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## Fr. Corey's Comments

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As we come to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent, Gaudete Sunday, (the word comes from the Latin, meaning "Rejoice", making its appearance from the Introit of this Sunday's Mass) I wanted to share some interesting symbols of the Advent/Christmas Seasons.

### Christmas

*"The Word became Flesh and made His dwelling among us, and we have seen His glory: The glory of an only Son coming from the Father, filled with enduring love." (John 1:14)*

*The actual date of Christ's birth is unknown. The Gospels do not record it, and there is not any early tradition to identify it. Scholars identify the approximate year as sometime between 8 - 5 BC, and the season as probably early spring. The feast day was placed where it was, in all likelihood, to supplant the practice of the winter solstice festival among pagan converts by pointing to Christ as the true light who comes into the world. The Western Church emphasizes the celebration of the Nativity or Birth of Jesus on December 25, while the Eastern Church celebrates His manifestation to the Magi on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6.*

*The word Christmas was derived from the Old English Cristes Maesse or "Mass of Christmas". Over the centuries it has become a comprehensive word including both the religious traditions and the secular traditions.*

*In North America, the early immigrants brought their different Christmas traditions. The Germans brought the Christmas tree, the Irish contributed the lights in windows of homes, Catholic immigrants brought Midnight Mass, and everyone had their own Christmas carols.*

*The Lights of Christmas: The most obvious symbol of Christmas are lights – Christmas candles, window lights, luminaries, lights on the Advent Wreath and Christmas tree. All signifying that Jesus Christ is the Light of the world.*

*Christmas Candle: The Christmas candle is an ancient tradition. It is usually placed in the center of the Advent Wreath to complete the removal of darkness and sin by the Coming of Christ.*

*Window Lights: Lights placed inside window sills depict a beacon to light the way for Mary, Joseph, and the coming of the Christ Child.*

*Christmas Tree: Christmas trees can be found almost anywhere, any size. For many people, the Christmas tree is only a seasonal decoration. To Christians it symbolizes the green of hope at a time of dying, the burning light of Christ at a time of spiritual darkness, and the fruits of paradise. Its origin as a Christian symbol may trace to a historical event. When St. Boniface evangelized the Germanic tribes he chopped down their sacred oak to prove the impotence of their god. Just as Patrick used the shamrock as a symbol of the Trinity, Boniface used the evergreen as a symbol of the eternity of the true God. The Church provides a blessing ceremony in its Book of Blessings for use in the absence of a priest.*

*Holly: The appearance of holly is representative of the burning bush of Moses and Mary's burning love of God. The red berries and prickly points are symbolic of the crown of thorns and the bloody death that the Christ Child would eventually suffer.*

*Poinsettia: Poinsettias are associated with Christmas as the lily is with Easter. In Mexico it blooms at Christmas time and is called the "Flower of the Holy Night". Its name is from the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico, Dr. Joel Poinsett. Before Columbus came to the New World, I wonder what they decorated Churches with at Christmas time. Poinsettias have become such a staple for Christmas; it is hard to imagine Christmas without them.*

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

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*I wanted to give you a "heads-up" about Christmas. First, on Christmas Eve morning (DEC. 24<sup>th</sup>) there will be just one Mass celebrated at 9:00am. That Mass will be celebrated in the Parish Hall. (We shall be decorating the Church on Wednesday.)*

*The Masses for Christmas Eve are: 4:00pm in the Church, 4:15pm in the School Gym. For safety reasons, there will be NO STANDING in the Church. When the Church is full, you may go into the Parish Hall and watch the Mass on TV (I don't really recommend that because there will be plenty of room in the School Gym). Then, there will be a 6:00pm Mass in the Church, and, of course, Midnight Mass in the Church. The singing of Christmas Carols will begin at 11:30 and Mass will start at Midnight. Remember that parking is sometimes an issue, so I do recommend an early start if you plan on attending the 4:00pm Mass. On Christmas Day, Masses will be celebrated at 7:00am, 9:00am and 11:00am. I promise you that there will be NO issues parking on Christmas Day. Confessions the week of Christmas will be on Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, from 9:30 – 10:00am, Tuesday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> from 7:00 -8:00pm, and on Wednesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> from 4:00-5:00pm.*

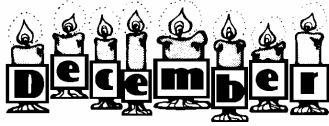
*I was so happy to see most of the Christmas Crib Giving straws were taken on the First Sunday of Advent. Thank you so much for your generosity. I think there are a few more left if anyone is interested. What you give will be returned to you a hundredfold.*

*I made a discovery a few weeks ago that made me a little sad. I found out how many people have never seen the Christmas classics. "The Bells of St. Mary's", "Going My Way", "The Miracle of the Bells", "Rudolph", "Frosty the Snowman", "It's a Wonderful Life" and the "Grinch". And, if you have family night, how about "The Trouble with Angels", "Where Angels Go Trouble Follows", "Boy's Town", "The Keys of the Kingdom", "Angels with Dirty Faces", "The Scarlet and the Black", "A Nun's Story", "The Agony and the Ecstasy", or "I Confess". At one time these movies were not only supported by Hollywood but were given awards and lauded at premiers as well as local theaters. Dip back into our heritage and enjoy a bowl of popcorn, some hot chocolate and a great old movie.*

*Ok, just a reminder of one of my "pet peeve". Please remember to keep Christ in Christmas and offer the greeting of Merry Christmas. If you have Jewish friends, wish them a Happy Hanukah. If you have friends who celebrate no religious holiday, wish them a Happy New Year. After all Jesus is indeed a reason for the season. Imagine having a birthday party for a friend and not letting the friend come or even mentioning his name. If you think about it, it really is kind of odd. Remember, Merry Christmas is not a four-lettered word, or maybe it is.... Christmas does mean L-O-V-E.*

*Last week I saw the movie "Blind Side". While it contained a couple of questionable lines (just giving a fair warning), the message of the film is most uplifting and a wonderful "seasonal" movie. It was great to see that not only the actors do a fine job but to also see the real folks they portrayed in the film. Besides all that, it is a great story that brought a tear to my eye.*

*A member of our Parish told me this one... A country Church was having trouble with squirrels. No matter how hard they tried they could not get rid of the pesky animals. One day the young priest said to the pastor, "Father, why don't we baptize the squirrels?" "What good would that do?" the Pastor asked in a disbelieving voice. "Well," said the young priest, "This way they will only come back on Christmas and Easter."*



# SCHOOL NEWS



## **CHRISTMAS FLOWER DONATION:**

If you wish to make a donation toward flowers for the Church in memory of loved ones, please put your donation in the basket or bring it to the Rectory.

**COFFEE & ...** will be served after the **8:30 & 10:00 Mass** today **SUN., 12/13.**



## **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).



**Holiday sign-up sheets** are in the **Vestry**. If you wish to serve a Christmas Mass, please sign up by **WED., DEC. 16<sup>th</sup>**, or call **Sheila** (744-5777). **MASSSES:** **Christmas Eve** – 4:00, 4:15 (school), 6:00pm, & 12 Midnight (12:00 – **HS only**). **Christmas Day** – 7:00, 9:00, & 11:00am.

**PLEASE NOTE:** New Altar Servers **should not** sign up the weekends of **12/6 & 13**. If additional servers are needed, you may sign up on 12/20.

## **SANTA'S WORKSHOP for Dorothy Day**

**SAT., DEC. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

In the past St. Mary's efforts have made Christmas a happy occasion for many less fortunate children in the greater Danbury area. Last year 500 children who would receive little else for Christmas received gifts at Santa's Workshop. This year we still need as many toys as we can get. We also need hats, gloves, and mittens. If you wish to donate, please leave your unwrapped gift in the vestibule of the Church. **Deacon Mike Oles** (733-5880).



Our annual **Christmas Concert** will be held on **WED., DEC. 16<sup>th</sup>**, at **7:00pm**, in the **School Gym**. All are welcome.



Are you Christmas shopping on-line this year? By logging onto **www.onecause.com** you can shop hundred of merchants (like Lands End, Amazon, and Target, just to name a few), and St. Mary School will receive a small percentage of what you spend. Please log-on, join **OneCause**, and designate **Saint Mary School** (no abbreviations). Click **“Support this school”** on the left side of the page and start shopping!



## **KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS**

**Next Meeting – DEC. 14<sup>th</sup>, at 8:15.**

**Rosary at 7:45pm in the Church.**

## **CHRISTMAS FOOD COLLECTION**

will end tomorrow, **MON., DEC. 14<sup>th</sup>**. Non-perishables are welcome, but breakfast cereal and hams are especially needed. Money gifts may be sent to: **BIA, PO Box 582, Bethel, CT 06801.**



Give the gift of prayer this Christmas! The **MISSION TRIP** teens will be selling **“Heavenly Stock”**, *the stock with heavenly returns*, after all the Masses this weekend, **DEC. 12/13** and next, **DEC. 19/20**. Each recipient will be included in monthly Masses said throughout the year and the proceeds will help fund next year's Mission Trip/Retreat to Camden, NJ in June.

## **MIRACLE OF CHRISTMAS**

**SUN., DEC. 13<sup>th</sup>, 3:00pm, Church**

Take a break from the hustle and bustle to reflect on the true meaning of the Christmas season. Come join the **St. Mary's Choirs** for an afternoon of carols and scriptures, followed by refreshments in the **Parish Hall**.



# Christmas Schedule...

## ST. MARY HOLIDAY MASS SCHEDULE

### CHRISTMAS CONFESSION SCHEDULE

SAT., DEC. 19<sup>th</sup> - 11:00-12 noon  
4:00- 5:00pm  
MON., DEC. 21<sup>st</sup> - 9:30-10:00am  
TUE., DEC. 22<sup>nd</sup> - 7:00- 8:00pm  
WED., DEC. 23<sup>rd</sup> - 4:00- 5:00pm

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### THURSDAY, DEC. 24<sup>th</sup> – CHRISTMAS EVE

4:00pm (Church),  
4:15pm (School),  
6:00pm (Children's Choir),  
(11:30 Sing-along at Church),  
12:00 Midnight (Adult Choir)



We Wish  
You A  
Merry Christmas

### FRIDAY, DEC. 25<sup>th</sup> – CHRISTMAS DAY

7:00am, 9:00am, 11:00am.

(Please note the change in Mass times.)

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### NEW YEAR'S DAY MASS SCHEDULE



THUR., DEC. 31<sup>st</sup>: New Year's Eve –  
6:30am, 9:00am, and 5:30pm.

FRI., JAN. 1<sup>st</sup>: New Year's Day –  
7:00am, 9:00am, and 11:00am.

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**MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK**

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<b>MON., DEC. 14</b>	6:30	+	Thomas Merrick – Susan Suhr
	9:00	+	Msgr. Edward B. Karl – Leo & Marlene Corkery
<b>TUES, DEC. 15</b>	6:30	+	Edward Holub – Brian & Shannon Vanderheiden
	9:00	+	George Foster – Matilde & Colin Cafferty
<b>WED., DEC. 16</b>	6:30	+	Msgr. Bert Gadarowski – Dave Deakin
	9:00	+	Ann Tedrick – Peggy O’Keefe
<b>THU., DEC. 17</b>	6:30	+	Fred Calabrese – John Seidel & Family
	9:00	+	Frank Machado – Matilde & Colin Cafferty
<b>FRI., DEC. 18</b>	6:30	+	Michael McAleer – Mary & Bob Raftery
	9:00	+	Anne Bartkus – Mary Guertin
<b>SAT., DEC. 19</b>	8:00	+	Ruth & Vincent O’Rourke – Grace O’Rourke
	5:30	+	John Hafner – Daughter, Asta Smith
<b>SUN., DEC. 20</b>	7:00	+	Vincent & Marion Spina – McCabe Family
	8:30	+	Jim Armstrong – Wife, Joan
	10:00	+	Peter Kirk – Family
	11:30	+	Margaret Orr – Giuseppina Inzitari
	5:30	+	Zachary Zowine – Mom & Sisters



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**WELCOME TO THOSE WHO WERE NEWLY BAPTIZED**



*O’Connor Michael Furey*

*Anthony Thomas Lanuto*

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This weekend, 12/12-13 there will be a **second collection** for the  
**RETIREMENT FUND for RELIGIOUS.**



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**GOAL:    \$15,000**

**COLLECTION:    \$14,917**

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**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.*