

St. Ignace  
FRANCISCAN MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY  
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they shall call him  
Emmanuel  
"God is with us"

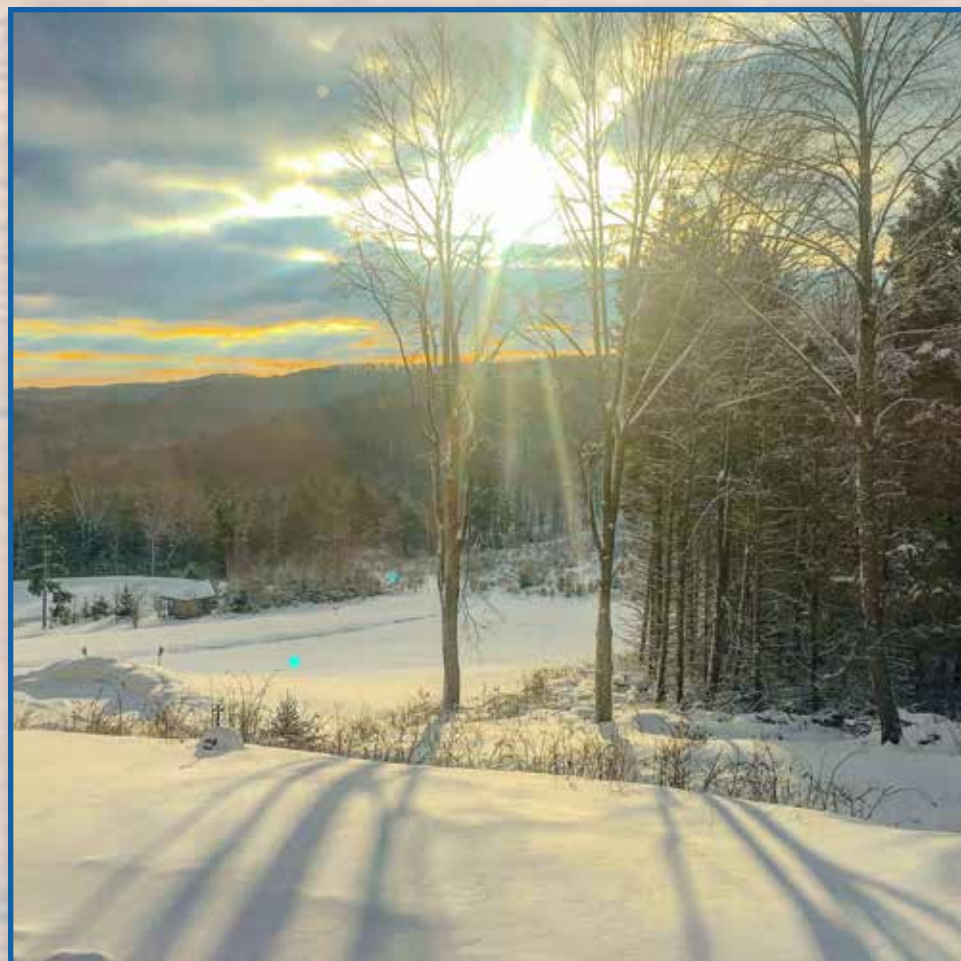
St. Ignace

PEACE

merry  
CHRISTMAS

"in a while  
you will hear  
a bell ring"

Blessings  
for a  
New Year







# greetings 2021 CHRISTMAS

Waking today on the Mountain, I am filled again with gratitude which is rising in me brighter than even the winter snow. It dispels the cold that is around here while it fills the sky overhead. The gift of this place offers me a sense of privilege; of being here and able to live in a world with others, making the Mountain a home for everyone. The privilege is one of service, not of status, and Christmas time wakes us to the model we see in Mary and Jesus of loving self-giving.

the Light  
Joy and  
Peace  
Christmas!  
the Mountain  
community

In the quiet of an Advent day, you and I remember the meaning of Christmas and wait. There is One who is the fullness of life who rings out like a bell through our hearts. The memory of other places rings here as well, each place its own bell, each of you clearly here with us as Christmas comes upon us.

The birth of God's Messiah in the midst of many together, offers us a memory that forges a unity among us. It is the one bell ringing in each of us as if it is the largest and loudest bell of the Cosmos.....and yet it is gentle, it has a gentle, simple sound reverberating as active peace through our bodies and our beings as it does throughout creation. Its tolling is the power of slowing and healing – the voice of wisdom.

Bells were probably first formed over 4000 years ago in China and have made their way in and through many cultures and Sacred events. They wake people for prayer and call out with voices from places and towers. Bells are given names, each shaped with a singular voice, breaking the silence of a morning or a night, breaking through clouds and snow in countries and in dry deserts to awake us to a God who is always attentive. This God is the God of "justice, love and peace." Sounding everywhere is the God who is among people of all colors and dispositions, calling us to befriend one another, to be grateful.

God rings out in all things as our Creator's singular voice and we become full of hope. It frees us and fills us with the very grace we need to get up and go, even as we come to this time of rest, celebration, good meals and the beauty of each other's company.

Pause now for a moment. Consider the time when you might hear many voices singing out and laughing, tears appearing, yes, some of us possibly upset, and others nodding off to sleep with the wonder of family times and relationships.

We are, my friends, the voices that, like bells, ring out over cities and through neighborhoods, call people to special times and gather us with the joyfulness of singular voices. Inviting us to come together, these bells also send us forth into the cities and neighborhoods that need our love and our service.

Possibly you have been with us here on the Mountain when, in an afternoon of prayer, reflection, walks in the woods or down by the pond or the field, you would hear one of us say, "In a while you will hear a bell ring. We will ring all of our outdoor bells and indoor bells and we will gather together at the voice of the bell." The bell outside the Chapel was given to us by friends. It comes from a steam engine that, on its last trip, rolled through Limestone, New York. We also have the beautiful brass bell by our kitchen that came from Brazil. And a small bell in our house given to us by Mike Schaffner that was fashioned by Native Americans in a pueblo chapel in New Mexico. Each of these have their own voice, yet they sing out for the same reason. Come together, bring that which is within you for this is what will transform each of us and all of us together.

May this Christmas be a time of communion and convergence; the coming together of all of us in the unity that we are in, the convergence of our different and sometimes disparate ideas and dreams. All of this becomes the delight, the singularity of the one bell ringing, Christ.

Resonating through all of us and our land, even our divisions and our hatreds, this bell of Christmas wants to sound. Its song is singing now and goes forth with us this day into our coming days. Merry Christmas and blessings of a New Year time full of joy and happy sounds and voices that call you home and send us out to love each other!

Peace!  
For the Mountain Family

