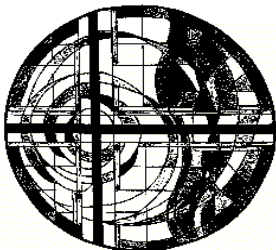


Communicator



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Advent 2011

Dear Parishioners:

As we begin Advent, the Scriptures share with us many different figures: Isaiah, who foretells the coming of Emmanuel, the child will bear the name "God is with us," John the Baptist, issuing a call to repentance, Luke taking up the voice of Isaiah and urging his disciples to prepare the way of the Lord. But the figure that strikes me this Christmas comes from the Christmas day Gospel, the *innkeeper*. Mary gave birth to the Christ in a stable because there was no room for them in the inn. The busyness and, perhaps, inhospitality of an innkeeper left Mary and Joseph with no choice for shelter except a stable. Mary gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

Yet, despite this beginning two young people touched by God's word brought light to our world in their love, faithfulness, and desire to do what they experienced as God's will in their lives. Mary gave physical birth to Jesus and then with Joseph gave the life of faith to their Son. It was a journey of many twists and turns leading to the foot of the cross for Mary.

The *innkeeper* is not a bad person. However, his busyness shouts to me the need not to be so hectic and preoccupied that there is "no room in the inn." That is, there is no place in my, our busy lives for the Messiah to be born, for Christmas to happen. As you place the figures around your crèche, perhaps as a family discuss to which figure you feel drawn. If you have the *innkeeper* as a piece in your Nativity scene, place him close to the manger where he becomes a reminder that in all of our busyness we cannot afford to miss the Word of God made flesh in this tiny baby. In the most human of events, the birth of a child, light for all ages has come into our world.

The economy continues to affect all that we do. Although the gifts under our own Christmas trees may be less this year, our community continues to reach out with generosity to those who come to us in need. Our *Giving Tree* for over twenty-five years has been a light shining in the darkness for many.

My Christmas wish for all of us is that we may have both spiritual and physical light as we look and pray around our crèche. Otherwise we might just pass by these simple people and not walk in the light. Everything changes with Light.

In His peace,

Liturgy Schedule

Friday, December 23, 2011	NO LITURGIES
Saturday, December 24, 2011	No 9:00 a.m. Communion Service
Christmas Eve Liturgies	
Saturday, December 24, 2011	4:00; 6:00; 10:00 p.m.
Christmas Day Liturgies	
Sunday, December 25, 2011	8:30; 10:30 a.m. NO 5:30 p.m.
Monday, December 26, 2011	NO LITURGIES
Friday, December 30, 2011	NO LITURGIES
Saturday, December 31, 2011	No 9:00 a.m. Communion Service
Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God	
Saturday, December 31, 2011	5:30 p.m.
New Year's Day Liturgy	
Sunday, January 1, 2012	7:00; 8:30; 10:30 a.m. & Noon NO 5:30 p.m.
Monday, January 2, 2012	NO LITURGIES

Jr. High Youth Ministry: The Junior High has been very busy. We have approximately 60 active youth in the Jr. High Program. We began the year with a guest speaker, Steven Johnson, who played an Animal Game with us.



Through this game we learned which animal characteristics we most identified in ourselves and how those attributes affected our relationships with others. We also grew to understand that we all have different attributes and looking at others through their eyes instead of our own allows us to understand what motivates them or is difficult for them and we in turn learned more tolerance. In October, Fr. Jim Farrell was a guest speaker, leading our group in a guided meditation and enjoyed a great night of Fear Factor in the Park. In November we attended the West Deanery Jr. High Retreat held at St. Thomas More, there were 85 in attendance from the deanery. We also made Advent wreaths for our family to use this season. We played Liturgical Calendar Jeopardy during the advent season and will visit the Harrison home. While at the Harrison

home, we will play Christmas Jingo, lead them in Christmas Carol's and share some punch and cookies.

... AND THE GLORY OF GOD WERE WOMEN ... FULLY HUMAN, ALIVE, AND THE VOICE OF HIS LOVE

A special retreat weekend, October 8-9, took place at St. Christopher's parish community. A team of women in the parish, along with Sr. Kathy, the team's Spiritual Director, facilitated a CHRIST RENEWS HIS PARISH (CRHP) for twenty five participants. They say that everyone has a story to tell about their life and this was very true



during this retreat. Different members of Team #1 spoke on a variety of themes, such as Christian Community, Scripture, Reconciliation, Spirituality, etc. What was so evident in each of the witness story was the faithfulness of God in their lives. St. Irenaeus once said, "The glory of God is man fully alive." God's glory, love and his transforming graces were alive and evident as the witnesses and team members shared different aspects of their lives. Participants then were encouraged to reflect and discover anew this same truth in their own life stories. Through fellowship,

prayer, laughter and tears, the participants were renewed, refreshed, and a commitment to their faith journey was rekindled in their hearts. Team #1 only felt full of gratitude for the privilege of being a channel of God's love and presence. They as well as all that attended truly were renewed and forty women on that weekend were able to claim the power of the scripture passage, "Be still and know that I am your God." Team #2 has now been formed and formation for this team has begun with preparing for another awesome retreat in the fall of 2012.



2012 Magnetic Calendar

Below is a 2012 magnetic calendar to attach to your refrigerator or any other metallic surface. We hope the calendar will help you remember significant dates and days of the liturgical year.

January 1 is the “Feast of Mary, Mother of God.”

February 22 is Ash Wednesday. Although Ash Wednesday is not a holy day of obligation, it marks the beginning of Lent and our serious look into sin and preparation for Easter. Masses will be 6:00 a.m.; 9:00 a.m.; & 5:30 p.m.

April 8 is Easter Sunday and **April 5, 6 & 7** mark the paschal Triduum. The paschal Triduum celebrates the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ with the Mass of the Lord’s Supper (Holy Thursday; April 5), the Veneration of the Cross (Good Friday; April 6) and the Easter Vigil (April 7).

Wednesday, **August 15**, marks the “Assumption of Mary.”

November 1 is the celebration of the solemnity of “All Saints Day.”

December 8 the Solemnity of “The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.”

December 25 the celebration of “The Nativity of the Lord.”

Sunday, after all, is the day for Christian assembly. It is at the heart and foundation of the church year because it is our most important liturgical ritual. We gather for the proclamation of the Word and the breaking of the bread, the Eucharist.

Perhaps the "little" things of life are really the "big" things---

"The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened." (Matthew 13:33) Having taught foods and nutrition for many years, I was always amazed at the power of the little bit of yeast to leaven an enormous amount of flour. Yeast begins small, but given a conducive environment, creates big, beautiful results. It may not seem that working at a food pantry can matter much. Hunger will never be totally eradicated. But Jesus is calling us all to do our small part to be like the yeast needed to make a bigger impact on those around us. Jesus' ministry began small but still inspires many some 2000 years later. Maybe our small influences at the pantry can make a big impact in the lives of many others. "The kingdom may appear to be small, like the yeast, but in reality, it is an astonishing power encompassing all of life." *Loyola Press* (Trudy Bledsoe shared her thoughts about the food pantry through the following poem)

"At The Food Pantry"

Rain, sun cold, hot they arrive.

With children in tow, broken cars, high heels, flip flops, shoes too small or too large, they arrive.

Large families, families of only one, hands extended to receive filled plastic bags, they arrive.

We smile, saying, "God bless you." They smile and say, "Thank you so much." They arrive.

We stress, is there enough food for all who are waiting? We are almost out of sustenance.

Only one bag left.

They arrive saying, "I am the last in line today." God in His mercy has fed us all.

We see the loaves and fishes alive in this time and place. He is with us in our servant-hood of love.

As they arrive.

If we are open and ready to do God's will, somehow, God will astound us in the mystery. Numerous times, the pantry has been in need of a particular food item or a service. Sure enough, the need is met, sometimes in very surprising ways. Trusting that everything will be okay-and faith-"carry" us a long way. There is joy in giving to others. When we make others happy, we ourselves receive the greater gift. How are we all being invited to be yeast, that is, to do small things that may have a big impact on the lives of others? How have we been called to serve the Kingdom of God? It's really the only treasure worth seeking. Nothing else really matters. So, perhaps, the "little" things of life are really the "big" things.

By: Phyllis Farley

**The Catholic Community of St. Christopher Presents:
St. Christopher Choir's Annual Winter Concert**

Take time from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season and attend the St. Christopher Choir's annual Winter Concert. The hour-long program is a perfect way to spend a quiet evening listening to sacred music and reflecting on the true meaning of Christmas. It will be held Thursday, December 15, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the church.

Admission is free, but a collection will be taken so that the choir can, once again this year, donate the proceeds to the Sr. Marie Wolf Fund which offers emergency resources to those in need.