



# IMMACULATE HEART<sup>OF</sup> MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

## A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

DECEMBER 31, 2017

Dear friends in the Word Made Flesh,

Lyke House, named after the late Atlanta Archbishop James P. Lyke, is home to the Catholic chaplaincy at Atlanta University Center. At its dedication Mass in 1999, long-time AUC chaplain Father Ed Branch explained that the building's intriguing design was based on the 12th-century rock-hewn churches in Lalibela, Ethiopia. From that moment, a visit to that UNESCO World Heritage Site has been on my "bucket list."

An invitation to concelebrate the ordination of a priest in Addis Ababa next weekend has presented me an opportunity to visit these remarkable churches at last. I will leave after tomorrow's holy day Masses and return on January 12. Please know that you will all have a special place in my prayers during this pilgrimage.

2018 promises to be an exciting year at IHM. It is, of course, the 60th Anniversary of the founding of the parish and school, and we will spend the better part of the year celebrating that milestone. I hope 2018 will also be the year that we build a permanent rectory for your present and future priests—although that will depend entirely on our Sunday offertory reaching the threshold that will allow us to take on and service the additional construction debt.

The blessing of Aaron in the Book of Numbers is the first reading on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God—New Year's Day. Allow me to make his blessing my own: In the New Year before us, "the LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD look upon you kindly and give you peace!" (Nm 6:24-26).