

*December pastoral message from the Bishop*

*“Oh that you would tear open the heavens and come down,  
So that the mountains would quake at your presence ...”  
(Isaiah 64:1)*

If there is one thing that could be said about the texts of the Hebrew or Old Testament Scriptures – they are not “gentrified” to sound soothing or pleasant! These words come from one who is desperate to experience God “like they did back then.” Surely we, living in 21<sup>st</sup> century western society, can relate to both the frustration and the desperation of this believer. We have just begun a new Church Year and our Sunday readings invite us to once again examine ourselves and our world, make ourselves conscious of the darkness we experience, and prepare ourselves and the world to receive afresh the Light of the world.

In fact, the heavens have been “torn open” and there’s actually been some pretty significant “traffic” between heaven and earth – if you’ll allow the vertical universe motif. The greatest possible rending of the barrier between heaven and earth has taken place with the birth of the Son of God. The pathway has been laid down and “paved” by the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, and it has been “tested” by his ascension. Finally, this “road” is eternally maintained by the Holy Spirit, the Go-Between God, who continually keeps us in the presence of God and who has become the nurturing presence of God within us. So perhaps we don’t see quaking mountains, fire, smoke or wind – but in fact we now live with something far greater – Emmanuel – God living with us!