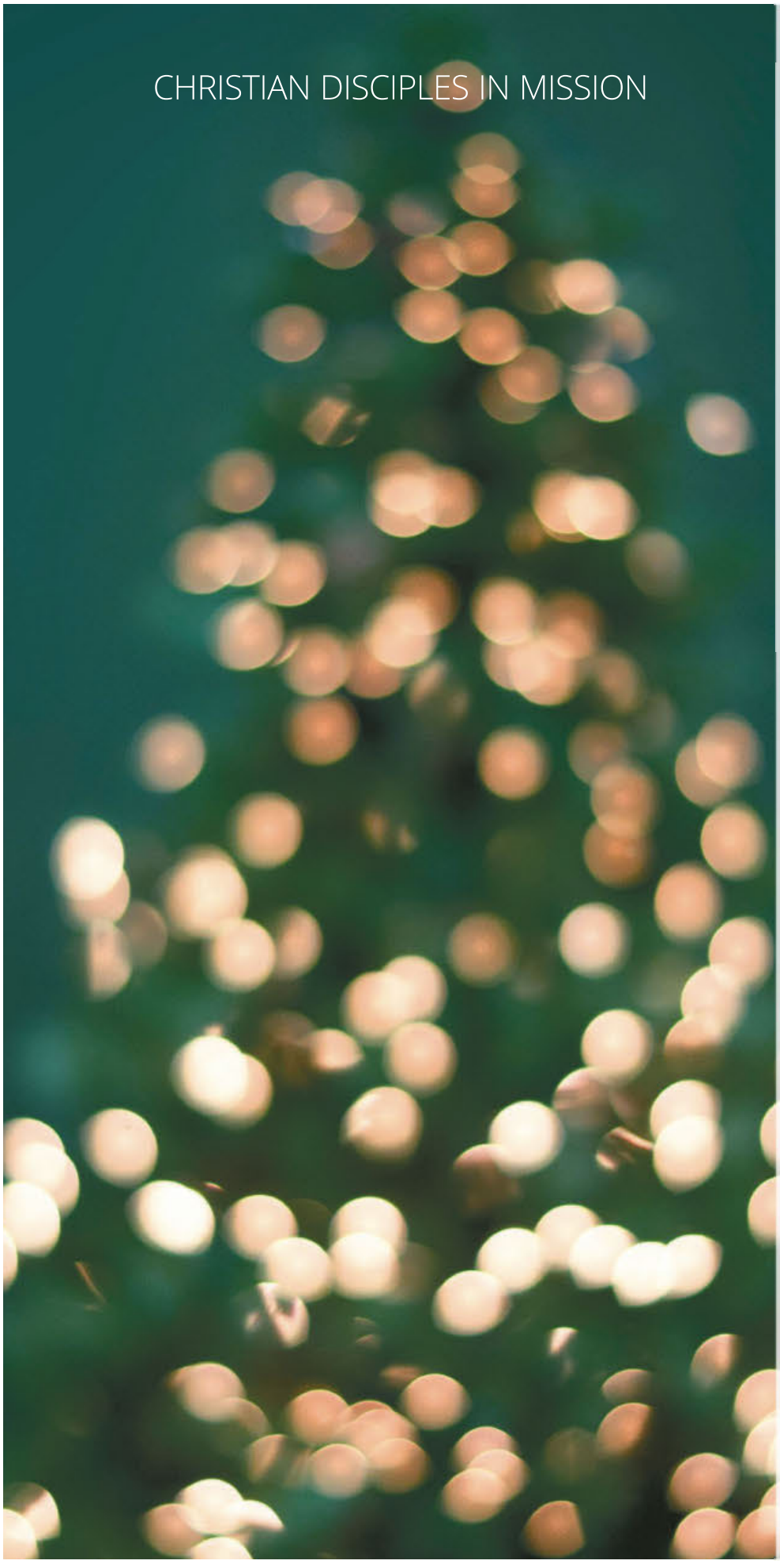

December 25 & 26, 2021
Christmas & the Holy Family

GOSPEL REFLECTION FOR THE WEEK

Luke 2:41-52
And Jesus advanced in wisdom
and age and favor
before God and man

Gospel Thought Starter:
What will you do to grow in wisdom and understanding of your faith and God's call for you this upcoming new year? A retreat, class, service work, increased prayer, a faith sharing group?

Gospel for next week:
Matthew 2:1-12

Parish information, Mass times, pastor and staff contacts on the inside cover.

Photo provided by Pixabay

RISE
ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

PASTOR AND PASTORAL TEAM

Father Eric Tellez - Pastor
Father André Dargis - Pastoral Team Member
Deacon Lou Cornille
Deacon Joe Herrera, Jr.
Deacon Jim Hostutler

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Mary Permoda, Director of Pastoral Activities
Gerry Blakeman, Marriage Preparation Coordinator
Patricia Briseno, Bookkeeper
Brian Cannon, Director of Adult Formation and Evangelization
Richard DiCarlo, Social Justice and Outreach Associate
Fernando Gomez, Coordinator of Stewardship and Development
Steve Head, Director of Plant Operations
Marsha Klag, Administrative Assistant
Sandy Meyers, Parish Nurse
Sue Orlando, Coordinator of Parish Records and Human Resources
Kylie Popa, Coordinator of Elementary Formation and Family Initiation
Megan Popa, Coordinator of Social Justice and Outreach
Rosemary Protocollo, Parish Office Receptionist and Bulletin Editor
Mary Sanicola, Administrative Assistant to Database and Finance
John Seliga, Evening Receptionist
Adam Stein, Coordinator of Communication and Social Media
Lynn Watson, Coordinator of Scheduling and Rock Assistant
Torri Winn, Assistant to the Pastor and Director of Pastoral Activities, Office Manager

FENLON HOSPITALITY CENTER

Thomas Bestul, Coordinator of Edge and Young Adults
Eddie Brenes, Coordinator of Audio and Visual Ministry
Nic Cortez, Coordinator of Liturgy
Sharon Fabyanic, Coordinator of EDGE and Life Teen
Bertha Hernandez, Facility Care
Paul Hillebrand, Director of Music
Diane Kar, Coordinator of Rock 45 and High/Middle School Sacraments
Alvaro Lopez, Senior Facility Care Lead
Carol LoPorto, Administrative Assistant, Elementary and Youth Formation
Rick Martinez, Facility Care
Gerri Porteous, Coordinator of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and Safe Environment
Arqui Ramirez, Facility Care
Laura Whitney, Assistant Coordinator of EDGE and Life Teen

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday: 8:30 am - 8:00 pm
Friday: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Masks are optional for fully vaccinated people.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION: Sunday 9:15 - 10:15 am

LITURGY:
Weekend Mass: Saturday 4:30 pm and Sunday 8:30 am, 10:30 am and 5:00 pm
Weekday Mass: Monday through Friday 8:00 am

SACRAMENTS:

Baptism: To arrange a baptism and begin the required preparation class, call 480-998-3843 a minimum of three months in advance.

Marriage: Arrangements must be made a minimum of nine months in advance. Call the Parish Office for an appointment.

Reconciliation: Saturday 3:00 - 4:00 pm

Anointing of the Sick or Communion to the Sick: To request either sacrament, call the Parish Office.

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Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas!

What a blessing to be able to gather for the celebration of Christmas this year. We rejoice with everyone who comes and partakes at the table of the Lord, and we also are grateful to those who continue to view our Masses online.

The history of Christmas reveals to us the power of this deep mystery that has caused wars to stop for a while, reconciled relationships, and brought forward the best of our humanity in caring for each other. There is something about Christmas and our memories of Christmas that can open our hearts to care for others. We are surrounded by such brokenness in our world, now more visible than ever before, and we wonder who or what can save us from such selfish ways?

Today we remember it is the coming of Jesus who has come to save humanity from its own sins. To remind everyone, we have been created by God as good, we are all inherently good. Jesus and his teachings clearly show the path we can all follow, and be freed from behaviors that turn us outwardly ugly and cause pain in many hearts.

This Christmas season we recall the coming of Christ, God becoming one of us, loving us and showing us the way. To know the peace of Christ, we do not have to wait to die to experience it, we can do so now by making a choice to follow him. Those who do, are called disciples, and when we realize we are disciples of Jesus Christ, we remember we are in mission. I find great comfort in the mystery of Christmas, God saving us from all we are experiencing right now. In the end, the ways of God will prevail and Christmas reminds us that God is with us.

Blessings to everyone this Christmas Day and season as our Church celebrates Christmas the next two plus weeks.

Peace in Christ,

Fr. Eric

RISE
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MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM MARY PERMODA

I am sooo looking forward to Christmas this year! Advent/Christmas is a beautiful season of giving and love that I always wish would last all year long. We say we are preparing a place within us for the love and mission of Jesus to be born in each one of us and then.....come January, I (we) move on as if Christmas never happened. It is like all the preparation and days of cooking that is done for the Thanksgiving meal is over in 30 minutes with that last bite of pecan pie.

This year I am doing something different. Instead of driving myself crazy looking for the “perfect” toy or gift for my nine grandchildren and other family members, I am going to try to make Christmas last past December 25.

I want to have experiences and create memories that last beyond Christmas. I want my family and grandchildren to continue to build loving relationships with each other beyond the day we all look so forward to. So this year, my gifts will be experiences like Suns basketball tickets for fathers and sons, Disney on Ice for the "littles", and going to the theater for the moms and daughters.

My family and grandchildren are blessed...they really do not need anything, except the love of family and Jesus. Hopefully, in turn when they grow up they can give what they have received.

Merry Christmas and may the love of Jesus be born in each of you and lived out all year long!

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PEACE IN THE CHAOS

By Megan Popa

If I'm honest, for me, the *most wonderful* time of the year often feels like the *craziest*, or *busiest*, or *most stressful* time of year! Each year, I say I'm going to try to be more organized, do my shopping earlier, not commit to as many things... to really simplify! And yet, no matter how hard I try, I seem to find myself in the same crazy frenzy each December as I have been in years past. So, instead of feeling like I've failed again for not creating a more simplified and peaceful world for myself and those around me leading up to Christmas, this year I decided to see if I could find joy *within* the chaos. Instead of thinking of peace as a *lack* of craziness, I wondered if perhaps I could find peace *within* the craziness. I won't say I was perfect about it, or had any big life altering revelations, but I think what I found was Christ present in the little things, amidst the chaos.

I saw Christ in the eyes of two young girls, members of our parish, who decided they really already had everything they needed. So, for their birthday party in November, they invited their friends to instead of bringing gifts for them, to bring gifts to donate to the church. So, I saw Christ in their selfless generosity as they loaded up a mound of gifts for us to distribute to our Adopt-a-Family and Giving Tree Programs. I saw Christ in the man who came to us asking for suggestions for something new to do with his kids for Christmas. He settled on picking up a dozen backpacks, which he and his kids are going to fill up with essentials and pass out to those most in need downtown. I saw Christ in another man, who doesn't live here full time, but decided to adopt a family. Upon returning his gifts, he was so full of joy, and wanted to become a registered parishioner and even join the golf cart ministry! And finally, I saw Christ in each of you, as you brought forth your sock and blanket donations, knowing that while you were out shopping or making your weekly Costco run, you thought not only of your own needs, but of someone else who was really in need. Advent wasn't any calmer or more simplified than in any of the years past for me. But if I took the time, I saw the joy and peace in the midst of it all. And while the humble birth of Jesus we celebrate makes me want to envision a quiet and peaceful scene, the reality is, the world around him was anything but! There was persecution, oppression, tension, fear and much more present in the world at that time. And yet it wasn't in the absence of the chaos, but *in the midst* of the chaos, that the Prince of Peace was born!

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How I wish we could find Christmas among the Christmas parties and the egg nog, the $10 gift exchange, and the lines at the grocery and the department store!

Did Jesus coming as a baby change anything in our lives? Are we different people because of his birth? Or an even deeper question, have we become a better person because of his dying and rising?

Would that we actually could recognize Jesus in one another...or better yet, be recognizable as Jesus to those we meet.

I know at times I might act a bit like Jesus in how I can be hospitable to people in front of me at church or in public. But what about how I treat the person on the phone who works in customer service, who I have lost my patience with more than once because they didn't understand what I was trying to ask them for, or worse yet when they have told me there is nothing they can do to fix my problem.

We all, at times, can hide behind the phone, and we have had a great opportunity to hide behind our masks for the past 21 months. It really is amazing how many times I would smile at someone as we passed in a store or parking lot and then later realized that they didn't see me smile. I think I take for granted what a smile can do for those I meet. That each person I go past can become an encounter that has deeper implications than just as a passerby.

This reminds me of a story by Leo Tolstoy called: "The Cobbler's Visitor" (also known as, "Where there is love, there is God also"). It is a story about an old man who has a dream that Jesus would come and visit today and so he woke up and cleaned his house and got all ready and then had three different people come to his shop, all of whom he offers help and hope and comfort; and yet he still looks for Jesus to come. He then is kind of sad at the end of the night, but he has another vision of all the people he has helped and then he hears a voice saying, "Whoever helps the least of these, has served me".

May we be seen as Jesus to someone who needs to see Jesus this Christmas season, and may it possibly be not only a stranger, but someone we have known for a long time.

Have a happy, holy, and healthy Christmas, Paul Hillebrand

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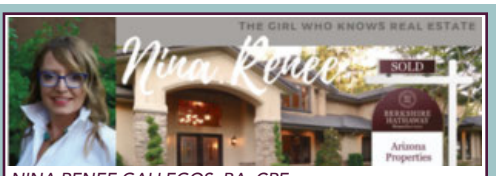

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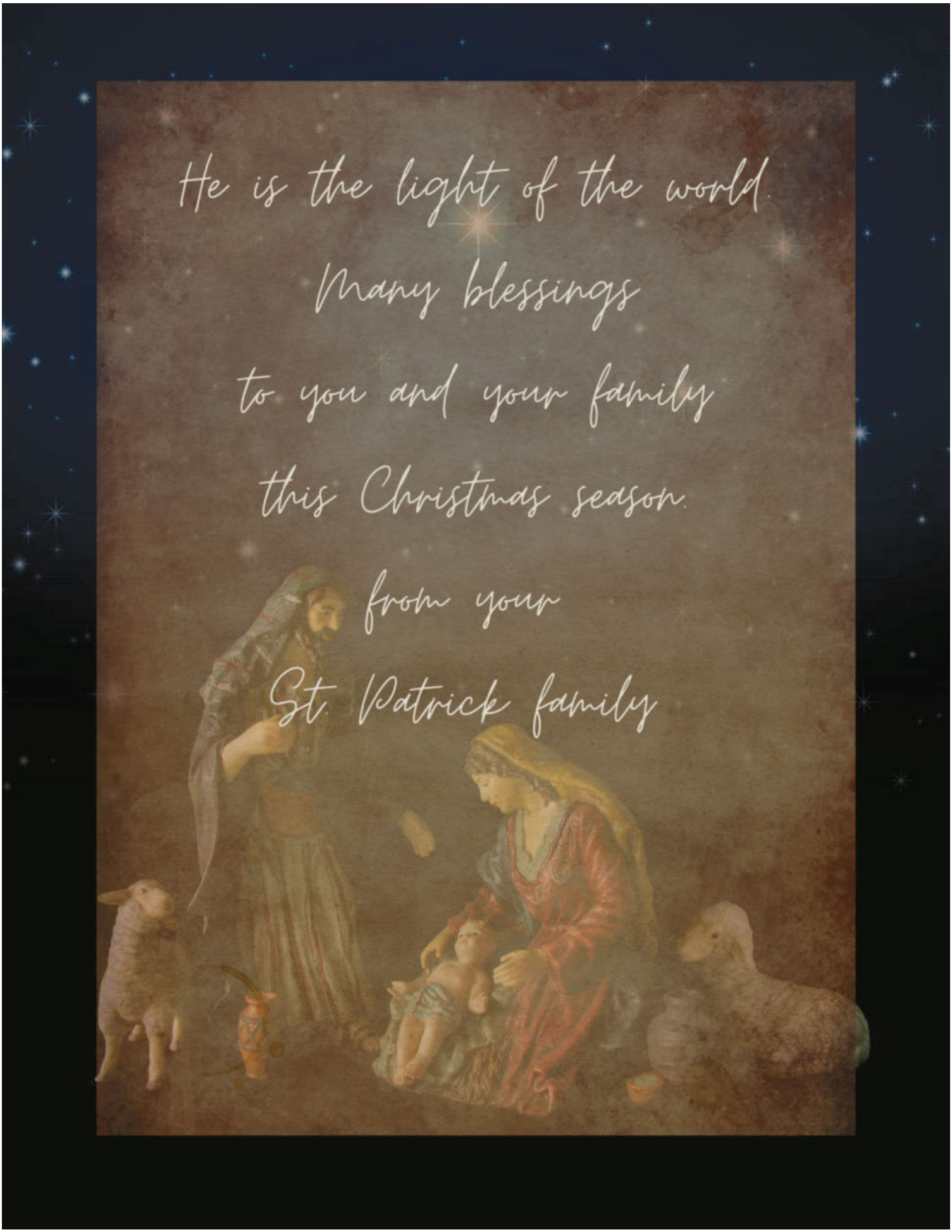
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to you and your family
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Parish Holiday Office Hours
12/29 - 8:30 am - 8:00 pm
12/30 - 8:30 am - 8:00 pm
12/31 - 8:30 am - 12noon

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THANK YOU!!!

A big thanks to everyone that participated in our Christmas giving programs this year. Once again they were a huge success!

We adopted 139 families, with a total of 401 children receiving a very special Christmas this year! There were over 800 ornaments, supporting 8 different non-profit organizations on our Giving Trees and every single one of them were taken down and returned with a physical gift or a gift card. And each week we received hundreds of white socks and blankets at Masses, which were then distributed to those who need them the most. We thank you for your generosity and for sharing the light of Christ this Christmas season.

"It is Christmas every time you let
God love others through you...yes, it is Christmas
every time you smile at your brother
and offer him your hand." - Mother Teresa

Merry Christmas!
from your
Youth Ministry Group

TRINITY SITE

"Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds."

J. Robert Oppenheimer, chief scientist in the bunker at the "place" that day, had this thought go through his mind while he observed the event. There were others in the bunker with him. Some laughed, some cried, and some were silent. They were all hoping to find a way to end the war.

I visited the "place" on July 16 one year when the public was allowed to go in. There in the dust of centuries was evidence of prehistoric people, yet before me the sand was fused. It was quiet that day, but on the morning of July 16, 1945, with an earth-shaking explosion, the Atomic Age came blasting into our world! I was standing at "ground zero" where that very blast took place in New Mexico.

This "place" is Trinity Site.

At my feet was a stubby block of cement. This was the base of the tower upon which the bomb was mounted. The bomb proved to be of devastating power, vaporizing the steel tower. About me, the typical vegetation of the desert was now growing; but upon closer inspection, it could be seen that it was not all vegetation. There were greenish chunks of glassy substance. So tremendous was the heat from that first blast, the sand was fused into greenish glass.

While I was there the "birthday" of the Atomic Age was commemorated at the very center of the blast area. Jewish, Protestant and Catholic groups held joint services with the cement stubble as the altar. Their hope was in future peace.

As the service concluded, a group of young children from a local mission were singing. The words were hard to understand because a wind had suddenly whipped up, and their voices seemed to be carried away into the sky.

It was a dusty, swirling vortex of singing hope for what the future may hold.

Peace, John Seliga

THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM – ISAIAH 11:6-9

Our Atrium children never fail to surprise us with their deep thoughts on the Kingdom of God. These children have already been introduced to the History of the Kingdom. During Advent, with our second and third graders, we reflected on prophecies, including Isaiah 11:6-9. The children already knew the Prophets brought from God, messages of hope to the people of Israel and that during Advent we are preparing for, not only Jesus' birth, but also for His coming at the end of time, Parousia.

During the reading of this prophecy, the children listened to a list of pairs of animals, in this age considered predator and prey. And continuing God's message in this prophecy that at the end of time, there would be no harm or ruin on His holy mountain, for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord.

One of our third grade girls interpreted what she was hearing. She said that at the end of time, God will give us back the Garden of Eden that was lost to us by Adam and Eve.

Wow! Pretty amazing coming from an 8-year old. "And the children shall lead them."

In our work with the children in this program, it is beautiful for us to see just how God speaks to these young ones.

St. Patrick Atrium Catechists – Miss Amy, Miss Mary Beth, and Miss Gerri

Lost a loved one and are seeking a group to help you on this journey?

We will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences.

Group meets weekly for 12 weeks. All are welcome!
Monday, January 10 – May 2 ~ 6:00 - 7:30 pm
Tuesday, January 11 – May 3 ~ 10:30 am - 12:00 pm
Register for the group at **griefshare.org** and select one of the St. Patrick Catholic groups.

Cost is $20 for "Your Journey From Mourning to Joy" book. Books will be available at the meetings. Have been in a group and have a book? Just register.

Questions: **Sandy Meyers@griefsupport@stpatcc.org**

Moving Forward on Your Grief Journey

Starts Tuesday, January 11, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Group is for men and women further along on their grief journey to address the ongoing needs after the loss of a loved one through spiritual, educational and social activities.

Meets monthly on the second Tuesday of the month in the House of Mercy. Social activities are on the fourth Tuesday of the month.

Questions: Peg Bohnert **thenextchapter@stpatcc.org**

CARE & SUPPORT AT ST. PATRICK

Cancer Support This support group is for those dealing with the effects of cancer in their lives and their families' lives. The group will be meeting virtually. For more information please contact Gloria Yturralde at 602-370-7042.

Divorced/Separated The "Catholic Divorce Survival Guide" is a twelve part program of sharing, comfort, and healing for divorced or separated people. It is a journey of learning, reflection, and prayer. All are welcome. This course is offered in the spring and fall. For more information contact Benny Jetson at 602-920-1671 or Therese Mexas at 480-278-3805.

Family, Personal Support Catholic Charities Counselor available Mondays from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm. For an appointment call 602-749-4405. Fees based on sliding scale.

Annulment Support—A group of annulment ministers help people navigate the system of annulments in the Phoenix Diocese. For an appointment call 480-264-4319.

Prayer Support Small Christian Communities is a support for people who have a desire to pray with others in a supportive community. For prayer requests email to **weprayforyou@stpatcc.org.**

Grief Support Help and encouragement after the death of a loved one GriefShare is a special weekly Monday seminar and support group designed to help you rebuild your life. We know it hurts, and we want to help. Sessions started in September. Please contact Sandy Meyers at **griefsupport@stpatcc.org**.

Benefits Assistance Program Assistance with Medicare and other health insurance benefits available for seniors, the disabled and caregivers. For information, please call Megan Popa at 480-998-3843 x-138.

The Next Chapter A group for men and women further along on their grief journey to address the ongoing needs after the loss of a loved one through spiritual, educational and social activities. Meeting start date was September 14. Please contact Peg Bohnert at **thenextchapter@stpatcc.org**

NAMI Family Support Group - This group is a free, confidential and safe place, open to family members, partners and friends of individuals living with a mental illness in order to support each other. Currently, the support group is online. To register go to the **namivalleyofthesun.org** website. Pre-registration is required for all online groups.

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Some of my favorite nuances of baseball are the "unseen" parts of the game. For example, when a runner is on first deciding whether to steal second or stay put, he is picking up cues from his coaches. The coaches are analyzing the opponents' mannerisms that the runner may not be seeing. There is a synergy between the runner and coach. He must be alert to these signs or signals being fed to him so he can make the choice to advance. That is when this "unseen" part of the game is put into action and we watch it unfold. Sometimes it is a success, other times it's a failure as they try to swipe that next base.

Another "unseen" part of the game is the balk call on a pitcher. Probably one of the more subjective calls an umpire can make, yet the runner on base is allowed to advance to the next base should the umpire make this call on the pitcher.

Last month, I wrote in my blog about a song that challenges us to change our habits and our ways. "Maybe it's time to let the old ways die", the song says. This year, we let the old way die at home for Christmas to see what it looks like. What's the worst that can happen? This holiday season we simplified by putting more emphasis and concentrating on the gift of gathering at table, sitting down with family/friends, prayer and conversation. With exception of the *very small* "thinking of you" gifts, we placed the chaotic rush-to-the stores and binge-shopping on the back burner. *Very simple* decorations at home. No expensive tree that we'll throw away in two weeks. We are taking the lead away from the base and picking up on the cues from the base coach whose name is called supply chain disruption and environmental impact. We are being given the signal to advance to second and leave first behind. We have to obey the coach, right?

From all of us here in the Social Justice and Outreach office, may you, your family, and friends have a blessed Christmas and Happy 2022.

Peace,

Richard DiCarlo

Christmas is a season not only of rejoicing but of reflection

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MY CHRISTMAS EVERGREEN BY KYLIE POPA

Last year, I was randomly offered a permit to cut down a Christmas tree for the holidays. When asked if it was something I'd be interested in using, it was an immediate yes on my part. I threw it out in the family text and my dad and two sisters were takers. A few days later, we all packed some warm clothing, loaded the saw and bungee cords, and headed up to the Tonto National Forest. Sometimes, I forget just how magnificent the scenery is in Arizona. Driving up the 89 and watching the mountains and hillsides dotted with saguaros and cacti slowly turn into low shrubs and then tall, glorious pine trees is quite a sight to see in a short two hour drive.

When we arrived at the designated area for cutting, we were pleasantly surprised by a snowy road and surrounding forest. As an Arizona kid, I couldn't help but feel like I was finally getting my very own (early) white Christmas! We parked the car and started our hunt. If you've ever had the opportunity to cut down your own tree, you know that the process is a little easier said than done. Not only are there so many trees to choose from, but they aren't the cookie cutter, beautifully shaped trees you see at the local Home Depot. Some trees had big holes, others had crazy branches, and several just reminded me of the infamous Charlie Brown Christmas tree!

After we spent quite some time searching, we ended up finding a unique little beauty to call our own. The evergreen is a popular symbol during the Christmas season, representing the everlasting life and love of Jesus. I couldn't help but think that all these trees in their glorious evergreen splendor were wonderful reminders of just that. It was December, 2020 and hope was running a little low in my heart. There were still so many fears and unknowns that awaited me back in the valley, but in that sacred space, surrounded by all those evergreens, Jesus reminded me that his love "stays green" all year. And even though, at times, life may look like some of those misshapen trees and seen better days, the needles still stay green and strong and full of life.

We brought that tree back to me and my sister's house. Again, it didn't look like your typical Christmas tree, but it stood so tall and strong in our living room. We strung some lights as best we could and added our angel to the top of the tree. The branches were too sparse for ornaments, so we left it simple that year. And you know what? That little beauty lasted until April. We jokingly called it our Easter tree! In such a dark season, that tree stood as a daily reminder of peace, hope, and great joy.

One special day with my sisters and a loving father who made the journey with us has now become a sweet memory I will remember forever. As these weeks of Advent fly by, may you find the time to slow down, cherish the moments and traditions with your loved ones, and look around for your "evergreens" that remind us hope is most certainly still alive.

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Ebenezer Scrooge. What a classic character - one that I've fully embodied for a lot of my life. My family had a nickname for me growing up... Bitter Boy. I earned that nickname. I was all bah humbug about just about everything. I work hard, through God's grace, to be a bit different these days.

Scrooge gives to us the iconic image of God softening the now-hard-but-once-malleable clay that carries our lives. There's a struggle for me in reshaping what I thought to be immovable. I want it and I don't. I suspect others experience this as well.

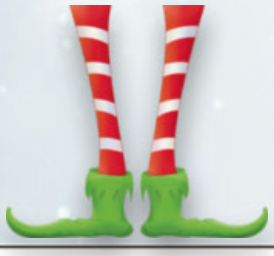
Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done. *(Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. Luke 22:42)*

My faith and my doubt often dance with each other.

I do believe, help my unbelief! *(The Father seeking healing for his Son. Mark 9:24)*

This is the dream of Christmas: the hope to be soft with vulnerability so that when the Artist touches us, we move. When we move in the warmth of the Potter's hands we bend not according to our design but we allow God the freedom to express every joyful and mysterious possibility of love though us. Like Mary, we allow God to come into the world through our being - and Christ is born.

And so, as Ebenezer Scrooge takes stock of his life, we too are invited to see the path we make straight for our God. I set my heart on bringing Christ into both our world and my world. As the warmth of God's presence eases my cold, brittle clay, I mark time forward from this point, never back.



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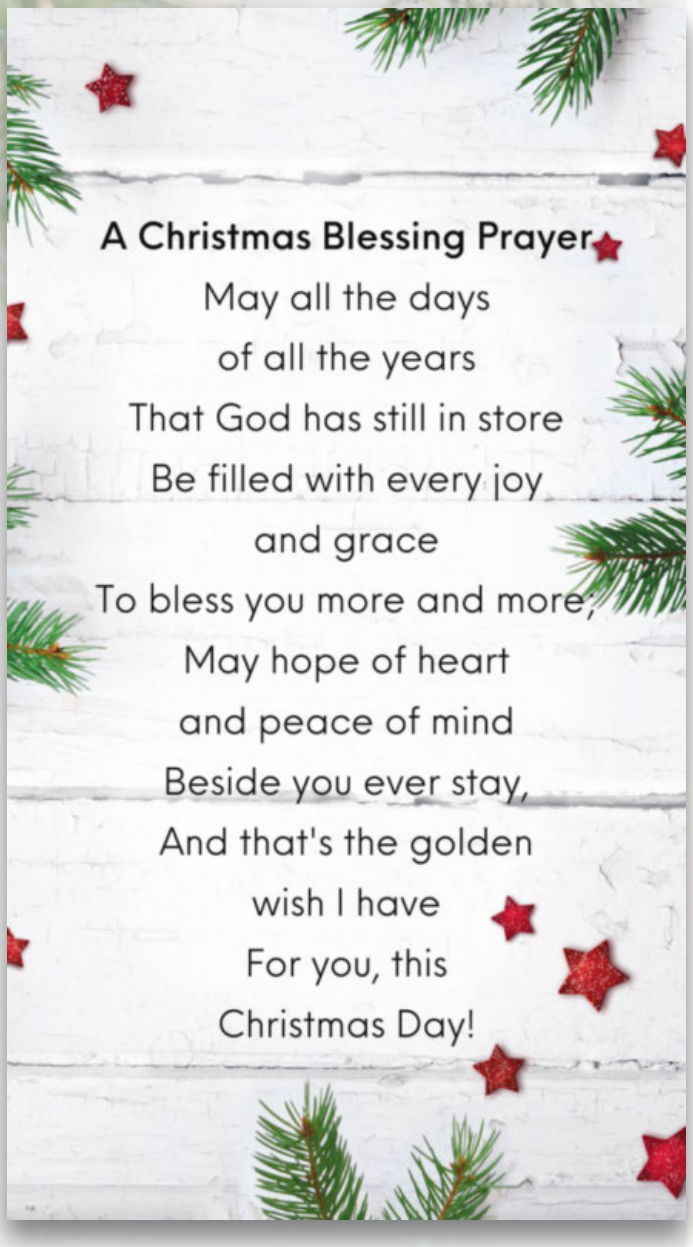

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