. We pray for those who are home bound or alone. Our world is still full of violence, oppression and wickedness. I pray that through our witness to the Love of Jesus Christ; our world will know true peace and happiness. Do not forget that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, therefore let your light shine so brightly this Christmas that those who live in darkness of sin and loneliness will have a reason to believe in Immanuel (God is with us!). As you gather around your Christmas tree or dinner table to share gifts, I encourage you to share the greatest gift of love and forgiveness with each other. God the Father sent His Only Son to show us love and bring us forgiveness of sins; therefore, we should imitate Him in loving and forgiving each other no matter what happened. I too hereby ask for your forgiveness, if I have offended you in any way, shape or form. And know that you are already forgiven by me in Christ Jesus if you believe that you have offended me.

I will travel to Nigeria immediately after the 10am Mass on Christmas Day. Some people are worried about my safety because of the news of insecurity in Nigeria. This is a serious issue but it is nothing new. We have somehow managed to live with it for a long time now. I truly appreciate your concern about my safety. I sincerely ask for your prayers, not just for me, but for the whole country, Nigeria. I pray that God will keep me safe during my visit and I look forward to your warming embrace on my return if it pleases Him. If for whatever reason I am unable to see you again, please know that I love you all and I will be your angel in heaven. May the joy of Christmas be ours now and forever, Amen! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2026! As a spiritual gift, you and your loved ones will be remembered at the 10:00pm Vigil Mass of Christmas. I remain,

Yours-In-Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Oby Zumas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Oby Zumas

A friend & Pastor.