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## Fr. Corey's Comments

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*More Christmases around the world:*

### Christmas in Ireland

*Christmas in Ireland lasts from Christmas Eve to the feast of the Epiphany on January 6, which is referred to as Little Christmas. Ireland's Christmas is more a religious time than a time of fun. Lighted candles are placed in the windows on Christmas Eve, as a guide for Joseph and Mary who might be looking for shelter. The candles are usually red and decorated with sprigs of holly. Irish women bake a seed cake for each person in the house. They also make three puddings: one for each day of the Epiphany: Christmas Day, New Year's Day and the Twelfth Night. After the Christmas evening meal, bread and milk are left out, and the door unlatched as a symbol of hospitality. St. Stephen's Day, the day after Christmas, is almost as important, with football matches and meetings going on. For children, the Wren Boys Procession is their big event. Boys go from door to door with a fake wren on a stick, singing, with violins, accordions, harmonicas and horns to accompany them. The reason for the ceremony is to ask for money "for the starving wren", that is, for their own pockets. Children often put out Christmas sacks instead of stockings. It is tradition to leave mince pies and a bottle of Guinness out for Santa.*

### Christmas in Italy

*The Christmas season in Italy goes for three weeks, starting 8 days before Christmas, known as the Novena. In the week before Christmas, children go from house to house dressed as shepherds reciting Christmas poems, playing pipes, and singing. They are given money to buy presents. In some parts shepherds bring musical instruments into the villages, play and sing Christmas songs. A strict fast is observed for 24 hours before Christmas Eve, and is followed by a celebration meal, which includes a light Milanese cake called panettone. Presents and empty boxes, are drawn from the Urn of Fate - lucky dip - which always contains one gift per person. By twilight, candles are lighted around the family crib, known as the Presepio, prayers are said, and children recite poems. At noon on Christmas Day the pope gives his blessing to crowds gathered in the huge Vatican square. In Italy the children wait until Epiphany, January 6, for their presents. According to tradition, the presents are delivered by a kind ugly witch called Befana on a broomstick. It was said that when she was told by the three kings that the baby Jesus was born, she was busy and delayed visiting the baby. She missed the Star, lost her way and has been flying around ever since, leaving presents at every house with children in case he is there. She slides down chimneys, and fills stockings and shoes with good things for good children, and it is said she leaves coal for children who are not so good.*

### Christmas in Slovakia

*Christmas trees in Slovakia go up on Christmas Eve. They go to church on Christmas Eve and return to a traditional dinner. The dinner consists of two main dishes. These are sauerkraut soup, and fish and potatoes salad. After the main meal people eat a dish called Lok'e which is food made from pieces of baked risen dough with raisins and poppy seeds. They then eat fruit such as apples, oranges, pineapples, bananas, and nuts and cakes. After dinner they go to the Christmas tree where they find Christmas presents.*

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

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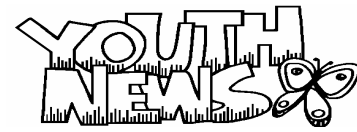
*More Christmases around the world: (Cont'd.)*

### *Christmas in Poland*

*Traditionally, Advent is an important season in the Polish year, with special church services, known as Roraty, being held every morning at 6am. The four Sundays of Advent are said to represent the 4,000 years of waiting for Christ. During Advent, and, in some homes, on Christmas Eve bees wax or plain wax is poured on water, and fortunes are told from the shapes which emerge. Special tasks carried out during Advent are the baking of the Christmas piernik or honey cake, and the making of Christmas decorations. Pierniki are made in a great variety of shapes, including hearts, animals and St Nicholas figures. Traditional decorations include the pajaki, which are handmade mobiles, stars and decorated egg shells. Pajaki are traditional decorations, colorful paper chains and lots of electric lights. Beautifully lit Christmas trees are placed in all public areas, outside churches and in homes. Traditionally, the trees are decorated with shiny apples, gift walnuts, beautifully wrapped chocolate shapes and many homemade decorations and candles. On the top of the tree is a star or a glittering top piece. In many homes, sparklers are hung on the branches of the trees giving it a magical air. Sometimes the trees are left standing until February 2<sup>nd</sup>, the feast day of St Mary of the Candle of Lightning. During Advent, the Gwiadorze or star carriers or carol singers began wandering through the towns and villages, and this would continue until Epiphany. Some of the Gwiadorze sang carols, others recited verses or put on Szopke or puppet shows, or herody or nativity scenes. The last two customs are developments from traditional manger scenes or Jaselka or crib. Christmas Eve, Wigilia, is an important part of the Polish Christmas. In fact, the most important rituals are celebrated on this day. A traditional food found in Poland is Oplatek which is a piece of bread pressed with a holy picture on the surface. Oplatek is more symbolic than real food. We celebrate with at least 12 different vegetarian dishes like: mushroom soup, carp, cabbage with pea, stuffed dumplings, and shells macaroni with poppy "makielki". In some homes - some hay is put under the tablecloth (it is connected with Christ's manger). People once carried these oplatek from house to house and wished their neighbors a Merry Christmas. Nowadays, the bread is mostly shared with members of the family and immediate neighbors. As each person shares the bread, they would have to do two things: forgive any hurts that have occurred over the past year and wish the person all the happiness in the coming year.*

### *Christmas in Japan*

*Only 1 percent of Japanese people believe in Christ. Even so, most Japanese people decorate their stores and homes with evergreens during Christmas. They enjoy giving each other gifts, and this is the part they celebrate. They have a Buddhist monk called Hotei-osho who acts as Santa Claus. He brings presents to each house and leaves them for the children. Some think he has eyes in the back of his head, so children try to behave as if he is nearby. Among the Christian Japanese Christmas is not a day for the family. They do not have turkey or plum pudding, but rather spend the day doing nice things for others, especially those who are sick in hospitals. Christmas for those in Sunday schools is the happiest day of the year. On Christmas Eve or Christmas night, the children put on programs that last for hours. They sing, they recite, and they put on a drama of the day Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Most children may not like Hotei-osho, so they may receive their presents from Santa who goes around with a red-nosed reindeer.*



**COFFEE & ...** will be served after the **8:30 & 10:00 Mass** on today, **JAN. 10<sup>th</sup>**.

**BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP:**

On **FRI., FEB. 5<sup>th</sup>**, at **7:00pm**, in the Church, Fr. Ed will give a talk: *“Carrying the Cross of Losing a Loved One”*. Discussion and refreshments will follow in the **Parish Hall**.



**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).



**St. Mary School** will host an **OPEN HOUSE** for all prospective students entering **Pre-School through Grade 8** on **SUN., JAN. 31<sup>st</sup>**, from **11:00am-1:00pm**. For more info. please call the **School** (203 744-2922).



If you are considering donating goods or services for the **St. Mary School Auction**, on **SAT., MAR. 20<sup>th</sup>**, please contact **Ruth or Erik Apotheke** for additional info. at **eapotheke@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 **THUR., JAN. 14<sup>th</sup>**. For more info. contact **Sean Folan** (203 744-2669).

**ATTN: TEENS & PARENTS**

There is a **mandatory Mission Trip/Meeting** today, **SUN., JAN. 10<sup>th</sup>**, at **6:30pm**, in the **Parish Hall**.



**SENIOR & JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS**

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

**SENIOR YOUTH GROUP**



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

**FEB. 7<sup>th</sup>** – **Winter Flag Football**. Dropoff at Parloa Park at **12:00** with pickup at **1:30pm**. Bring Permission slips.



**JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP**

**FEB. 6<sup>th</sup>** – **Ice Skating**. Drop off at Danbury Ice Arena at **1:30pm** with pick-up at **3:30pm**. Bring Permission slips.



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

**Level II Confirmation Candidates** required **Enrollment Mass, 5:30pm**, **SUN., JAN. 10<sup>th</sup>**. Arrive 15 min. early to sign in.



**ST. MARY BOOK CLUB: JANUARY BOOK**



*“The Screwtape Letters”*, authored by **C. S. Lewis**. Meet for discussion on **TUES., JAN. 26<sup>th</sup>**, at **7:30pm**, in the **Children's Room**.

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





**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS**  
**Next Meeting – JAN. 11<sup>th</sup>, at 8:15.**  
**Rosary at 7:45pm in the Church.**

**MARRIED COUPLES** – Worn out from the Holidays? Are you looking for a way to avoid the January blahs? How about a special weekend, for just the two of you? Register for a **Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend** from **FRI., JAN. 29<sup>th</sup> – SUN., JAN. 31<sup>st</sup>**. For more info please contact **Joe & Jane Staszowski** (860 644-7260) or email: **meweekend@gmail.com**.



**SANTA'S WORKSHOP for Dorothy Day**  
**SAT., DEC. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009**


This was a **HUGE** success thanks to St. Mary Parish. More than 400 families (at least 600 children) received tremendous gifts that none of their parents would have been able to provide them. They waited patiently in bitter cold for hours, warmed up only by hot chocolate and friendly voices.



Thanks to all those who so generously donated the gifts. Also, to **Mary Korin**, who chaired this most successful workshop, and her assistants. And, a special thanks to the **Knights of Columbus** who stood in silent sentry at either end of Spring Street directing traffic.

**SPECIAL THANKS TO THOSE WHO HAVE DONATED TOWARDS FLOWERS FOR OUR ALTAR FOR CHRISTMAS**



**IN MEMORY OF**  **BY**

***Louis H. Pacific, Sr.*** ***Wife, Grace***

***Elizabeth & Anthony Ippolito***  
***Gina & Dan Ippolito***

***Deceased Members of the DeRoin & Prothero Families***  
***John & Kathy DeRoin***

***Deceased Members of the Piotrowski & Torma Families***  
***Pat & Joe Torma***

**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. 22<sup>nd</sup>**, – **SUN., JAN. 24<sup>th</sup>**. 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**.

***Winter Fun***



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**MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK**

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<b>MON., JAN. 11</b>	6:30	+	John Szabo – Tom, Dawn & Gavin Malone
	9:00	+	George Foster – Mrs. McDonald & 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Students
<b>TUES, JAN. 12</b>	6:30	+	Frank Kinsky – Mary & Bob Sawitsky
	9:00	+	Helen Lavin – John & Marilyn Murray
<b>WED., JAN. 13</b>	6:30	+	Dorothy & Link Hurgin ( <i>Health &amp; Blessings</i> )
	9:00	+	Anne Bartkus – Paul & Mary English
<b>THU., JAN. 14</b>	6:30	+	Frank Kinsky – Patricia Kelly
	9:00	+	Msgr. Bert Gadarowski – Marie Miller
<b>FRI., JAN. 15</b>	6:30	+	Sophie Hanyak – Barbara DeRubertis
	9:00	+	Bitondo Family – Marie Willmott
<b>SAT., JAN. 16</b>	8:00	+	Alice McShane & Brendan Duffy
	5:30	+	Edward Yunecko, Jr. – Celeste Caprio
<b>SUN., JAN. 17</b>	7:00	+	Paul Liguori – Art & Bridget Cuomo
	8:30	+	Christian Major – Kozlowski Family
	10:00	+	James Burns – Chick & Dolly Jennings
	11:30	+	Tony Soegaard – Kilmartin Family
	5:30	+	John Rubino – Tony & Debbie Caraluzzi

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**GOAL:    \$15,000**

**COLLECTION:    \$14,126**

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*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.*