



Dear Friends

As Christmas approaches I seem to think about my Mom more often. It was last Christmas night that Jack, Patti, Madeleine, Mike and I had a meeting with Hospice. It was only then that reality really set in that Mom would be leaving us - a fact that I had been denying. Mom and her children had been at a restaurant just four weeks before celebrating her 95th birthday. At that birthday dinner I gave her a crystal heart necklace. Little did I realize that this would be the last birthday gift that I would be giving to my Mother. She wore it often and had it on when she went to be with her John, and the Lord, just four weeks later, December 27th.

Many of you reading this column today have gone through similar experiences. I often thought that Christmas can be a difficult time for many who have experienced a loss of a loved one. Now I know it first hand. I can now identify more fully with many of my parishioners. I talked with a young woman, whose husband died recently, who could identify more with the Christmas song "I'll Have A Blue Christmas Without You" rather than "Jingle Bells." For many this is not a happy time of the year. Recently a widow, whose husband died ten years ago, told me: "*I can't wait for Christmas to be over.*" Some readers might be thinking "*Get over it, get on with life.*" To that I would respond that no two people grieve alike - everyone is different. One of my Advent projects this year is to try to write to all those in our parish who have experienced such a loss since last Christmas. This year more than any other can I really identify with you. I, too, have shed a tear or two.

Christmas can also be difficult for those who are dealing with serious illness or with those who have lost a job. The same sadness for those who are serving in harms way in the military. Equally difficult for those who may be going through separation or divorce. I read recently that 80% of those who divorce remarry. So many families are accepting a new family member this Christmas and that too can be the cause of difficulty or stress. Equally stressful can be family members who get together at this time and don't necessarily care for one another. Pope John Paul wrote in 1981 in his address to families: "*Love doesn't mean always having affection for others in the family. It means loving them as God loves.*" In other words is there room in the "Inn" of our heart for others in the family that we might just see once a year and that we don't particularly care for?

I'm sure the list of loss and stresses that this season brings to mind can go on and vary with each of us. What can we do for people in these situations? First and foremost is to have open eyes and ears to recognize what others might be going through. How often have we said "*I'll give you a call,*" or "*We'll get together*" after a loss of a loved one, only to forget days later? We empathize at the moment and so quickly get on with our life that we forget the pain - whatever that pain may be - of the other. After we recognize the hurt we must open our hearts to that other. As we approach Christmas and recognize the pain and loss that some are going through is there room in the *inn of our hearts*? Reflect on this Christmas card verse as we enter the final days of Advent. They are truly the message of the season:

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*Christmas is the birth of the Son of God on earth, and yet
 Only that first Christmas took place in a stable. Every
 Christmas since then takes place in human hearts. This Christmas
 Let us mend a quarrel, build peace, seek out a lonely or forgotten
 Friend. Find time to give ourselves to others. Think first of someone
 Else. Show our love to others. Show it again. For only the first
 Christmas took place in a stable. Every one since then takes
 Place in human hearts - your heart and mine.*

Have a nice week!



IS ADVENT SUPPOSED TO BE JOYFUL?

Yes! It is the season of preparation for the coming of Jesus. It is a somewhat restrained time of year but still cheerful. It would be similar to preparing for a visit from a close friend or beloved family member. Lots of preparations need to be made, and our joy is not complete until the loved one arrives. But the preparation itself is also a happy time. Since the Second Vatican Council, we have recalled the ancient meaning of Advent. Advent has a two-fold character. The first few Sundays focus on the visions and hopes of God’s prophets and how the life and ministry of Jesus would fulfill what was foretold. The last week of the season focuses more on the Incarnation of Christ as a child of Mary, in other words the fulfillment of God’s promise to the people of Israel. Throughout these weeks of Advent we might meditate or reflect on this mood of hopeful anticipation, of longing, and hoping, of promise, prophesy and fulfillment. We look forward with joy to Christmas, but with the knowledge that after Christ’s birth, we will also walk with him to the Cross and Resurrection. In the world of today it is not easy to compete with commercialism, to keep “Christ” in Christmas, but perhaps the realization that this season is just the beginning of our journey can help us to do just that!



- Monday, December 14
 CARMELA & RAY DERBISH.....7:30am - Fr. Martin
- Tuesday, December 15
 SCOTT SMART.....7:30am - Fr. Martin
- Wednesday, December 16
 MARY WILHELM.....7:30am - Fr. Martin
- Thursday, December 17
 CAROL MORRISSEY.....7:30am - Fr. O’Keefe
- Friday, December 18
 JERRY & STEVE VALENTINE.....7:30am - Fr. O’Keefe
- Saturday, December 19
 PAUL E. McGRAW, JR.....9:00am - Fr. O’Keefe
 ALICE McMENAMIL.....5:00pm - Fr. O’Keefe
- Sunday December 20
 BILL MATTLE.....7:30am - Fr. Wilson
 PARISHIONERS.....9:00am - Fr. Martin
 ELEANOR KENNEDY McKINLEY.....11:00am - Fr. Martin
 JUDY SCHALLER.....12:45pm.- Fr. O’Keefe



Christmas Holiday — all classes cancelled December 20 through December 29. Classes resume January 3, 4, and 5.

The **Inclement Weather Policy** can be viewed at www.edu.nativityburke.org; click on Weather Policy.

Altar Flowers

In Loving Memory of
 Gladys Wilson
 From Girl Scout Troop 843
 and
 In Loving Memory of
 Joseph Engelbretsson
 From The Engelbretsson Family



True stewardship requires changes in human actions - both moral behavior and technical advancement. Our religious tradition has always urged restraint and moderation in the use of material goods, so we must not allow our desire to possess more material things to overtake our concern for the basic needs of people and the environment.

US Catholic Bishops, Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good, 2001

Can you reduce your consumption of material things this Christmas season and do more to fulfill the basic needs of people and the environment?

A green thought from Nativity's Creation Care Ministry

NEED STOCKING STUFFERS?

For gifts that give to the producer as well as the receiver, try Fair Trade coffee on sale next week in front of church. And don't forget, Fair Trade Divine Chocolate on sale everyday in Nativity's Gift Shop. New taste sensations are now available.



Pro-Life Corner:

All across the world there has been a campaign to strip pre-born babies of their humanity. They have been called "blobs of tissue" and "products of conception". These terms are meant to dehumanize the pre-born in order to make their destruction more acceptable. We are called to be the light of the world. Let us tell the world that abortion and euthanasia are not acceptable.



The **GABRIEL PROJECT** supports women who are facing a crisis pregnancy and need help. Contact 1-866-444-3553 or gabrielproject@arlingtondiocese.org You are not alone! (Gabriel Project is a crisis pregnancy program open to all and sponsored by the Catholic Diocese of Arlington.)

Pro-Life Rosary - A prayerful, peaceful and public gathering of friends and neighbors who pray the rosary for one hour takes place on Saturdays at 10:00 AM on Rolling Road across from Kings Park SC Giant Food. Please call Jane Hamilton, 703-646-5051, for more info.

Crisis Pregnancy Centers Phone Numbers

Catholic Charities National: 1-800-CARE-002
Catholic Charities Local: 703-425-0100
A Woman's Choice: 703-538-4305
Gabriel Project: 1-866-444-3553

WATCH EWTN CHRISTMAS PROGRAMMING

Join EWTN Global Catholic Network in celebrating the birth of the Christ Child. EWTN is proud to bring you Live Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses from Rome and the Basilica of the national Shrine in Washington, DC as well as inspiring musical performances, animated features, specials for children, teens and new holiday presentations the whole family will enjoy. Watch EWTN on cable TV channel 161.

PRAYER SHAWL MEETING....

The next evening meeting will take place in the APR on Wednesday, December 16th at 7:00pm. The daytime meeting will take place on Monday, December 21st at 9:30am in the APR. Come and bring your project to work on or learn how to make a prayer shawl for someone who is seriously ill. For more information call Toni Rausch, 703-455-3260; Flo Grike, 703-250-7799 or Joanne Dezzutti, 703-455-5702.



A FAITHFUL FRIEND SUPPORT LINE

Sometimes you need A Faithful Friend to talk with, to listen, to understand, and to help Christ's Light shine through. Call A Faithful Friend for support and comfort during difficult times. Confidential, anonymous, free of charge. 703-532-0011.

SHARING HOPE...

a support group for men and women going through separation and divorce, will meet this Saturday, December 19th, at a member's home for a Gala Christmas Dinner Party. Newcomers are warmly welcomed. For RSVP and directions please call Barbara at 703-425-5467 or Maureen (work) 703-610-5805.

Retreat for all Men...Need a break? Some time for spiritual reflection? Start the new year with a weekend retreat for men on January 22-24, 2010 at the Dominican Retreat House in McLean, VA. **Rev. Bart A. Karwacki, OFM Conv.** Will be the retreat director. For reservations or information contact Paul Allard at 703-569-1040 or the Retreat House at 703-356-4243.

"Nothing can separate us from the love of God"

Romans 8:39

Thought for the Week

Every time you smile at someone, it is an action of love, a gift to that person, a beautiful thing.

Mother Teresa

Christmas Traditions Around The World



Christmas in Lebanon is like here in the States with a few different details. People decorate their homes, but the most important thing is the Nativity scene. It's almost a life size one with mountains, waterfalls, and plants that have been planted a month before Christmas especially for the Nativity scene. I remember one Christmas after dinner when we opened our presents; my mom told me that when she was my age, Santa used to come to her house and deliver her gifts personally. At midnight everyone goes to church to celebrate the birth of Christ. One important tradition we practice is going to my grandparents' house to wish them a "Merry Christmas" on Christmas day. People go and visit each other because they are not far from one another. My mom's aunts and uncles all live within walking distance from each other so the whole family get together a lot especially during the holidays.

Roland Joun
7th Grade



Hi, my name is Soo Min and I came from Korea. Americans and Koreans do plenty of similar things during Christmas. In Korea, we also decorate Christmas trees but, we don't place our presents under the tree. Gifts are usually placed on the children's pillows on Christmas morning. In Korea, our New Year's Day is referred to as Transition. A day before New Year's Day, everyone gathers in the home of the eldest member of the family to celebrate. On New Year's Day, we usually wear Transitional Korean clothes but more and more people have chosen not to wear them anymore. We greet the adults in our family by bowing our bodies and they would give us money. Food is prepared by the women in the family the day before and they usually cook rice cake soup to be served the following day. Having the soup officially signifies that a person has become a year older than before. We also honor our ancestors by making different kinds of dishes where they are from; the dishes are set on the table in a very specific way. After this ceremony, we all go to the cemetery to pay our respects.

Soo Min Lee
7th Grade



Christmas in Brazil is very different because Christmas comes during the summer so it is really hot! Brazilians don't hang stockings since most houses do not have fireplaces; instead we place our shoes by the window. On Christmas morning, we can find our presents next to our shoes. After I open my presents, I eat breakfast and then play with my presents until dinner time. We celebrate the holiday by going to the beach and having a big party with lots of fireworks shooting up into the sky. There's music playing with plenty of dancing.

Nicholas de Campi
5th Grade

"And this is my prayer: that your love may increase evermore...said that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ..." Come to a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend and recharge your marriage/holy orders. The next local Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend is February 19-21, 2010. Early registration is highly recommended, as dates fill up quickly. For more information call John and Lorie Scali (703-631-5289) or visit <http://wwme-nova.org/> (en español <http://seccion16emm.com/>)

Nativity's Grief Support Group, for all who have suffered the death of a loved one, and are in need of the comfort that sharing can bring, meets at **7:30pm** in our school building on the **First & Third Thursday of each month** and is open to all adults at no charge. Prior registration is not required. Contact Carol Mack for more information 703-455-2400, ext. 117.

Interested in Nativity's Expansion Project?

Visit the Nativity Website (nativityburke.org) for information and updates on Nativity's Vision for the Future.

The Church Office will follow Fairfax County Government Offices' schedule in the event of inclement weather. If the **schools are closed**, there will be **NO MORNING MASS**. If a 2 hour delay has been announced, then the morning Mass will be celebrated at its regular time. Parishioners are cautioned that there is no obligation to risk aggravating physical conditions or compromising safety when attempting to come to Church. To check the schedule go to: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/weatherupdate.htm> or www.nativityburke.org or to **Channel 16**.

VOCATION DISCERNMENT RETREAT

Young women from 18-30 years old are welcome to a “Come and See” vocational discernment weekend with the Daughters of St. Paul in Alexandria, VA from December 18-20, 2009. Please call Sr. Margaret Michael or Sr. Christine for more information at 703-549-8306 or email srmichaelfsp@aol.com.

**A CHRISTMAS GIFT TO THE PARISH?
2009 TAX LAW - TAX-FREE IRA GIFT**

If you are 70½ or older, you can make a gift tax-free from your IRA to our parish or the diocese thru 12/31/09. While this gift will not result in a tax deduction, the amount will be excluded from your taxable income. Other benefits and restrictions apply – for more information, please call 703-841-2516 or visit

www.arlingtondiocese.planyourlegacy.org/ira.php.

TAX SAVINGS THROUGH A GIFT OF STOCK

You may make a gift of stock as a **donation to our parish or our diocese**. In exchange for a gift of long-term, appreciated securities (stock), you can receive an income tax deduction and avoid capital gains taxes on stock appreciation. For more information, please call 703-841-3896 or visit

www.arlingtondiocese.org/giving/gifts_stock.php



**South Run Home for the Holidays
Sunday Dec. 20, 2009
2:00pm to 6:00pm**

Homes in the South Run neighborhood will be open to display holiday decorations and to share treats and good cheer. 100% of the proceeds will benefit the Merrill Children Trust Fund - a beneficiary very close to our hearts.

Homes will be open in both South Run I & II. Entries for door prizes will be available at the open homes in South Run 11.

TICKETS can be purchased in advance by contacting **Robyn Trump @ 703-913-6177** or SouthRunRec@yahoo.com, or on the day of the event at any house displaying a “Home for the Holidays” sign. We would like to suggest a minimum donation of \$20.00 per person. Of course, any donation will be graciously accepted. Please make checks payable to Merrill Children Trust #:3019579279.



This Week in our Parish

Sunday, December 13

CATHOLIC CHARITIES CHRISTMAS COLLECTION

2:00, 4:00, 6:00 pm.....CCD Classes (S)
7:30 pm.....Vibe Meeting

Monday, December 14

4:00 & 7:00 pm.....CCD (S)
7:00 pm.....RCIA (PH)
7:00 pm.....RCIC (Room 9)
7:00 pm.....Christmas Pageant
8:00 pm.....AA Meeting (APR)

Tuesday, December 15

9:30 am.....Bible Study (APR)
4:30 & 7:00 pm.....CCD (S)
7:00 pm.....Knights of Columbus (PH)
7:30 pm.....Legion of Mary (APR)

Wednesday, December 16

10:00 am.....Mom & Me (APR)
7:00 pm.....ESL (Room 5)
7:00 pm.....Hispanic Prayer Group (Room 6)
7:00 pm.....Prayer Shawl Group (APR)
7:30 pm.....Evening Bible Study (Room 9)
7:30 pm.....BSA Troop 1100 (PH)

Thursday, December 17

6:00 pm.....GSA Troop 2948 (GR)
7:00 pm.....ESL (Room 5)
7:00 pm.....Spanish Class (Room 2)
7:30 pm.....Prayer Group (APR)
7:30 pm.....Baptism Class (SL)
7:30 pm.....Grief Support Group (S)
7:30 pm.....Venture Crew (Room 4)

Friday, December 18

7:00 pm.....Pack 1101 (PH)

Saturday, December 19

9:00 am.....Mass (CH)
9:30 am.....Pro-Life Rosary (CH)
10:00 am.....ESL (Room 5,6,7,8)
10:00 am.....Dog Obedience Class (PL)
1:00 pm.....Hispanic Baptisms (SC)
7:00 pm.....Hispanic Mass (CH)

FYI....All announcements to be posted in the bulletin for December 20th, 27th, January 3rd and 9th must be in by December 17th. Thank you.

Mary Duley
Bulletin Editor