



In the beginning was the *Word*;
The *Word* was in God's presence,
And the *Word* was God.

The *Word* became flesh
And dwelt among us,

And we have all received love
following upon love.



MY FRIENDS: MAY YOU HAVE A BLESSED CHRISTMAS

–Fr. Patrick Kennedy

Once again we enter into the Season of Christmas. It is time to slow down and enjoy the moments with family and friends. It is time to ponder the opportunities we have to be grateful for many people and things in our lives. We share gifts as a reminder to people around us that we love them and care for them very much.

Since the birth of Christ, creative people of each generation have tried and often succeeded in portraying Christmas and its meaning through a variety of venues. The poetry and storytelling that comes from their genius is founded on the prose of everyday life. Through all the glitter and twinkling lights adorning our trees and houses, and even though we belt out “Joy to the World,” all of us know that our lives often reflect a more conflicted picture of who we are and what we deal with each day.

These thoughts and feelings, these daily experiences, are suspended somewhat during these days of Christmas when we try to allow our spirits to be caught in the moment, to relish the generosity and care of others, and to keep an eye open to those in our midst who are more troubled and find life more burdensome these days than we do.

But the story told long ago is one that even today can resonate with what we deal with day by day. Like all of us, the hope of a waiting people of Jesus’ time is not easily satisfied at the coming of their Messiah. C’mon, He, the Messiah, came into the world in a lean-to, used mainly for a shelter from the cold winds by the beasts that work in the field and graze on the grass surrounding it. In fact, I am assuming this arrival was not heralded by many even though the story we read says “hosts of angels” did him bidding, and wise people came from the East to acknowledge him. Most simply ignored His birth because they were busy about many things and could not be bothered. They were trying to be counted in a census called by the Procurator. They wanted to do that and go back home.

Actually, the story of Jesus’ birth came alive long after He left the earth, and it did so not through eyewitness testimony but through the eyes of faith instilled in the hearts that came to believe in Him through the preaching of the Apostles. It

was only after much time and honing of the original story that people formed and shaped their hearts round what had happened and through the development of the Church became believers and celebrators of the wondrous event.

I believe that during these days it is good for us to ponder the circumstances of what we celebrate because in contemplating the story, we might be more grounded in our celebrations, and it might temper our idealism of what we expect to happen during this Christmas time.

The world moves at a fast and dizzying speed. Most of our lives go unnoticed by others, even those closest to us. We can’t blame them. They are as distracted as we are by our own need just to make it through the day. While Jesus’ birth is highly acclaimed and widely celebrated now, we need to remember it didn’t start that way. I wonder if there was more than a subtle reason why God chose to enter the world in such an oblivious and unobserved way. Could it be the starting point of our understanding the need to celebrate this birth in the first place?

I am sure it will be hard to put the cell phones down, the iPads away, to still the whirl of the computers for a few moments while we take time to lift our heads from our busy worlds and just experience the joy of another’s presence as we share Christmas together. The hope of God is to see the presence of God in one another. It is where God is revealed most plainly and clearly to us. For this to happen, we must become disconnected from that which takes our attention elsewhere and know there is nothing more profound than noticing and seeing the people around us and enjoying what we are observing.

For four weeks, we have been invited to watch, stay awake, and be alert and ready for the Lord to come. The doorbells will ring. People will enter. Hopefully we will welcome them, and as we invite them in to sit a spell and revel in the holiday season, the gift they receive from us is our undivided attention. And then, the presence of our guests and members of our families will be the greatest present we will receive this season.



Christmas Cookies

—Mary Kennedy, Director of Stewardship

It was the aroma that triggered the conversation and brought about a trip down memory lane. The scents of vanilla, almond, chocolate, and cardamom wafted through the air during the annual Christmas cookie baking get-together with my sister, daughter, and niece which got us talking about the annual Christmas baking parties of our youth. We learned at the side of Mom and Grandma how to make those tantalizing confections that still grace our dessert plates to this day. My Grandma Vera was a fearless baker. That is to say she made awesome creations all without a recipe, and her measurements consisted of dibs, dabs, dashes, pinches, and the ever popular smattering of ingredients. The result was tasty and appealing creations that no one could replicate – even her own confections were never the same twice. Vera blessed all of her grandkids with her baking talents, but that wasn't the gift we best remember about her. My Grandma's greatest gift was her ability to make each and every one of her nineteen grandchildren believe without a doubt that he or she was Grandma's favorite. Her ability to recognize our individual talents and know how best to encourage us to use our gifts to go and make our dreams a reality was a gift given to each of us individually by Grandma Vera. She gave this gift so seamlessly and lovingly that it was only after she died that each of us learned that Grandma's favorite was a moniker split nineteen ways. That precious gift of unconditional love resonates even today. Enjoying the smells of Christmas, I am reminded to live each day to the fullest, using all of my talents. When someone says something needs a dab of this or a smattering of that, I smile and think of my Grandma Vera and the encouragement she gave each of us to go out and live, and give, and love with all of our heart. There are stewards like my Grandma Vera in everyone's lives; people who has taken the time to love, and give, and help you in more ways than you can ever gratefully acknowledge. Their greatest gifts were given to you to help you along the way. In the spirit of the Christmas Season as we celebrate the ultimate gift of the Christ Child, close your eyes and take some steps down memory lane to remember the great gifts that have blessed your life, and breathe in deeply the aroma of treasured and timeless love.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR
FROM FR. KENNEDY, FR. MURTAUGH,
DEACON AL, AND THE
ENTIRE PAX CHRISTI STAFF



A Christmas Message from the Pax Christi Pastoral Care Ministry Council and Staff

*How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger
who brings good news.* —Isaiah 52:7

How beautiful are the feet of those who walk the extra step across a room to greet someone with whom they have had differences.

How beautiful are the feet of those who step beyond the material gifts and appreciate the heart of the giver.

How beautiful are the feet of those who move about in the kitchen making special foods and serving the guests who gather.

How beautiful are the feet of those who not only go to church services but who also fully participate by greeting others joyfully, praying and singing heartily.

How beautiful are the feet of those who walk into homeless shelters or places with little comfort to bring some of their own abundance.

How beautiful are all those feet who walk with glad tidings this day, with the intention of love in their hearts, for they are living the message of the One who came so long ago.

—Adapted from *Inviting God In*, Joyce Rupp.

As your feet take you near and far during this season of wonder and rejoicing, may we continue to be Christ to one another and bring God's Good News to others.

MERRY CHRISTMAS



Saturday, December 24

9:00am Overeaters Anonymous
4:00pm MASS - FR. MURTAUGH
4:00pm MASS in Nazareth Hall
- FR. KENNEDY
6:00pm MASS - FR. MURTAUGH
8:00pm MASS - FR. KENNEDY
9:30pm Lessons and Carols
10:00pm SOLEMN CELEBRATION OF
CHRISTMAS MASS - FR. KENNEDY

Sunday, December 25

Building Closed Following Masses

9:00am MASS - FR. MURTAUGH
11:00am MASS - FR. McMICHAEL

Monday, December 26

Building Closed; NO Mass

Tuesday, December 27

Building Closed Following Mass

8:30am MASS

Wednesday, December 28

Office Hours 8:00am–5:00pm

11:00am Tai Chi
6:00pm MASS

Thursday, December 29

Office Hours 8:00am–5:00pm

6:45am MASS
6:00pm Pax Christi Basketball
7:00pm Alanon
7:00pm Alateen
7:00pm Alcoholics Anonymous

Friday, December 30

Office Hours 8:00am–12:00pm

8:30am MASS

Saturday, December 31*

Blood Drive Sign-Up Weekend

9:00am Overeaters Anonymous
4:00pm Private Reconciliation
5:00pm MASS - FR. KENNEDY

Mary, Holy Mother of God

Sunday, January 1

Blood Drive Sign-Up Weekend

9:00am MASS - FR. KENNEDY
11:00am MASS - FR. MURTAUGH
3:30pm Teen Choir
5:00pm MASS - FR. MURTAUGH

Monday, January 2

Building Closed for Holiday
NO Mass

And on Earth, Peace.

–Michael P. Griffin, for the Justice and Charity Ministries

Resting in the peace of God's favor is the hope and promise for all God's people. It is not a favor measured only by the material. It is the favor of being in a relationship of love from the highest of God's glory to the lowliest place we might know in this life. It is a peace that comes in the full recognition of the sacred dignity of all.

The coming of Christ celebrated in this season fills this place in our hearts and lives and calls us to do the same. The Justice and Charity ministries of Pax Christi celebrates as it facilitates our communal commitment to living this relationship with God and extending this love to the world around us.

We give thanks to all who have contributed to these efforts. We also open our arms and hearts to those whose peace feels uncertain or threatened, and invite you to connect as needed with the love of Christ present at Pax Christi.

The Wonder of it All

–Michael P. Griffin, Director of Faith Formation

Every expression of wonder in our lives, from a subtle glimpse to a thunderous ovation, is a reminder of the wonder of the Incarnation of God breaking into our lives that we celebrate in this sacred season. Wonder has a way of inviting us to lean in, to pay attention in a new and particular way for what is to follow.

Wonder calls us to act in a new or renewed way when we find a willingness to trust our vulnerabilities in order to go to a new place or grow into renewed people. Responding with wonder in faith can feel like a risk when indeed it is inviting us deeper into the realm of God through Jesus Christ. Too often the world's response to wonder is to move on rather than move deeply. The opportunity for all who consider themselves disciples of Jesus is to share our wonder with the world! God's gift to us is our gift to share with others.

Thank you to all who have shared their gifts with faith formation ministries. If you are feeling a lack of wonder in your life these days, Pax Christi seeks to help you to rekindle the wonder in faith and community. Join us. All are welcome!

Year End Gifts

We appreciate the generosity of the people of this community during the Christmas season. Contributions can be made online at www.paxchristi.com, click on the "Make A Donation" button. Mailed donations should to be postmarked by December 31 to qualify for 2011 tax credit.