

January 3 , 2010
The Epiphany of the Lord
“ We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.”

Liturgical Ministry Schedule

Mass Intentions

Weekend of January 10, 2009

5:00 PM (ENGLISH)

LECTOR– J. Perou

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

Y. Bellevue P. Peisel G. Maffettone
 F. Defay M. L. Lebon

ALTAR SERVERS– C. Occil, N. Smith

7:30 AM (ENGLISH)

LECTOR– S. Napoleon

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

M. A. Brady O. Davis E. St. Louis
 V. Costello D. Spagnoli M. St. Louis

ALTAR SERVERS– C. Bargeron, J. Fray

8:45 AM (SPANISH)

LECTORS– M. Gonzalez, V. Bueno, C. Ayala

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

V. Ampie V. Maldonado J. Lazo
 A. Patino A. Ferreira A. Lazo

ALTAR SERVERS– C. Manzo, R. Almonte,
 A. Mejia, K. Mejia

11:00 AM (ENGLISH)

LECTOR– D. Cronin

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

S. Bricourt K. Graham L. Magloire
 W. Delpesh L. Joachim V. Semper

ALTAR SERVERS– S. McGorty, C. McGorty &
 C. Thomas



12:30 PM (HAITIAN)

LECTORS– E. St. Louis, R. Philius, E. Philius

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

E. St Louis, R. Philuis, E. Philuis

If there is any difference between the above and your individual schedule, the individual one is to be considered correct.



January 3, 2009

Monday
8:30 AM

January 4– St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
For Guidance for Andy Charlot

Tuesday
8:30 AM

January 5– St. John Neumann
Maurice Pereira

Wednesday
8:30 AM

January 6-Blessed Andre Bessette
Frank Schaller

Thursday
8:30 AM

January 7– St. Raymond of Penafort
In Thanksgiving

Friday
8:30 AM

January 8
Jim Cuddy

Saturday
5:00PM

January 9
Victoria Ann Wood

Sunday

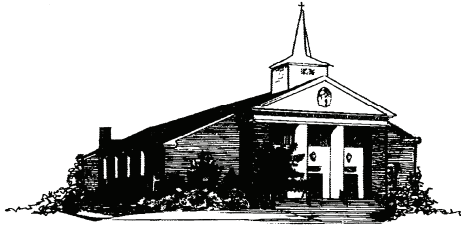
January 10
The Baptism of the Lord
In Thanksgiving for Joseph Anthony
Reverend Edward Sullivan
John J. Boyle
Gertrude Beaubrun- St. Rose

7:30 AM
8:45 AM
11:00AM
12:30 PM

The Bread and Wine for the Week of
January 3 to January 9, 2010
 are offered In Memory of
 Lynn Walters
 Requested by
 Elly Paul

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR
The Baptism of the Lord
January 10, 2010
 Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11.
 Psalm 104:1-4, 24-25, 27-30.
 Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7.
 Luke 3:15-16, 21-22.





St. Martha's Catholic Parish

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THE PASTOR'S WEEKLY LETTER – January 3rd 2010

Solemnity of The Epiphany

Dear Parishioners: Queridos feligreses, Chers Paroissiens:

TODAY !: Our Annual Volunteer Dinner is today from 3 P.M. to 6 P.M. in *Bethany Hall*. Any parishioner who volunteers the service of time or talent on a weekly basis is invited. If you made your RSVP already – please don't forget to bring a dessert and we'll see you later. If you did not RSVP by now, we look forward to your presence in 2011 (since we have already given the count to the caterer). Thanks to all who have volunteered this past year!

FOR THE RECORD: The Annual Meeting of the Parish Corporation of *Saint Martha's Roman Catholic Church* took place on December 30th 2009 in compliance with New York State Corporate Law, Universal Canon Law and the policies of the Diocese of Rockville Centre. The Corporate Trustees, Parish Finance Council, and Secretary/Treasurer were all invited.

Happy New Year to all!

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:HOY!: Nuestra Cena Anual para los Voluntarios es este día desde las 3 p.m. hasta las 6 p.m. en el Salón Betania. Están invitados todos los feligreses que voluntariamente donan tiempo y talento semanalmente. Si ya respondió – por favor no se olvide de traer postre y le veremos más tarde. Si todavía no ha respondido, esperamos contar con su presencia en 2011 (ya dimos el número de personas que asistirán a los que prepararán la comida). ¡Gracias a todos los que fueron voluntarios el año pasado!

PARA EL RÉCORD: La Reunión Anual de la Corporación Parroquial de *Iglesia Católica y Romana de Santa Marta* tuvo lugar el 30 de diciembre del 2009 conforme a la Ley Empresarial del Estado de Nueva York, Ley Universal Canónica y política de la Diócesis de Rockville Centre. Fueron invitados los Fiduciarios Empresariales, Comité de Finanzas de la Parroquia, y el Secretaria/Tesorero.

¡¡Feliz Año Nuevo a todos!!

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AUJOURD'HUI!: Notre Dîner Annuel des Volontaires a lieu aujourd'hui de 3h à 6h p.m. à *Bethany Hall*. Tous les paroissiens qui donnent de leur temps et de leurs talents chaque semaine sont invités. Si vous avez déjà envoyé votre RSVP – n'oubliez pas d'apporter un dessert et nous vous verrons plus tard. Si vous n'avez pas encore RSVP, nous espérons vous voir en 2011 (puisque nous avons déjà donné le compte au traiteur). Merci à tous les volontaires de cette dernière année!

MISE AU POINT: La réunion annuelle de la Société enregistrée Paroisse de *l'Eglise Catholique Romaine de Sainte Martha* a eu lieu le 30 Décembre 2009, conformément à la loi régissant les corporations de l'Etat de New York, le Droit Canon universel et les règlements du Diocèse de Rockville Centre. Les administrateurs, le Conseil de Finances de la Paroisse, les Secrétaires/Trésoriers étaient tous invités.

Bonne Année à tous!

Fr Frank

Padre Frank

Pere Frank

PASTOR'S HOMILY – CHRISTMAS 2009

There seems to be some interesting changes for Christmas 2009. Did you hear that the Vatican changed the traditional Papal Midnight Mass to 10 P.M.? Perhaps you just heard before coming here that, as the Papal Mass was beginning, someone accosted Pope Benedict and knocked him down to the floor as he was walking up the aisle of St. Peter's Basilica. Fortunately, he's okay. He got up and continued. I told him he shouldn't have changed the time, but he didn't listen!

This Christmas something else is new and interesting – and it's creating quite a lot of interest. It's a grassroots association entitled: "*Re-Define Christmas.Org!*" It's a movement that's neither a commercial venture nor a money-maker.

It's simply "a charitable idea" shared by many. The novel idea is that holiday gift giving *could* be more meaningful and do more good. In addition to the gifts we *enjoy* shopping-for and giving, we're often *compelled* to give gifts that aren't so meaningful. Imagine if we replaced those gifts by giving donations to people's favorite charities instead. Then, we ask that others do the same for us (in our name).

I find it fascinating that the people who 'invented' this great idea decided to call it: "*redefine Christmas,*" not "Redefine *the Holidays.*" They seem to want to stress, at least implicitly, "*the reason for the season*" and ultimately, the reason for the giving in the first place. The concept isn't about *re-inventing* Christmas. It's about changing the way we look at gift giving and receiving. Its taking money we usually spend on "obligatory gifts," with little meaning, and creating gifts of charity that *give* in multiple ways – to the receiver, the giver, *and* the people who truly need the assistance.

I think it's a great idea to "re-define Christmas" and gift-giving in this way. But, for me, I discovered it too late – just two days ago. I had already finished the 'obligatory-giving,' when I heard about it on the radio and checked-out the website. Nevertheless, it's a goal for Christmas 2010 and perhaps even before that. What we certainly need – is a 're-definition' of the true meaning of Christmas.

This connects with the essence of Christmas – which affirms that the biggest mystery we have centers around the fact that God became a human being. God, you might say "*re-defines*" what it means to be a human being, and humanity *re-defines* its image of God – into a loving parent.

God became just like us to reveal how much we are loved. This love is a gift that's given freely and without condition. All we have to do is accept it with open arms. We don't have to send God a thank-you note. Although that's what we do – when we come here to Mass; when we love one another; and when we help people less fortunate than ourselves.

PAGE 2 – CHRISTMAS 2009 HOMILY

[Continued]

present – a present, a gift – that’s always being *re-defined* by life, and by *its*’ circumstances. Offered as a symbol of love, we’re waiting to be unwrapped so that what’s inside of us can be revealed layer by layer day by day.

How often are we afraid to *say* what we’re feeling or tell our deepest and perhaps darkest secrets because we *think* it will change someone’s love for us? And how often have we overcome fear and revealed something hidden about *whom* we are – only to find out that it doesn’t matter? Our friend or spouse, our parent or child loves us still; loves us *anyway*; loves us always. The more we un-wrap ourselves, the more we *re-define* and renew ourselves, the more we *see* that we’re all the same – that we share a common spirit, and that we each have a spark of God inside of us. That’s what the Incarnation is.

Recently, I read a reflection which beautifully suggested that the Incarnation can be seen as God’s “FACE BOOK!” [C.f. *Bill Hughes, email reflections – December 1, 2009, – wfhughes@optonline.net*]

You could say that the Bible is God’s “Face Book” too, in which many people have made *entries* about themselves – prophets, kings, evangelists, apostles, etc. Their contributions aren’t just words written down, but a story told. God’s “Face Book” is an open book, a living book, inscribed and enriched by the day-by-day living of those who have heard His word and believed it. As sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, the Incarnation puts us ‘on-line’ with God and “in communion” with one another.

“Christmas is an open invitation for each believer to make an ‘entry’ into God’s “Face Book:” – a *record* of reaching out to one another; of relationships renewed; reconciliations realized; and peace and justice practiced and pursued.” [Bill Hughes]

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This year may I suggest that we do whatever we can to “redefine” Christmas – “redefine Christmas.Org;” yes, but also – “redefine Christmas.You;” and “redefine Christmas.Me!”

First, we can do that by changing our ‘obligatory-giving’ now and in the future and invite others into that circle of re-definition. Second, we can *redefine* Christmas by un-wrapping the parts of ourselves that remain closed to God’s loving embrace and the embrace of loved-ones. Third, we can *redefine* Christmas by making a spiritual *entry* into God’s “Face Book” – to add a word, a line, a chapter to this narrative of God’s love by each act of love we have for one another.

“*We [always] need a little Christmas,*” as the song goes. But more than ever, we need a little “re-definition” of Christmas to “reset” or “reboot” the context and to highlight the “reason for the season,” in the true “Spirit of Christmas.” This Christmas, let us work at logging-on to the universal and incarnate ‘web of faith’ during this season to “redefine Christmas dot right now.” Merry Christmas!

Msgr. Frank Caldwell

PASTOR'S HOMILY – Holy Family © December 27th 2009

This past week, someone on Long Island won the lottery – \$162 Million Dollars! The winning ticket was sold in Suffolk County and the lottery officials are still waiting for that lucky individual to come forward and claim the prize. Imagine if *you* were that person. All you had to do was to come up with six uncomplicated numbers – 3, 33, 35, 39, 45 and Mega Ball 13. It's simple! Those six numbers last week equaled \$162 Million Dollars. Then you'd be on "easy street" for the rest of your life! Right?

Well, not so fast. Yes, your life would be very different. However, there've been many studies, which show that 'instant wealth' causes a lot more problems than it solves. Personally, I don't know anyone who ever won a big lottery prize. But I do know a few families that have come into considerable wealth over a period of time, – and it's been a slow, unfolding disaster. I was talking to a young man this week who comes from an extremely wealthy family. He said he would "give it all up in an instant – for a normal, healthy family instead."

Look at the very sad story of Tiger Woods. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas his whole life changed because it had apparently been falling apart long before that – perhaps sometime after he came into wealth. He had everything – especially what seemed to be a beautiful family. But it wasn't enough. There are so many stories like Tiger Woods out there – whether rich and famous or not. Our role isn't to condemn them but to pray for them, especially the children involved, and at the same time – to take home some lessons and warnings for ourselves and for our families.

On this Feast of the Holy Family, I'd like to offer *one suggestion* for all families. The suggestion is one word – *thoughtfulness* (or mindfulness) of others.

A major problem that destroys families *isn't* money itself – but *selfishness*. The antidote for that – is thoughtfulness or, mindfulness and concern for those around us. But to go from natural selfishness to thoughtfulness is a process. It takes a lot of work. It doesn't happen overnight or by osmosis because our human nature is inclined (and sometimes conditioned) to think – "me first."

I don't think it is always (or necessarily) *a sin* to be selfish. But thoughtfulness is always a virtue that's needed in every family, and every relationship. So, may I suggest that we think about today's Gospel story in this regard. It's the famous story of Jesus 'ditching' his parents.

It's a story of confusion, misunderstanding and hurt feelings. Jesus hangs back at the Temple and winds up causing his parents a lot of grief and "great anxiety," even though he may have his own very good reasons for doing so. There are a lot of theological implications about Jesus' self-understanding going on here that St. Luke wants to highlight. But, at this time of the year, I think it is more important to stress the *practical* implications of the passage.

PAGE 2 – HOLY FAMILY 2009

This story shows us that Jesus and his family were like ours “*in every way except sin.*” Here we have a story showing that ‘good people,’ even very holy people, can sometimes hurt each other deeply. They don’t deliberately want to. They don’t intend to. But it happens! Within any given family, it may happen rarely, or it may happen more frequently, depending on the personalities and situations involved. But it happens!

What did Jesus do ‘*wrong,*’ if we could phrase it that way? The first heresies of the ancient church questioned (or denied) the *humanity* of Christ – not his divinity. It’s important for us to see Jesus as fully human (as well as fully divine). So what could Jesus have “*done better*” while he was in Jerusalem for the Passover as a twelve year-old? Well, although it *wasn’t* a sin – it was kind of “*thoughtless.*” Jesus of Nazareth should have thought to ask or at least tell his parents about his plans. Objectively, as St. Luke describes it, Jesus should have been more thoughtful or mindful of his parents and his own actions. It wasn’t a sin, but it wasn’t the right

Maybe we’ve been in that predicament ourselves. Most times our failings in family life aren’t horribly evil or sinful. Our problems result *instead* from one word – “*thoughtlessness.*” That means not thinking about anybody else in the family.

Perhaps today we could think about being more thoughtful and consciousness. If the child Jesus himself had to grow through this phase, how much more do we – regardless of whatever age we’re at in life!

On the Feast of the Holy Family, we’re invited to consider ‘family growth’ not just in *age*, but “in wisdom and grace,” through thoughtfulness, as we work for progress – not perfection in our relatively functional, imperfect families.

All the gifts we received on Christmas Day have relatively short “shelf-lives.” They fade quickly. Even winning the lottery eventually passes into oblivion. But what lasts into eternity is our relationships, especially within the family. If we have a few good and true friends – we have more than what \$162 million dollars can buy! They (the relationships, the people, our family and friends) are the blessings we ought to nourish with constant “thoughtfulness” and mindfulness.

And as Saint Paul tells us today (in the Letter to the Colossians) we ought to: “bear with one another, forgive, allowing the rich word of God to dwell within us, teaching, admonishing, giving thanks, and above all put on love - which binds everything together” through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Msgr. Frank Caldwell

*Thank you for your generosity
to St. Martha's Parish !*

December 27, 2009

		Vs yr ago
Christmas	\$17,865.02	-7%
Sunday Collection	\$8,223.89	-17%
Poor Box	\$200.10	

If you do not get your envelopes or misplace them please use a plain one and write your full names, address, number & amount. If you are changing your address or are going to be temporarily away please inform the bookkeeper about 6 weeks before.
Thank you.

**CAPITAL CAMPAIGN PROGRESS AS
OF DECEMBER 17, 2009**

GOAL: \$800,000

PLEDGED: \$431,945 54.0% of Goal

**282 Donors & 29 Fund Raisers
and Monthly Campaign Collections**

**The Monthly yellow envelopes, exclusive
of pledges, has yielded more than twenty
thousand dollars to date. Thank you all!**

**DONATIONS RECEIVED: \$363,118
BALANCE TO GOAL: \$368,054**

CHRISTMAS LIST SUGGESTION!

Looking for a gift for the person who has everything? Why not consider a donation to **St. Martha's Capital Campaign?** All sizes fit and the color is perfect.

PARISH CENTER DIRECTORY

Msgr. Francis Caldwell, Pastor Ext. 302

**Mrs. Barbara Fong Lee Ext. 301
Parish Secretary**

**Mrs. Martha-Ann Brady Ext. 304
Bookkeeper & Bulletin Editor**

**Mrs. Marlene Jean- Baptiste
Director of Social Ministry
292-1603 Ext 320 or 481-2550 Ext**

Voice Mail only: Must leave a message

**Mr. Richard Lee Ext. 345
Counseling & Marriage Preparation**

**Deacon Hernst Bellevue Ext.346
Baptismal Program**

**Mr. Alvin Ingram Ext.347
Liturgy Chairperson**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**Sr. Elizabeth Myles, CSJ
Pastoral Director— Religious Education
516-481-2550 Ext. 311 OR**



**Sr. Eileen Curley, RSM,
Pastoral Associate, and
Adult faith formation and RCIA director-
516-481-2550 EXT 314 OR**

NEW PARISH E mail!

Effective Immediately Dellmail.com has gone away!

saintmarthac@yahoo.com Note the "C"

RINCON HISPANO

AVIS A LA COMMUNAUTE

INTENCIÓN DE LA MISA: Por el eterno descanso de Ana Quintanilla.

GRUPO DE ORACIÓN: Cada miércoles, a las 7:00 de la noche en el Gimnasio.

ULTREYA: Cada domingo, a las 11:00 de la mañana en la Capilla.

GRUPO JUVENIL: Cada jueves, a las 7:30 de la noche en el Salón Parroquial.

MUCHÍSIMAS GRACIAS: A todos los que participaron en la Misa en Víspera del Año Nuevo, el jueves pasado.

POR FAVOR: Piensen en ser “Embajador de Protección” para nuestro recién renovado s “Salón Betania” debajo de la iglesia. Si quieren que el salón permanezca en buen estado, diga algo cuando noten comportamientos que pudieran destruir o causar daños. Si no cuidamos juntos el lugar, seguramente volverá al estado que estuvo antes que se renovara. Por favor, piensen en ser “Embajador de Protección” de la parroquia.

MONEDAS PARA LA MEGA CAMPAÑA: Hace poco se vació el jarro de monedas sueltas, el cual recaudó \$297 dólares. Muchísimas gracias! Dicho jarro volverá a ocupar su puesto a mitad de enero. Por favor, empiecen a acumular sus monedas para la Mega Campaña.

LA MEGA CAMPAÑA: Aún sigue progresando. Recuerden, la meta es de \$800.000. Se espera recaudar un total de \$431,945 de parte de personas que se han comprometido. Un total de 282 personas han donado dinero y ha habido 29 actividades, mas las colectas mensuales. Se ha recibido un total de \$363.118 en donaciones. Aún nos falta \$368,054 para alcanzar la meta.

EL E MAIL NUEVO DE LA PARROQUIA: Es “saintmarthac@yahoo.com.”

FELICITACIONES: A todos los cumpleaños del mes de diciembre; que Dios los bendiga plenamente y que sigan cumpliendo numerosos años de vida.

MESSE DOMINICALE: Chaque dimanche à partir de 12h30, la communauté haïtienne se réunit à l'église pour célébrer la messe. Le mercredi soir à partir de 7 h30 PM nous avons une prière charismatique à la chapelle. Vous êtes tous invité(e)s.

ADORATION: Chaque lundi après la messe de 8h30 AM à la chapelle il y a exposition du St Sacrement jusqu'à 4h PM. Il nous faut une présence à tout moment durant l'exposition. S'il vous plait ne laissez pas le St Sacrement seul.

SERVICE SOCIAL: Les bureaux du service social de Ste Martha sont à votre disposition si vous avez besoin de nourriture, habits, service d'immigration etc. Contactez les au 292-1603 du lundi au vendredi excepté les mardis de 10h AM – 2h PM. Si vous cherchez du travail ou si vous avez du travail à offrir adressez vous à Gilaine les mercredis et jeudis. Nous comptons sur votre générosité pour aider les démunis, donner ce que vous avez : céréals, riz, mambas, boites de conserve, poulet, viande, de l'argent, couchette pour bébé. Dieu vous le rendra au centuple

CAMPAGNE CAPITALE : Les travaux de restauration n'ont pas fini, il y a encore beaucoup à faire, et nous avons besoin de votre aide. Votre contribution si petit soit il nous sera d'un grand concours. Alors penser à offrir vos dons à la campagne capitale. La grande bouteille reprendra sa place à l'église à la fin du mois de Janvier. Merci à tous ceux qui ont mis et qui pensent à mettre de la monnaie dans la bouteille pour aider à la réussite de notre projet. Que Dieu vous bénisse.

BULLETIN DU DIMANCHE: Prenez avec vous le bulletin du dimanche et lisez le. Vous y trouverez des informations importantes sur votre communauté et votre paroisse.

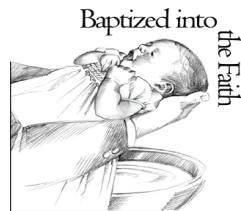
Nous vous souhaitons à tous une Bonne Année 2010. Qu'elle vous apporte beaucoup de bonheur, santé, prospérité et surtout la paix dans vos cœurs.

THE SACRAMENTS AT ST. MARTHA'S

BAPTISMS of DECEMBER 2009

Aliya Tyra Jerome
Robert June Romulus
Sophia Tosemarie Desravines
Nicholas Michael-Mario Montreuil
Pablo Chaverra

Dayana Michelle Guevara
Ariana Yaneth Herrera
Olivia Rose Louiscar
Sophie Ann Suzelle Midy
Andrew Alexander Torres



PRAY FOR THE SICK

Please call in the names of those who are ill. Names of the ill will be published for one month, which then is renewable. Names of people can be placed on the Sick list only by the individual or family member.

Martha Alce, Elizabeth Augustyn, Jean Beekman, Ann Boden, Thomas Brislin, Sharon Burke, Veronica Byrnes, Fr. Zachary Callahan, Marie Caruso, Ann Celentano, Thomas Celentano, Anne Cote, Edward Cserny, Ann DeNicola, Kevin Derham, Karl Droessler, Brian Duffy, Malorie Dzienius, Roderich Evans, Josephine Elgonitis, Mary Famularo, Jean Ferraia, Jack Flynn, Kathleen Flynn, Humbert Garel, Harriet Ganas, Sr. Patricia Gimblett, RSM, Ann Gould, Bertha Griffin, Joan Gurge, Lorraine Hardy, Frank Hayde, Jeanette Healy, Marlene Hicks, Eleanora Hinton, Marianne Imperato, Jack Kightlinger, Barbara Kirsten, Kevin Lawlor, Monserrate Lebron, Rita Liotta, Edith Lucchi, Faith Lyons, Nancy Martinez, Joan Mariconda, Arthur McNeill, Thomas Mc Govern, John Mueller, Steven Nieves, Mary O'Leary, Florence O' Sullivan, Teodocia Perez, Samuel Peters, Frances Powell, Mary Prutzman, Mary Rodefeld, George Schmidt, James Spagnoli, Frank Torie, Rubena Waldron, Sr. Margaret Williams, CIJ, Sharon Wicke, Betty Griffin, Leonisa Rivera, John Villavicencio, Marge Weiss, Jennie Vilhauslas, Kay Brown, Laura Mauro, Fernando Rodriguez Lamberty, Robert & Pam Henry, Alexander J. Wilamowski, Charles Droessler, Antoine Amie, John Flanagan, Jr., Rose Marie Allen and Manuel Sepulveda.

TREE OF LIFE:



Memorialize a loved one with a leaf on our parish's *Tree of Life*, located in the Church Lobby. If you would like more information about this lovely memorial, Please contact **the Parish Office** at 481-2550 Ext 301

OUR FAITHFULLY DEPARTED

Edward J. Gallagher + December 5, 2009
Peter Smith +December 15, 2009
Pierre Coriolan +December 16, 2009
Vivian A. Reynolds + December 19, 2009
Rita Faure + December 23, 2009
Inez C. Grasso + December 25, 2009



Ron Rolheiser column -Week of December 20, 2009

Reasons to Celebrate Christmas

For many people the thought of Christmas brings fatigue. It's not the religious aspect that causes the tiredness, but the overdrawn rituals that surround it: the overly decorated shops, the constrictive shopping, the lights, the Santas, the Christmas trees, and the carols that begin to echo through our malls already in early November

And so it is asked: What has all of this, or any of it, got to do with the birth of Jesus? Hasn't Advent, which is supposed to be a time of preparation for the feast, become an exhausting ordeal that brings us to Christmas day already saturated with what we were supposed to be building up to? Wouldn't we honor Jesus more if we spend the money we lavish on Christmas on the poor instead? Don't our Christmas celebrations serve to obliterate our awareness of Jesus' birth more than highlight it? Valid questions.

Our Christmas celebrations, admittedly, do start too early, are too-commercially driven, do focus too little on anything religious, and do not take the poor sufficiently into account. Too often too they serve to obliterate religious awareness rather than highlight it. And so it is easy to be cynical about the Christmas. It contains too many excesses.

However, with that being conceded, we need to be careful not to throw out the baby with the bath water – and that is more than a pun in this case. Because something is done badly does not mean it should be cancelled. What is called for, I believe, is not the cancellation of the tinsel, the lights, the socials, the food, and the drink that surround Christmas, but a better use of them. There are good reasons to cancel the rituals with which we surround Christmas, but there are even better reasons for keeping them.

What are those reasons? Why continue so many of these rituals when, almost invariably, they degenerate into excess and fatigue?

Because we have a congenital need to celebrate, pure and simple. As human beings we have a healthy, God-given, genetically-encoded need to sometimes make festival, to have carnival, to celebrate an elaborate Sabbath, to park our prudence for a few hours, and to live life as if there wasn't any reason to pinch our pennies or to be cold to our neighbors. Christmas is Sabbath, the supreme Sabbath.

There are seasons in life, and these should be on a regular cycle, that are meant precisely for enjoyment, for family, for friends, for color, for tinsel, and for good food and good drink, There is even the occasional time for some prudent excess. Jesus gave voice to this when his disciples were scandalized by a woman's excess in anointing his feet with perfume and kisses.

Ron Rolheiser column -Week of December 20, 2009 –page 2

Reasons to Celebrate Christmas

All cultures, not least those who are economically poor, have times of festival where, explicitly or implicitly, they take seriously the words: *The poor you will always have with you, but today it is time to celebrate*. Christmas is such a time, meant for festival.

John Shea, in his now-classic book on Christmas, *Starlight*, tells the story of a family who decided one year to celebrate an alternative Christmas. They did not put up a tree, did not string up any lights, played no carols, and did not exchange gifts. They met for a simple, quiet meal on Christmas day. Asked by friends how it all went over, one family member replied that it “was pleasant”. Another member, perhaps speaking more honestly, stated that it was “an existential abyss”.

There is a God-given pressure inside of us that pushes us to celebrate and instills in us an irrepressible sense that we are not meant for poverty, gloom, and carefully measured-out relationships, but that we are meant ultimately for the feast, the dance, the place of lights and music, and the place where we don’t measure out our pennies and our hearts on the basis of having to survive and pay mortgages. The celebration of festival and carnival, even with their excesses, help teach us that.

Christmas is such a festival. In the end, its celebration is a lesson in faith and hope, even when it isn’t as strong a lesson in prudence.

To make a festival of Christmas, to surround Jesus’ birthday with all the joy, light, music, gift-giving, energy, and warmth we can muster is, strange as this may sound, a prophetic act. It is, or at least it can be, an expression of faith and hope. It’s not the person who says: “It’s rotten, let’s cancel it!” who radiates hope. That can easily be despair masquerading as faith. No. It is the man or woman who, despite the world’s misuse and abuse of these, still strings up the Christmas lights, trims the tree and the turkey, turns up the carols, passes gifts to loved ones, sits down at table with family and friends, and flashes a grin to the world, who is radiating faith, who is saying that we are meant for more than gloom, who is celebrating Jesus’ birth.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com.

Social Ministry / Outreach News

Job Bank of Outreach: Gilaine, is overseeing the Job Bank.

Do you need a babysitter, home health aid, housekeeper or landscaper? Or can you provide these services? Register with St. Martha's Social Ministry Job Bank. Call 292-1603 on Wednesday or Thursday between 10 AM and 2PM.

FIDELIS CARE HEALTH INSURANCE

Is in Social Ministry every Wednesday from 10 –12 PM. Ask to see Claudia.

CAN YOU HELP?

ITEMS NEEDED: Frozen hamburgers, one pound frozen chopped meat packages, small chickens, chicken parts, hot dogs/franks, tuna fish, beans, rice, oil, individual boxed milk (ie. Parmalat), jelly, peanut butter, yams/sweet potatoes, all kinds of juice (esp., small sizes), tea bags, any cold cereal, individual packs of oatmeal, bar soaps, toilet tissue, paper towels, napkins, diapers, diaper wipes, toothbrushes and other person care items or store gift certificates. Clean grocery store plastic or paper bags.

Thank you for your generosity!
To all who contributed to the Christmas Angle gifts and food for those in need..

Professional Therapy and Counseling:

Family, marriage, and individual therapies, provided by New York State licensed therapists, are available to our parish . This program, provided by the Catholic Counseling Center is under the direction of Dr. George Giuliani. Most insurance policies, including Medicare, are honored. For confidential information and appointment, call Dr. Giuliani at 631-243-2503 or go to our website at <http://www.thecatholiccounselingcenter.net>

LIVING STEWARDSHIP

January 3, 2010

The Epiphany of the Lord

We are grateful this week
for all stewards
in our parish
who bring their gifts
of prayer, time,
service, energy and resources
to pay homage to the Infant Jesus.

Bulletin Reflection

January 3, 2010

The Epiphany of the Lord

The three kings in today's Gospel traveled a great distance at considerable cost to offer their richest gifts to the Infant Jesus. How far will I go and what will I offer to do homage to this newborn King and Savior?



**PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR THOSE
IN THE UNITED STATES MILITARY**

A PRAYER FOR OUR MILITARY

YOU ARE MY REFUGE AND MY SHIELD. I PUT MY HOPE IN YOUR WORD.”

(Psalm 119:114)

Lord, bless the men and women of our military as they answer the call to serve our nation and defend our freedom.

Protect them, particularly those in harm’s way. Most of all let them know your love: that you are with them, and that you will never forsake or abandon them. I ask this in the precious name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen. Partners in Evangelism Ministry to Service Men and Women

<p>U.S. Air Force: Staff Sgt. Francisco J. Velasquez,</p> <p>U.S. Army: Master Sergeant Jill Agront, Sgt. Hisnard Cadet, Jr., Staff Sgt. Misael Exantus, Spc. Danny Mendez, Sgt Aaron Fullerton, PFC Zaymery Villalobos, Special Force Kareem Inniss, Colonel Verb Washington, Major Elizabeth Werns-Romano, Flight Surgeon, LTC Christopher Jenkins, Spc. Richard Aquilar, 1st Lt. Gavin Campbell McMahon, LTC Douglas Boltuc.</p>	<p>U.S. Marines: Sergeant W. Jason Ferris, L Cpl. Jason Fullerton, L. Cpl Alfonso Rodriquez, Cpl. Adam Griffin, L Cpl. Eaton Farrell, LCPL Alexis Vazquez</p> <p>U.S. Navy: Airman Herbert J. Alvarado, JE-4/CS3 Jesus Ron, P.O.1st Class John V. Sparkowski, Lt. Joseph A. Baugh, Cpl. Eric Omar Matos, U.S. Navy & Marines, Commander Kevin Seaton Canty.</p>
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**CONGRATULATIONS!
Honor Roll Honors**

**Holy Trinity Diocesan HS
Hicksville**

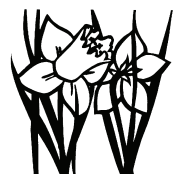
Danya Menard
Katherine Mora

St. Mary’s HS– Manhasset

Allyson Leach
Tharaleisha Laurent

Kellenberg Memorial HS

Jasmin Belcher
Dimetry Denis
Thierry Favelus
Julie Gelin
Cailin Giard
Kelsey Gibson
Stephanie Glemaud
Malayika Moreau
Alex Samuel
Eric Seda



Events at St. Martha's— Dec. 27th, 2009	Events at St. Martha's— Jan 3rd, 2010
Key: A —Gym B —Bethany Hall -Lower Church C —Main Church	H —Social Ministry/Outreach L — John Darcy Chapel PC — Parish Center S — School
Sun. 1-03-10 Epiphany of the Lord No Rel.Ed.Classes/ No RCIA sessions 9:45-10:45 Senior Choir Practice L 10:30am–12pm. RICA Adult Sacraments Session in Spanish H 11am–12:30pm Ultreya Movimiento Cursillos Cristisndad L 3:00 – 6:00pm Our Parish Annual Volunteer Gathering B	Sun. 1-10-10 Baptism of the Lord 9:30 – 10:45am RCIA Adult Sacraments Session in English S (Rm.208) 9:45 – 11:00am Religious Education Program S (A + ALL Rooms) 9:45 – 10:45am Senior Choir Rehearsal L 10:15 – 11:30am Hispanic Social Gathering B 10:30am – 12pm RICA Adult Sacraments Session in Spanish H 11am – 12:30pm Ultreya Movimiento Cursillos Criatiandad L 2:00 – 4:00pm Haitian Fellowship B
Mon. 1-04-10 7:30-9:30pm Charismatic English Prayer L	Mon. 1-11-10 7:30 – 9:30pm Charismatic Prayer in English L
Tues. 1-05-10 7:30pm Divine Mercy Chaplet L 7:30-9:30pm English as a Second Language (ESL) S (Rms. 210/213/214) 7:30 – 8:30pm U Strong for Youth B	Tues. 1-12-10 7:30 – 9:30pm English as a Second Language (ESL) S Rms. 210/213/214 7:30 – 8:30pm U Strong for Youth B
Wed. 1-06-10 6:30 – 9:45pm Pace Group AA S (Art Rm) 6:30 – 9:45pm Carismatic Hispanic Prayer A 7:30 – 9:30pm RCIA Adult Sacraments Session in English P.C. 7:30 – 10pm Haitian Charismatic Prayer L	Wed. 1-13-10 6:30-9:45pm Pace Group AA S (Art Rm.) 6:30 – 9:45pm Carismatic Hispanic Prayer A 7:30 – 9:30pm RCIA Adult Sacraments Session in English P.C. 7:30 – 10:00pm Haitian Carismatic Prayer L
Thurs. 1-07-10 St.Martin's Parent/Teacher Night No Rel.Ed. Classes / No ESL classes. 7:00 – 9:30pm Juventud sin fronteras B	Thurs. 1-14-10 7:00-9:30pm Juventud sin fronteras B 7:15-8:30pm Religious Education Program S (A + classrooms) 7:30 – 9:30pm ESL S Rms. 210/213/214 7:30 – 9:30pm Parent Baptism Prep Session In Creole S (Rm. 201)
Fri. 1-08-10 10am – 1:30pm BINGO B 6:30-9:45pm Pace Group AA S (Art Rm) 8:00 – 10:00pm Spanish Choir Rehearsal C 8:00-10:00pm Haitian Choir Rehearsal L	Fri. 1-15-10 10am – 1:30pm BINGO B 6:30 – 9:45pm Pace Group AA S (Art Rm.) 8:00 – 10:00pm Spanish Choir Rehearsal C 8:00 – 10:00pm Haitian Choir Rehearsal L
Sat. 1-09-10 11am-12:30pm Legion of Mary L 6:00 – 10:00pm BINGO B	Sat. 1-16-10 11am – 12:30pm Legion of Mary Mtg. L 6:00 – 10:00pm BINGO B