
Fr. Corey's Comments

More Christmases around the world:

Christmas in Germany

Christmas preparations often begin on the eve of December 6th. People often set aside special evenings for baking spiced cakes and cookies, and making gifts and decorations. Little dolls of fruit are traditional Christmas toys. Children leave letters on their windowsills for Christkind, a winged figure dressed in white robes and a golden crown that distributes gifts. Sometimes the letters are decorated with glue and sprinkled with sugar to make them sparkle. Germans make beautiful gingerbread houses and cookies. The German Christmas tree pastry, Christbaumgebäck, is a white dough that can be molded into shapes and baked for tree decorations. In parts of Germany, people believe that the Christ Child sends a messenger on Christmas Eve. He appears as an angel in a white robe and crown, bearing gifts. The angel is called Christkind. There is also a Christmas Eve figure called Weihnachtsmann or Christmas Man; he looks like Santa Claus and also brings gifts. Some homes in Germany have several Christmas trees, and in all towns across Germany, they can be seen glittering and glowing. In Germany they hang up advent wreaths of Holly with four red candles in the center. They light one candle each Sunday and the last on Christmas Eve. Children count the days until Christmas using an Advent calendar. They open one window each day and find a Christmas picture inside. In Germany the traditional visitor is the Christkindl who is the Christ Child's messenger. She is a beautiful fair-haired girl with a shining crown of candles who visits each house with a basket of presents. In some homes a room is locked up before Christmas. On Christmas Eve the children go to bed but are woken up at midnight by their parents and taken down to the locked room. The door is then opened, and they see the tree all lit up, with piles of parcels on little tables. Also, boys dress up as kings and carry a star round the village, singing carols.

Christmas in India

Christians in India decorate banana or mango trees. They also light small oil-burning lamps as Christmas decorations and fill their churches with red flowers. They give presents to family members and baksheesh, or charity, to the poor people. In India, the poinsettia is in flower, so the churches are decorated with this brilliant bloom for the Christmas Midnight Mass. In South India, Christians put small clay lamps on the rooftops and walls of their houses at Christmas, just as the Hindus do during their festival called Diwali.

Fr. Corey's Comments (Cont'd.)

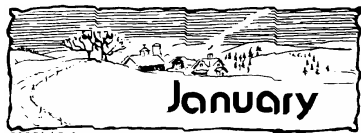
Christmas in the Holy Land


Christmas in the Holy Land where Christ is believed to have been born is often full of travelers who have come to celebrate Christmas. Here in a grotto there is a 14-pointed Silver Star on the floor where the birthplace is supposed to have been. There are three Christmas Eves in the Holy Land. One is on the 24th of December which is celebrated by the Protestant and Catholic Churches. The second is for the Greek Orthodox, Coptic (Egyptian,) and Syrian churches. The third is the Armenian Church. At times, all three services are going on at the same time, but in different parts of the church, as well as in different languages. For lunch they eat turkey, spiced with pepper, cinnamon and nutmeg and stuffed with rice, meat, pine nuts and almonds. Early in the evening, members of the Protestant church groups would go around singing carols. On Christmas morning children would open their presents before breakfast. After breakfast Protestant people would go to church, then visit friends to wish them a happy Christmas. The Catholic Church priests would come to bless water from which all members of the family would take a sip. The member of the Greek Orthodox Church Epiphany is very important. They had a special church service at which a cross was dipped into water to bless it. People would take the water home with them and drink three sips before eating anything.

Christmas in Iraq

In Christian homes an unusual ceremony is held in the courtyard of the home on Christmas Eve. One of the children in the family reads the story of the Nativity from an Arabic Bible. The other members of the family hold lighted candles, and as soon as the story has been read, a bonfire is lit in one corner of the courtyard. The fire is made of dried thorns, and the future of the house for the coming year depends upon the way the fire burns. If the thorns burn to ashes, the family will have good fortune. While the fire is burning, a psalm is sung. When the fire is reduced to ashes, everyone jumps over the ashes three times and makes a wish. On Christmas day a similar bonfire is built in the church. While the fire burns the men of the congregation chant a hymn. Then, there is a procession in which the officials of the church march behind the bishop, who carries an image of the infant Jesus upon a scarlet cushion. The long Christmas service always ends with the blessing of the people. The bishop reaches forth and touches a member of the congregation with his hand, putting his blessing upon him. That person touches the one next to him, and so on, until all have received "the Touch of Peace".

More in next week's bulletin.




COFFEE & ... will be served after the **8:30 & 10:00 Mass** on **SUN., JAN. 10th**. 



DOROTHY DAY VOLUNTEERS

WED., JAN. 6th: Our turn to Cook.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP:

Our next meeting at the **Parish House** -  **SAT., JAN. 9th**, from **10:30am** to **12:00noon**.



ST. MARY'S MEN'S MINISTRY

meets every **Saturday morning** from **6:30-8:00** in the **Parish Hall**. Please stop by for bagels, fellowship, and faith discussions to help men and their families. Any questions, please call **Dave Whitmore** (203 470-0909).



ATTN: TEENS & PARENTS

There is a **mandatory Mission Trip/ Meeting** today, **SUN., JAN. 3rd**, at **6:30pm**, in the **Parish Hall**.



Junior Youth Group

JAN., 9th – Sledding at Parloa Park. Dropoff: **12:00**; Pickup: **1:30pm**. Bring Permission slips.

Senior & Junior Youth Groups

JAN. 22nd – Candlelight Vigil, March for Life, **7:00-8:30pm**. All SYG is encouraged to attend. Sr. & Jr. volunteers needed. Sign up with Annie.

Senior Youth Group

FEB. 1st – Meeting to **PLAN A SKI TRIP**, **6:00pm**, in the **Parish Hall** for interested students and parents.

Service hours will be available every **Wed. night** from **5:00-6:00pm** for all Youth Group members.

ST. MARY SCHOOL will host an **OPEN HOUSE** for all prospective students entering **Pre-School through Grade 8** on **SUN., JAN. 31st**. For more info. please call **School** (203 744-2922).

Are you considering donating goods or services for the **St. Mary School Auction** which will be held on **SAT., MAR. 20, 2010**? Please contact **Ruth or Erik Apotheker** for additional information at **eapotheker@comcast.net**.

WANTED: DIRECTOR OF ENROLLMENT

St. Mary School seeks to fill a new part-time staff position with someone who will develop, coordinate and implement all recruitment and enrollment-related activities for both the preschool and elementary grade levels. Candidates should hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, as well as possess marketing skills and experience in marketing planning and execution. Please submit resumes to the Saint Mary School office, c/o Sean Folan, by **FRI., JAN. 8th**. For more info. contact **Sean Folan** (203 744-2669).



Contemporary Folk Group is looking for a pianist. If interested, please call **Debbie Caraluzzi** (730-0804).

Level II Confirmation Candidates  **required Enrollment Mass**

SUN., JAN. 10th. Arrive 15 min. early to sign in.



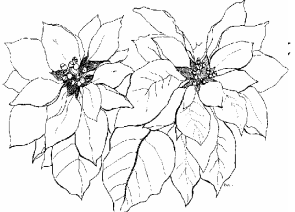
RACHEL'S VINEYARD RETREAT

(Sponsored by the Bridgeport Diocese.) If you are suffering from the emotional pain of an abortion, come experience the healing love of Jesus Christ during our private weekend retreat from **FRI., JAN. 22nd**, – **SUN., JAN. 24th**. For more information please call **Clarissa** (203 218-0291) or e-mail her at **Jeremiah31v17@aol.com**. You may also visit at **www.rachelsvineyardbpt.com**.

Thank you so much to all who donated so generously to the Christmas collection, the Gift Manger, the Dorothy Day Toy collection, the K of C Food collection, and to those who bought "Heavenly Stock" in support of the Senior Youth Group Mission Trip. At a time when our economy is such that giving becomes a bit more difficult, we were overwhelmed by the generosity of our St. Mary parish family. I am particularly thankful for your donations and pledges in support of the Altar renovation.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING WHO HAVE DONATED

TOWARDS FLOWERS FOR OUR ALTAR FOR CHRISTMAS

Robert Brady		Family
Mary F. Deakin		Family
Arthur L. Horan, Jr.		Family
Albert Kellenberger		Family
Christopher Urban		Family
Blanche & John Kowalski		Sons
Son, Bill Bonacci and Son-in-Law, Roberto Cerra		Francesca & Enrico Bonacci
John & Ann Hafner and Timothy Smith		Asta Smith
Teresa Sullivan, Nora Sullivan Boesch and Assunta LaMagna		Mike Sullivan & Family
Marge & Marty Caswell, John Burns, Hudak Family and George LaReau		Jim & Pat Hudak
Deceased Members of the Hunt and O'Sullivan Families		Jim & Eileen O'Sullivan
Deceased Members of the Landi and Troetti Families		Janet & Mauro Troetti
Deceased Members of the McNamara & Stelzel Families		Agnes McNamara & Family
Deceased Members of the Richard & Falvey Families		Walt & Cathi Richard & Family
DONATIONS BY: Denise Sullivan		

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

MON., JAN., 4	6:30	Ryan Martorella (<i>Health & Blessings</i>) – DiMatteo Family
	9:00	+ Paul Papp – Granacker Family
TUES, JAN. 5	6:30	+ Frank Kinsky – Bartkus Family
	9:00	+ Anne Bartkus – George & Carol Branecky
WED., JAN. 6	6:30	Heavenly Stock Intentions
	9:00	+ Hazel Woods – Gzyms Family
THU., JAN. 7	6:30	+ Sheryl O'Mara – Husband
	9:00	+ Ann Tedrick – Family of Dorothy Clarke
FRI., JAN. 8	6:30	+ James McDonald – De La Gueronniere Family
	9:00	+ Msgr. Edward B. Karl – Eleanor Roche
SAT., JAN. 9	8:00	+ Joe Quatraro – Friend
	5:30	+ Tony Soegaard – Stevens Family
SUN., JAN. 10	7:00	+ Catherine Costello
	8:30	+ Christian Major – Anne Marie & Joe Coniglio
	10:00	+ Charles Montagno – Ann & Dennis Nauheimer
	11:30	In Honor of Paul & Pat Orsino's 40 th Wedding Anniversary
	5:30	+ Donald Clarke – Family



*If you, or a family member, are planning a stay at Danbury Hospital,
please inform the Rectory so a member of the clergy may visit.*

PARISH OFFICE (744-5777)

Sheila Kurjiaka: *Bulletin Editor*

Kate Fitzgerald: *Secretary*

Paul Orsino: *Property Manager*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (743-4557)

Mary Ferri: *Director*

Peggy Gavin: *Secretary*

Dennis Nauheimer (RCIA): 794-9488

(Call if interested in becoming a Catholic or completing your initiation as a Catholic with Confirmation and/or Eucharist.)

MUSIC MINISTRY

Mike Macelletti: *Music Director*

Elizabeth Barnes: *Choir Director*

Debbie Caraluzzi: *Contemp. Group Director*

ST. MARY SCHOOL (744-2922)

Sister Anne McCarthy: *Principal*

Linda Curry: *Secretary*

MASS SCHEDULE

Monday – Friday: 6:30 & 9:00am

Saturday: 8:00am & 5:30pm

Sunday: 7:00, 8:30, 10:00, 11:30am & 5:30pm

CONFESSION SCHEDULE

Saturday: 4:00 - 5:00pm.

BAPTISMS: *Every Sunday at 1:00pm.*

(Call the Rectory to Schedule.)

PRE-BAPTISM CLASSES: *Twice a Month.*

(Call the Rectory to Schedule.)

ARRANGEMENT FOR MARRIAGE:

Couples must meet with a parish clergyman at least six (6) months before the marriage is to be celebrate.