

**FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK**

Dear Parishioners,

Monday we celebrate the great feast of Christmas which for us as Christians marks the beginning of an entire new era in the history of the human race. To appreciate what makes Christmas day and the two thousand years that have followed different from all the time that went before we need to know something about love.

It has been said that there are two ways of showing love for another. One way of showing love is in giving gifts to the beloved. When love blossoms between two people they feel the need to make gifts to one another as signs of their interest and affection. That is how God loved us in the creation. In fact, the whole of creation is God's gift to us; the life we possess, the sun, the moon, the stars and more importantly, the other people He has placed in our lives. And this is the love the people of the Old Testament experienced before that first Christmas Day.

But there is a much more beautiful and difficult way of showing love for another and that is to suffer for the beloved. When we love another person enough to take on their burdens, to make their suffering our own, then our love is reaching its ultimate capacity. We have moved beyond giving gifts as signs of our love to giving our very selves out of love for the other. Husbands and wives are called to love each other in this way. And any good parent knows what it means to have a suffering love for their children. Priests and religious are also called to love this way through their willingness to suffer for the sake of the Lord and His people.

This suffering love, this love which is not satisfied in simply giving gifts, but must give its very self, is shown perfectly in the Christmas story when Jesus Christ is born into our world and our suffering. But better than this, not only does Jesus, the Son of God, share our suffering, by His life, death and resurrection Christ has mysteriously transformed suffering into a source of love and grace.

This love of God, which makes Him willing to take on our flesh and to suffer for our sake, is what makes Christmas Day, and the two thousand years that have followed, different from all the days that went before. As we celebrate this great wonder of God becoming man out of love for us, let us open our hearts to His love that it may be the source of our peace. May it also strengthen us to reach out to others, particularly those who are suffering in any way.

With my prayers,  
Fr. Conley

**MANY THANKS AND OUR PRAYERS TO ALL OUR PARISHIONERS FOR A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR. WE ARE ESPECIALLY GRATEFUL FOR ALL WHO**

**HAVE SENT CARDS AND GIFTS. MAY THE SON OF GOD WHO BECAME MAN AT BETHLEHEM REWARD YOU FOR YOUR GOODNESS.**

**HAPPY 80TH BIRTHDAY GOES OUT TO DEACON GENE BURROUGHS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE HERE AT ST. MARY'S.**

**CATHOLIC QUOTES**

*He has shared our journey...Jesus has entered our history; he has shared our journey. He came to free us from darkness and to grant us light. In him was revealed the grace, the mercy, and the tender love of the Father: Jesus is Love incarnate. He is not simply a teacher of wisdom, he is not an ideal for which we strive while knowing that we are hopelessly distant from it. He is the meaning of life and history, which has pitched his tent in our midst.*  
*Pope Francis*

**COME CELEBRATE THE TRUE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS – THE HOLY SPIRIT-WHO MADE IT ALL POSSIBLE!**

We will have a celebration on Thursday, December 28 from 6:30- 9 PM of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit we have received in our parish this year. A special invitation is extended to all of those who participated in our Life in the Spirit series as well as those who continue to come to our Thursday night gatherings. If you can join us, please let Father Conley know at [frconley@comcast.net](mailto:frconley@comcast.net) or 301-870-2220, extension 13. Come Holy Spirit, bring us Jesus!

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE RAFFLE**

**WINNERS:** Debbie Nelson, St. Mary's Bryantown family won \$4500 and Don & Lori Hill, St. Mary's Bryantown family won \$1000. The next drawings will be on January 29, 2018.

**ST. MARY'S NEWPORT - GOOD SHEPHERD**

**FOOD PANTRY** - In need of food? We are here to help. Come visit our Good Shepherd Food Pantry and one of our food pantry volunteers will assist you in gathering food for you and your family. We are open the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month from 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. For more information, you may contact the parish office at 301-934-8825.

**SONS & DAUGHTERS OF GOD**

Our new adult faith formation series begins on Thursday, January 11. This six-session series meets on the second and fourth Thursday of the month from 6:30-8:30 in the hall. We will explore what it means that Jesus Christ has made it possible for us to call God our Father. The cost is \$10 for the series and includes dinner before each session.

The first presentation is called "God Delights in You." Subsequent presentations will focus on the compassion of Jesus and the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Start the new year right by strengthening your spiritual health. You may sign up in the foyer or by contacting Father Conley at 301-870-2220, ext. 13 or [frconley@comcast.net](mailto:frconley@comcast.net)

**HAVE YOU BEEN ASKED TO BE A GODPARENT OR SPONSOR?** If so, **congratulations!** It is a great honor because you have been asked to help someone else to grow in faith as a Catholic. To assist those of you who are asked to be godparents or sponsors we have a two-class course called "**Preparing for the Sacraments for Parents and Sponsors.**" The free course is required for our parishioners who need a recommendation in order to be godparents or sponsors at other parishes. It will provide a good overview of our Catholic faith. This course is usually offered from 7 to 9pm on the first and third Wednesday of each month beginning in January. For more information contact Fr. Conley.

#### **NATIVITIES OF THE WORLD**

Nativities of the World, a collection of more than 150 mostly-handcrafted crèches from around the globe, will be on exhibit at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land from now until January 7, 2018 (daily 9am-5 pm). Many are folk art, created of local materials, such as nuts, tin foil, straw, and felt. See the universality of the Catholic faith through the way different cultures express the birth of Christ. The Monastery is at 1400 Quincy St. NE, Washington, DC 20017. Free parking near Brookland-CUA Metro/H6 bus toward Ft. Lincoln. Information: [myfranciscan.org](http://myfranciscan.org) and 202-526-6800.

#### **RETRouvaille MARRIAGE PROGRAM**

**4 Stages of Marriage** – The 4 stages of marriage are: (1) Romance, (2) Disillusionment, (3) Misery, and (4) Awakening. Many marriages experience the first 3 Stages. Marriages that end in divorce never make it to the 4<sup>th</sup> Stages of Awakening. Don't give up without learning about the 4<sup>th</sup> Stage of Awakening. If your marriage suffers from Disillusionment or Misery, please contact Retrouvaille. All calls are confidential.

To register or obtain more information visit our website at: [www.HelpOurMarriage.com](http://www.HelpOurMarriage.com) or call 443-400-7017.

**WANTED!!! SPONSORS WHO WOULD LIKE TO ADVERTISE ON BACK OF OUR CHURCH BULLETIN.** If anyone is interested in advertising for the upcoming year that will start on March 1st, please call Mary at the rectory at 301-870-2220.

#### **SCHEDULE FOR CHRISTMAS TIME MASSES AND CONFESSIONS**

##### **MASSES FOR CHRISTMAS EVE**

4 PM Children's Mass

8 PM Choral Mass

*Prelude begins at 7:30*

##### **MASSES FOR CHRISTMAS DAY**

8 AM and 10 AM

*Please note that there will not be a morning Mass on Tuesday, December 26*

#### **MASSES FOR THE WEEKEND OF DECEMBER 30- JANUARY 1**

##### **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30**

Confessions 8:30 AM and Mass at 9 AM

Confessions at 3 PM and Mass at 4 PM

##### **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31**

Masses at 8 AM, 10 AM and 12 noon

4 PM Vigil Mass for the Solemn Feast of Mary, Mother of God

##### **MONDAY, JANUARY 1**

Masses at 8 AM, 10 AM, and 12 noon

#### **MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK:**

**SUN:** 8am Don Pobst, 10am Parishioners,

**12N: NO MASS,** 4pm Janine Burch, 8pm Eleanor

Kalamor Haupt, **MON:** 8am Mary K. Estep,

10am Jimmy Estep, **TUES:** 8am **NO MASS,**

**WED:** 8am Robert Goodman, **THURS:** 8am Robert

Popp, **FRI:** 9:30am Pat Rettig, **SAT:** 9am Don Pobst,

4pm Donald Lawson.

#### **PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY**

**PRAYERS:** Mary Bowes, Frances Card, Joe Cross, Kendall Farrell, George Fassel, Arlene Gandolfi, Martha Gehring, Judy Istvan-Windsor, Irma Johnson, Regina Kijesky, Marie Knobel, Lillian Komar, Susie Logan, Maurice Long, Liz Marcus, Mary Emma Middleton, Larry Miller, Joseph Mona, Wayne Mullings, Lenora Proctor, Joseph Quade, Sylvene Savoy, William Leon Savoy, Edna Sweeney, Lisa Thompson, Beth Weise, Tim Welch, Brice Zimmer.

#### **OFFERTORY COLLECTION LAST WEEKEND,**

\$9233.00. Of the 770 registered households in the parish, we received donations from 252 identifiable contributors (55% of the parish) using envelopes or checks. The unidentified donations totaled \$845.00. We received \$21.00 for our School Support.