
Fr. Corey's Comments



As we celebrate this Christmas, may we always keep in mind the reason for the celebration: Jesus Christ is born in Bethlehem. He has come to save us from our sins and to show us how to live in love. May this Christmas be for all of us a time of forgiveness, peace and love. On behalf of the Sisters, the Clergy and our staff, may you and yours have a blessed and wonderful Christmas, full of love, happiness and memories.

The Rectory will be closed from Noon on December 21st to 9am on January 3rd.

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◆ Here is a replay of some Christmas-related facts that will arouse your interest:

--- In the Ukraine, if you find a spider web in the house on Christmas morning, it is believed to be a harbinger of good luck! There once lived a woman so poor, says a Ukrainian folk tale, that she could not afford Christmas decorations for her family. One Christmas morning, she awoke to find that spiders had trimmed her children's tree with their webs. When the morning sun shone on them, the webs turned to silver and gold. An artificial spider and web are often included in the decorations on Ukrainian Christmas trees.

--- At Christmas, it is traditional to exchange kisses beneath the mistletoe. In ancient Scandinavia, mistletoe was associated with peace and friendship. That may account for the custom of "kissing beneath the mistletoe". Mistletoe was chosen as Oklahoma's state flower in 1893 and later changed to the state floral emblem.

--- 'Klaxon' is a name that does not belong to one of Santa's reindeer. A klaxon is actually a powerful electric horn. Its name comes from a German word meaning "shriek".

--- In many households, part of the fun of eating Christmas pudding is finding a trinket that predicts your fortune for the coming year. For instance, finding a coin means you will become wealthy. A ring means you will get married; while a button predicts bachelorhood. The idea of hiding something in the pudding comes from the tradition in the Middle Ages of hiding a bean in a cake that was served on Twelfth Night. Whoever found the bean became "king" for the rest of the night.

--- Frumenty was a spiced porridge, enjoyed by both rich and poor. It was a forerunner of modern Christmas puddings. It is linked in legend to the Celtic god Dagda, who stirred a porridge made up of all the good things of the earth.

--- In Greek legend, malicious creatures called Kallikantzaroi sometimes play troublesome pranks at Christmastime. In order to get rid of them, salt or an old shoe is burnt. The pungent burning stench drives off, or at least helps discourage, the Kallikantzaroi. Other techniques include hanging a pig's jawbone by the door and keeping a large fire so they can't sneak down the chimney. Greeks do not use Christmas trees or give presents at Christmas. A priest may throw a little cross into the village water to drive the kallikantzari (gremlin-like spirits) away. To keep them from hiding in dark, dusty corners, he goes from house to house sprinkling holy water.

--- The poinsettia is a traditional Christmas flower. In Mexico (its original birthplace), the poinsettia is known as the "Flower of the Holy Night". It was brought into the US by Joel Poinsett in the early 1800's. Contrary to common belief, poinsettia plants are non-toxic. *Holly berries* are poisonous!

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--- The first Christmas cards were vintage and invented in 1843, the Victorian Era. Louis Prang, a Bavarian-born lithographer who came to the USA from Germany in the 19th century, popularized the sending of printed Christmas cards. He invented a way of reproducing color oil paintings, the "chromolithograph technique", and created a card with the message "Merry Christmas" as a way of showing it off.

--- Hallmark introduced its first Christmas cards in 1915, five years after the founding of the company.

--- The "Urn of Fate" is part of the Christmas celebrations in many Italian households. The Urn of Fate is brought out on Christmas Eve. It holds a wrapped present for everyone. The mother tries her luck first, then the others in turn. If you get a present with your name on it, you keep it; otherwise, you put it back and try again.

--- In Sweden, a common Christmas decoration is the Julbukk, a small figurine of a goat. It is usually made of straw. Scandinavian Christmas festivities feature a variety of straw decorations in the form of stars, angels, hearts and other shapes, as well as the Julbukk.

--- The word Christmas is Old English, a contraction of Christ's Mass.

--- Clearing up a common misconception, in Greek, X means Christ. That is where the word "X-Mas" comes from. Not because someone took the "Christ" out of Christmas.

--- The first president to decorate the white house Christmas tree was Franklin Pierce.

--- Germany made the first artificial Christmas trees. They were made of goose feathers and dyed green.

--- Electric lights for trees were first used in 1895.

--- Traditionally, Christmas trees are taken down after Epiphany.

--- "It's a Wonderful Life" appears on TV more often than any other holiday movie.

--- Rudolph was actually created by Montgomery Ward in the late 1930's for a holiday promotion. The rest is history.

--- The "Nutcracker" is the most famous Christmas ballet.

--- Jingle Bells was first written for Thanksgiving, then became one of the most popular Christmas songs.

--- If you received all of the gifts in "The Twelve Days of Christmas", you would receive 364 gifts.

--- In 1843, "A Christmas Carol" was written by Charles Dickens in just six weeks.

--- Christmas became a national holiday in America on June, 26, 1870.

--- The first state to officially recognize the Christmas holiday was Alabama.

--- In 1907, Oklahoma became the last US state to declare Christmas a legal holiday.

--- In Mexico, wearing red underwear on New Year's Eve is said to bring new love in the upcoming year.

.....*More to follow next week!*

## PARISH HAPPENINGS

**ST. MARY ANNUAL COLLECTION** is continuing. You may still drop your envelope into the offertory anytime this month.

### **Bible Study** “Come Discover the Book of Psalms”



Our Bible Study is taking an in-depth look at the Book of Psalms. If you would like to join us or if you have any questions please contact **Rick Lawlor** at 203-470-8084 or email at **rlawlor22@comcast.net**. Classes will be on most Tuesday evenings, 7:00 pm in the Parish Hall.

**ST. MARY'S MEN'S MINISTRY** meets most Saturday mornings from 6:30-8:00am in the Church Hall from 6:30am. Come join us for excellent fellowship and great discussions along with coffee, bagels and donuts! Our next meeting is on Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>. **Save the date** for our special speaker, **Fr. Terry Quinn** on Wed. evening, January 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm in the Parish Hall.



**NOCTURNAL ADORATION** will be on **FRI., JAN. 6<sup>th</sup>**, from **8:00pm to 8:00am**.

**ONE HOUR WITH HIM** All ages are invited to join us for *the first hour of Adoration from 8:00-9:00pm* in the Church for an hour of music, community prayer, and silent prayer. This is an opportunity to spend time in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Bring your friends, parents, children, siblings for this beautiful hour on the first Friday of each month beginning January.

### **BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP**



provides a prayerful experience of mutual support and comfort for those who are confronting the loss of a loved one. Our next meeting will be on **SAT. JAN. 7<sup>th</sup> from 10:30-noon** in the Parish House. If you will be attending for the first time, please call the **Rectory (203 744-5777)** to confirm.

## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

The next regular meeting will be on **Mon., Jan. 9 at 8:15pm** in the Parish Hall.

**CHRISTMAS FOOD COLLECTION** Thank you to all who generously donated to our collections for Thanksgiving and Christmas! We are still accepting monetary gifts year-round at: Brotherhood in Action, P.O. Box 581, Bethel, Ct. 06801. **Thank you again and God's blessings for the new year!**

## YOUTH GROUP

**SENIOR YOUTH GROUP** with Fr. Jeff and Deacon Joe will have their first kick-off meeting on **Sun., Jan. 8 from 6:30-8:30pm in the Parish Hall!** All high school students are invited to come and find out what's planned for the New Year!!

The **JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP** kick-off meeting will be on **Sun., Jan. 15 from 6:30-8:30pm in the Parish Hall.** Join Fr. Jeff and Deacon Joe to see what's going on for 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders in 2012!

## SCHOOL NEWS

**Christmas Blessings and Joy** to all from the St. Mary School Community!

Classes will resume on **Tuesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>**.

Please join us at St. Mary School for our inaugural **TAKE A LOOK TUESDAY** on **Tuesday, Jan. 10.** Drop in between **9:00-10:00am** and speak with members of our community to learn more about the superior academic and spiritual education that St. Mary School provides to children Pre-K through Grade 8. We look forward to seeing you!

**SNOWFLAKE GALA** – All Parishioners are invited to attend our **18<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner Dance & Auction** on **February 11<sup>th</sup> at the Amber Room from 6:30 – 11:30pm.**



Reservations are now being accepted.

Reservation forms are available online at [www.stmarybethelct.org](http://www.stmarybethelct.org). Please contact Kathleen DeMarco at [kathleendemarco@comcast.net](mailto:kathleendemarco@comcast.net) or 203-917-4077. Tickets are \$75 per person until January 15<sup>th</sup>, \$85 per person thereafter. Join us for a great evening out with friends and the St. Mary's community!



In March 2011, the **GUARDIAN ANGEL NETWORK** was initiated. This is an opportunity for those who would like to donate to our nationally recognized Blue Ribbon St. Mary School. The **Guardian Angel Network** allows the generous spirit of St. Mary parishioners to enhance the top quality education St. Mary students receive. A heart-felt **THANK YOU** is extended to those who have already so generously donated. Please visit the Guardian Angel Network board in the Parish Hall for items ready to select. **Contact** the school website [www.Stmarybethelct.org](http://www.Stmarybethelct.org) for more info or e-mail [Kathleen@Marienugent.com](mailto:Kathleen@Marienugent.com).

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**ATTN: ALL 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS!** The Confirmation Commitment Mass is on *Sunday, Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> at the 5:30pm.* All Confirmation candidates are required to attend. Parents and sponsors are encouraged to attend with their candidate.

**Religious Education Office hours are Tuesday – Thursday, 9:30am – 2:00pm.** The Religious Ed Office will close December 20<sup>th</sup> for Christmas break and reopen January 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## AROUND THE DIOCESE

**OFF THE STREETS:** Thanks to the generosity of many, we have a good supply of household items, so we won't have a drop-off the first Saturday of January. However, we continually need contributions to provide security deposits or one-way bus tickets. It costs on average \$500 to take a homeless person Off The Streets. We have no paid staff, no offices, and almost no overhead. We take no government money. So almost every dollar collected goes directly to helping a homeless person. Thanks to your generosity, we have helped more than 200 persons so far. But the need is great so any contribution you can make will be greatly blessed. Please make a tax-deductible donation to Off The Streets; P.O. Box 591; Bethel, CT 06801. Also since we have received the formal 501 (c) (3) notification, companies can sometimes provide a matching donation. God's blessings from Deacon Mike Oles and Joe Simons, Coordinators.

**CURSILLO** is designed for Catholics who desire to strengthen their faith, who want to be closer to Christ, and who want to bring Christ to those around them. Our next **Ultreya** will be held in the Parish Hall on **Thursday January 19 at 7:30 pm.**

Join with other men and women who are seeking an opportunity to grow in faith and spirituality through Christian community. For more about **Cursillo** or how you can experience a three-day Cursillo weekend, Mary Guertin at [mguertin.home@gmail.com](mailto:mguertin.home@gmail.com) or call 790-6645.

The **BETHEL TOASTMASTERS CLUB'S** meets most 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays, 7:00-8:30 pm in the hall in the Parish Hall. Toastmasters is a nonprofit organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs and is open to all who want to build confidence and better their skills. For more information please call Sharon Closius at 203-798-9822 or Pat Wilson-Perkins at 203-797-1967.



# St. Mary's Snowflake Gala 2012

18th Annual  
St. Mary's School  
Dinner Dance & Auction  
Saturday, February 11, 2012  
Amber Room  
6:30 p.m. - 11:30 p.m.

Cocktail Hour, Dinner &  
Dessert, Open Beer & Wine  
Bar, Dancing  
Live and Silent Auction

Tickets are \$75 per person  
until 1/15, \$85 per person  
after 1/15

Please contact Kathleen  
DeMarco at 203-917-4077 or  
[kathlendedmarco@comcast.net](mailto:kathlendedmarco@comcast.net)



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## MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

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|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>SAT., DEC. 24</b><br><i>(Christmas Eve)</i> | <b>4:00, 5:30, 7:00pm &amp; 12:00 Midnight</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>SUN., DEC. 25</b><br><i>(Christmas Day)</i> | <b>7:00, 8:30, 10:00 &amp; 11:30am</b> ( <u>NO 5:30pm MASS</u> )                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>MON., DECEMBER 26</b>                       | 6:30 + Alice Kozlowski – Paul & Pat Orsino<br>9:00 + Czeslaw Zabrzewski (6 <sup>th</sup> Anniv.) – Wife Alina                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>TUES., DECEMBER 27</b>                      | 6:30 + Michael Gasgoine – Paul & Patricia Mayhew<br>9:00 + William Stevens, Jr. – Family                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>WED., DECEMBER 29</b>                       | 6:30 + Katherine Kiah (10 <sup>th</sup> Anniv.) – Donna Kiah<br>9:00 + Angie Roselli – The Salvestrini Family                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>THU., DECEMBER 29</b>                       | 6:30 + Cathryn Costello<br>9:00 + Marion & Vincent Spina – Family                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>FRI., DECEMBER 30</b>                       | 6:30 + Caroline Basso – Family<br>9:00 + Brendan Duffy & Alice McShane – Friends                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>SAT., DECEMBER 31</b>                       | 8:00 + John Payne & Mary Monahan – Family<br>5:30 + Willaim Stevens, Jr. – Friends of the Family                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>SUN., JANUARY 1</b>                         | 7:00 + Chad McCollam – Cindy & Jim Scholl<br>8:30 + Paul Scott Clayton – Fudgy & Ned Belardinelli<br>10:00 + Steve Deak – Leon & Stephanie Anziano<br>11:30 + Rod Dexter – Patty & Joe Vitarelli<br>5:30 + Alice Marie Giannone – Fudgy & Ned Belardinelli |



### WELCOME TO THOSE WHO WERE NEWLY BAPTIZED

*Chase Jake Moran*

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#### PARISH OFFICE (744-5777)

**Kate Fitzgerald:** *Parish Secretary/Bulletin Ed.*  
**Pat Jackson:** *Parish 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

**Michael Ferrari:** *Music Director*  
**Elizabeth Barnes:** *Choir Director*

#### ST. MARY SCHOOL (744-2922)

**Sister Anne McCarthy:** *Principal*

#### MASS SCHEDULE

**Monday – Friday:** 6:30 & 9:00am  
**Saturday:** 8:00am & 5:30pm (*Vigil Mass*)  
**Sunday:** 7:00, 8:30, 10:00, 11:30am & 5:30pm

#### CONFESSION SCHEDULE

**Saturday:** 4:00 - 5:00pm.

**BAPTISMS:** *Every Sunday at 12:45pm.*  
(Call the Rectory to Schedule.)

**PRE-BAPTISM CLASSES:** *Once a Month.*  
(Call the Rectory to Schedule.)

**ARRANGEMENTS FOR MARRIAGE:** *All Couples must meet with a parish clergyman at least six (6) months before the marriage is to be celebrated.*