

### Third Sunday of Advent

Recognizing the Lord

December 14, 2008

Reading I: [Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11](#) The Spirit Is Upon Me

Reading II: [1 Thessalonians 5:16-24](#) Pray Without Ceasing

Gospel: [John 1:6-8, 19-28](#) The One to Come

**Gospel Summary** -The Jewish leaders questioned John the Baptist asking who he was. They even took a few guesses themselves suggesting that he was the Messiah, Elijah, or a prophet. John had his own following who would have been glad to acknowledge him in any of these three categories, but John made it clear that he was simply announcing the one to come who would be much greater than himself.

**Reflection for Families** - So often our identity is tied to another person. We are Jim's mom, Tom's wife, Sue's husband, or Mary's daughter. Like John did in today's gospel, we may even define ourselves by who we are not. John made it clear he was not the Messiah, a prophet, or Elijah returned. What John is, is the same thing we are, and that is a herald & the person who brings the Good News about Jesus Christ into the lives of others. In our families we do this by our faithful participation in worship, prayer, and actions.

#### Bringing the Gospel into Your Family -

Just like John claimed that he was a witness to testify to the light, make plans as a family to bring the Light of Christ into the world. Light candles at your evening meal. When you have finished eating, turn out all the lights so that you see only by the light of the candles. Go around the table asking each person to think of one action that he/she will do this week to announce Jesus among us. In a few nights, check in with each other to see how the actions were received.

#### HOPE MEAL & RIDE PROGRAM

December 14<sup>h</sup> to December 20<sup>th</sup>

Please give 3 days notice

Coord: Bernadette Grandieri 610-565-6141

#### MASS CHANGES IN JANUARY

Our Sunday Mass at 9:30 AM will change to 10 AM starting Sunday, January. 4<sup>th</sup>. The rest of the schedule will remain the same.

#### MASS INTENTIONS

##### SATURDAY, December 13

8:30AM John & Angela Mancini

5:30PM Paul Arizin

##### SUNDAY, December 14

7:30AM Patrick Cotter

9:30AM Joseph Labrum, Sr.

11:30AM John Gross, Jr.

5:30PM Fred Dolente

##### MONDAY, December 15

8:30 AM Theresa M. D'Achino

##### TUESDAY, December 16

6:30 AM Richard Smith

8:30AM Eleanor MacIntosh

##### WEDNESDAY, December 17

6:30AM Anne Devine

8:30AM Phyllis J. Hagendorf

##### THURSDAY, December 18

6:30AM Deceased Priests of the Parish

8:30AM Joseph T. Cosden

##### FRIDAY, December 19

6:30AM Deceased Dominican Sisters of our School

8:30AM Jim Fay

##### SATURDAY, December 20

8:30AM Patrick Cotter

5:30PM Joanne Federico

##### SUNDAY, December 21

7:30AM Albert DiGregorio

9:30AM Jim Fay

11:30AM Ginella D'Aurizio

5:30PM Emil Rasa

#### Bread & Wine – Anthony Petrone

**WE ARE IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF THE WORLD, AND DEVOTED FOR A BETTER WORLD, FOR WE ARE DESTINED FOR DIVINE LIFE AND LOVE**

**Plan to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation as your best gift to yourself and your family as we prepare to enjoy the Christmas peace and joy of Jesus.**

**Our Cluster Penance Services will be at 7 PM.**

**Ten priests will be available.**

**Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> - Monday, at St. John, Wallingford**

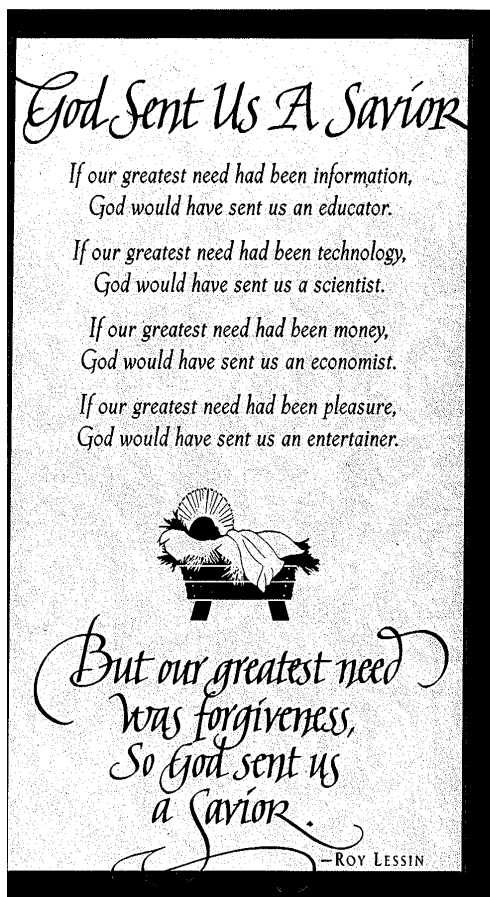
**Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> - Tuesday, Our Lady of Charity, Brookhaven**

**Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> - Wed., St. Mary Magdalen**

**Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> - Thurs., St. Katharine, Chester**

**Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> - Sat., 4-5 PM SMM**

**Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> - Monday, Nativity- Media**



**JESUS ALONE GIFTS US WITH PEACE  
THE FAMILY THAT SINS TOGETHER  
CAN BE HEALED TOGETHER  
WITH THE MERCY OF JESUS**

I reflected on when I felt the closest to my Dad. The memory keeps flashing in my mind of Dad and I going to confession together when I was a child. While kneeling together praying our penance, God taught me that Dad was a sinner just like me and we both needed Christ's mercy to be reconciled to God and each other. As a priest I realize that my deep affection and respect for my Dad even in his weaknesses has helped me to accept my own failures and yet be more humble and compassionate with myself as well as those who seek God's mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Why not pass on the healing gift of God's mercy and compassion to your children by joining us as a family for one of our Cluster Penance Services? Give the best gift to yourself and family by receiving forgiveness for your personal and family sins together so that you can **enjoy the peace and joy of his divine forgiveness and friendship.** Love, Fr. Ralph



**From Mrs. Burke's Desk...**

The results are in...twenty-eight of our eighth grade students have been invited to sit for the Connelly Foundation Neumann Scholarship examination to be held this January 31, 2009. These students have met the eligibility requirements by receiving an academic average of 92 or above in 7th grade, combined with either a National Percentile Total score of 90 or above or a CSI of 120 or above in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Terra Nova Test. We congratulate their outstanding academic success as being among the best and brightest in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The following students are eligible to sit for this challenging examination:

Stefanie Adams, Jessica Bellia, Justin Barker, Conor Bradley. Ryan Bradley, Gonzalo del Peon, Lindsay Dowrick, Natalia Fabisiak, Giulianna Fardone, Gabriela Faux, Stephen Fediw, Brian Fitzgerald, Kevin Fulmer, Scott Grinnan, Andrew Halt, Robert Juliana, Kaitlin King, Alyssia LaMonaca, Ryan McFadden, Rosemarie McLaughlin, Anita Morro, Maura Murphy, Christina O'Shea, Madeline Pelesh, Eric Poynton, Ryan Robinson, Matthew Rushton, and Alexander Tammany.

The SMM Instrumental Christmas Concert will take place on Tuesday evening, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM in the Father Hughes Parish Center. Please come join us!

Registration information: 610-565-1822  
Celebrate our vision for learning...moral awareness, academic excellence, responsible citizenship, and cultural development.

**From the President Desk ...**

**From the office of the School President:**

We are beginning to form the St. Mary Magdalen Alumni Association. I am grateful to those who have contacted me with information about alumni from our school. If you are a graduate or have family members who have graduated from SMM, in the back of church is a form that we would appreciate if you complete. You may return it to the parish office mailbox or in the Sunday collection basket. You can also e-mail your information to [presidentsmm@comcast.net](mailto:presidentsmm@comcast.net) Thank you for your cooperation in this new endeavor! May our school continue to be **PASSIONATELY CATHOLIC AND ACADEMICALLY CHALLENGING!**

**SMM Alumni Association -Pat Miniszak**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Phone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BAPTISMAL PREP CLASSES:** Call **Peter or Mary Zurbach** to sign up for class at **610-565-5736**. Sponsor Eligibility Letters from the parishes are needed three weeks before the Baptism. Next Pre Jordan is **January 6th, 7:00 PM**. We ask you to come for instructions before you give birth so that you can be prepared in choosing your date and sponsors.

We remind all God parents that they must be registered and practicing Catholics. They must be 16 years of age and have received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

**A time to die, please** pray for the members of our SMM Faith Community who have died, **Robert Protesto, Sr., father of Jack, John Elko, father of John Jr., Walter Scheuerman, father of Tom**) and all the victims of war, hurricanes, and the 4,100 daily abortions.

**A time to heal...PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR SICK & OUR SOLDIERS in harm's way:**  
**Our Children:** Farnsworth Bisbee, Fred Cambio, John Cammorato, Gianna Campbell, Leo Carlin, Chick Carman, Rosemary Casey, Daniel Casullo, Gennela D'Orazio, Gea DelSordo, Ann DiDonato, Marcella DiMaggio, Erin DiMartino, Domenic and Eleanor DiPangrazio, Carla Donato, Frances Dougherty, Baby Cooper Gates, Louis Gentile, Vincent Grasso, Margaret Greto, John & Helen Hartman, Joseph Jascewsky, Elliott Johnson, Henry Johnson, Kathy Joy, Leon Kazmierczak, Nancy LoMonaco, Joseph Manion, Michael Manganiello, Joe MacDonald, Theresa MacCombie, Kathy Mauer, Francis McCabe, Joe McCarthy, Mary McDevitt, Anna Teresa Moretto, Lucille Noonan, William O'Brien, Alan Okon, Timothy Poole, Christine Quinn, James Ranieri, Sr, Bobby Ruggieri, Jean Quarto, Carolyn Rock, John Scott, John Shea, Dan Shillington, Gerald Snyder, George Tyson, Samantha Johnston-Twining, Louise Veit, Catherine Walsh, Rev. Bill Wright, Lindy Zwahlen.

**Please call the rectory if you are sick or want a priest** to visit you in the hospital or at home. Remember it is a spiritual work of mercy to pray & visit the sick & bring them the consolation and companionship of Jesus.

**WELCOME OUR NEW FAMILIES:** **William & Deborah Heitz, Louis & Rita Troilo, Patrick & Gigi Scullin & family, Brian & Jaime Haughton, Mr. Brian Kovacs, and Miss Michele Perrelli & family. See Fr. Chieffo for a Registration Form.** If you would like your family and home to be blessed, please call the parish office. If you are interested in visiting our new families to share about our parish activities, please contact **Joanne Hinkle at 610-892-3998.**

**SMM Home & School Poinsettia Sale:** will be available before & after all the Masses on Saturday, December 13 at 5:30PM & Sunday December. 14<sup>th</sup>.

**GOD BLESS YOUR GENEROUS HEARTS**  
We are grateful to **Sue Fromhold** and all St. Nick's Helpers for distributing all your sacrificial generosity for our needy neighbors. Have a turkey you can't use this year? We'll take it off your hands. Call **Kathy Siegfried at 610-627-1933**

**YOU CAN GROW IN YOUR FAITH BY LISTENING AND SHARING**  
Consider joining a small scripture reflection and faith-sharing group made up of fellow parishioners. These groups meet in an informal setting to review the Sunday Mass readings and discuss their relevance to today's world in our individual and collective lives. It is a wonderful way to meet & connect with one another as a community of believers on a journey toward our spiritual home. Meetings are approximately one and a half hours. Facilitators and times of meetings are listed below. Please call either Terry Campbell (610-627-1109) for more information, or one of the facilitators.

**Sunday evenings, 7:30PM:** Terry Campbell 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays.

**Mondays at 2 PM:** Betty Mulhern 610-353-5035.  
Twice monthly: Sue Mita 610-566-4819

**Tuesday evenings, 7:30PM** (monthly): Mary Ann Foster 610-566-1399.

**Men's Group:** Jim Dooley (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays) 610-892-9684 at 7:30PM.

**Wednesday mornings, 7 AM** Men's Group: Don Saleski (610-566-3492) in Church Gathering Room.

**Monthly, 9:30 AM,** toddler's welcome: Jeanne Barker 610-627-1009.

**Weekly, 3 PM:** Eleanor O'Rourke, White Horse Village 610-558-9128.

**Thursday evening, 7:30 PM:** Bonnie Clark (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> weeks) 610-353-7930.

If you want to start a group, call Fr. Chieffo.

**JOIN US FOR PERPETUAL  
EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION**

**SUNDAY 1PM- SATURDAY 8:30 AM**

Praise God, Our Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration Chapel We have resumed 24/7 adoration of the Blessed Sacrament - that's round the clock adoration from Sunday after the 11:30 AM Mass until Saturday before the 8:30AM Mass. Thanks to the Holy Spirit and all of our committed adorers, SMM can once again keep the doors open to our Chapel all day and night. Thanks to all of you who committed to spending at least one hour with Jesus every week in Adoration. **There are a few AM hours that still need adorers: Tuesday 3-4 AM, Friday 2-3 and 3-4 AM and Saturday 3-4 and 4-5 AM.** Please prayerfully consider committing to an hour or possibly sharing an hour with someone, alternating weeks or coming together. For questions call Monica 891-9483 or Shelly 353-7739.

**RELIGIOUS BOOK STUDY GROUP**

Celebrate the year of St. Paul by joining the religious book study on **St. Paul & his Epistles**. The group meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday evening of the month from 7:35 pm – 9PM in our library. Please contact Gina Mesko at 610-872-0876: [gagm2002@comcast.net](mailto:gagm2002@comcast.net). Newcomers welcomed anytime throughout the study! Let the word of God grace and guide you to Jesus!

**SMM MOMS IN TOUCH**

**Meet for prayer hour on Tuesday mornings at 9:00AM in the St. Katharine Drexel Room in the school**, Even if you are not comfortable praying in a group, just joining us and praying silently in your heart will add to the strength of all our prayers! Small children are always welcome. Not sure if our group is for you? Call Dana Westby at 610-892-9680.

**AN INVITATION TO A JOURNEY OF  
FAITH in the Catholic Church –RCIA**

If you are interested in becoming a Catholic, or are a Catholic desiring to celebrate Eucharist and Confirmation, please consider joining our Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) journey of faith. Meetings will be held every **second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 8:00 P.M.** You may call Deacon James DiFerdinand at our parish offices (610 566 8821 ext. 123). New

members are always welcome as well as those interested in learning about our faith.

**H.O.P.E. PRAYER CHAIN**

HOPE accepts prayer requests to show our parish spiritual support during difficult times. Contact Maria Flannery at 610-565-3144 for your prayer request and also to be a prayer warrior for SMM. Lift up your fears and anxieties to God and receive his grace.

**HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH MINISTRY**

Our high school Youth Group meets every Sunday night in the Youth Room in the basement of the school. After providing the music at the 5:30pm Mass, we meet until 7:30pm for faith, fun, and always some food! Here's what the next few weeks looks like:

12/14 – Christmas Caroling

12/21 – Movie Night

For our annual Christmas Caroling night on Sunday, December 14, the teens will travel the parish spreading holiday cheer to those in need starting at 6:30pm. If you know someone who would like a visit from our Singing Elves, call 610-996-1944 to schedule a stop and we'll come a'wassaling!

**PARISH PICNIC AND OPEN HOUSE  
SUNDAY APRIL 26, 2009 1 PM-5 PM**

The Pastoral Council is looking for volunteers to run a parish picnic here on the grounds using the parish center, cafeteria, and schoolyard. We need people to give tours of the school and church. See **Fr. Chieffo or Carolina Stangis at 484-443-8352**.

**THE ROSARY & BENEDICTION**

Join us every Tuesday in the chapel at 7:15PM. Benediction will resume on January 6<sup>th</sup>, Deacon James DiFerdinand will offer a scripture reflection and Benediction after the Rosary.

**LITTLE CHURCH SCHOOL**

Little Church School is a program for children ages 3 to 5 (including Kindergarten) which meet on most Sundays during the 9:30AM Mass in our Kindergarten classroom. Registration forms can be picked up in the back of the Church.

**CHARISMATIC HEALING MASS  
WITH ST. CHARLES SEMINARIANS**

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 2<sup>ND</sup> AT 7:30 PM**

**PRAISE BEGINS AT 7 PM**

**ALL ARE WELCOME TO PRAISE GOD FOR HIS  
COUNTLESS BLESSINGS**

### STEWARDSHIP AND TITHING

In this time of financial crisis, I thank you for your continued faith and generosity in supporting our church to the best of your ability. Be assured of my gratitude for all you can and can not do at this time. Please do not hesitate to call upon me, if you need help. **Fr. Ralph**

**December 7<sup>th</sup> - \$24,823.00**

**Last Year - \$22,921.00**

**Retired Religious - \$3,637.00**

**Immaculate Conception - \$1,256.00**

### CENSUS/STEWARDSHIP COMMENTS

I cut down on my Christmas card list and decided to call, visit and especially spend more time praying for everyone.

### BUILDING FUND

**Cash received - \$6,092,855.45**

**Balance due on pledges - \$429,685.67**

**Total amount spent - \$9,097,965.68**

**Loan with Archdiocese - \$500,000.00**

**Our new Angel Stained Glass Window donated by the Harvey Family should be installed this week.**

### SHARING OUR PARISH STEWARDSHIP

God bless you abundantly for all the gifts for our needy brothers and sisters in the area as well as a donation to the Needy School Students of BVM School, Darby and the Bridge of Hope orphanage in India. You can help by sending your contribution to: Blessed Virgin Mary School 1101 Main St., Darby, PA 19023  
St. Ignatius School 636 N. 43<sup>rd</sup> St. Phila, PA 19104  
Bridge of Hope for Children P.O. Box 160 Eagleville, PA 19408 Fr. Ignatius Marneni thanks you.

**JESUS LOVES CHEERFUL GIVER!**

### OUR FINANCE COMMITTEE RESULTS

To keep tuition at a minimum, we decided to raise tuition \$125 per student rather than the needed \$200 per student due to our increased expenses. We remind you that the parish subsidy will be \$650,000 or half of the Sunday collections. We strongly believe in Catholic Education for the spiritual and moral formation of our children. If anyone is facing a financial crisis, please let us assist you. Contact Mr. Antonello, our Business Manager. We are

grateful that the Endowment Fund will contribute \$50,000 to help the salaries of our school, PREP, and Youth Minister as well as all our Adult Spiritual Programs.

### SCHOOL TUITION

**2009-2010**

**1 CHILD 2 CHILDREN 3 CHILDREN**

**\$2700 \$4600 \$6000**

**KINDERGARTEN \$2850**

Non Parishioners: double tuition

### ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSFER

Starting December 15, 2008, "EFT" electronic fund transfer will be available to those parishioners who wish to make regular **Sunday** contributions on a **monthly** basis. Bank forms are available in the church narthex. Complete the form and turn it into our church office, located under the church. Call Mary Lou for information, 610-566-8821 X109, if needed. Your **monthly** contribution will be electronically transferred on the **15<sup>th</sup>** of every **month** from your bank to our bank starting as of December 15<sup>th</sup>. Our first year's goal is 100 families using the "EFT" system. We hope this format will assist you in budgeting your family expenses as we hope it will help in budgeting the parish expenses.

### SPONSOR A STUDENT

We thank all the very generous parishioners who made a contribution to our Sponsor a Student program. Anyone else interested in helping needy families, call Anthony Antonello or the parish office.

### COMMEMORATIVES AVAILABLE

**CHANDELIERS (\$10,000)**

**PEWS (\$10,000)**

**RECONCILIATION ROOM (2) (\$15,000 ea)**

**WINDOWS IN CHAPEL (\$25,000)**

**#8 The Crucifixion, #10 The Ascension**

**#14 The Last Day**

**CHURCH CHAIRS - \$500**

**FRONTAL PEWS - \$600**

**SUNDAY LECTIONARY - \$200**

**BAPTISMAL BOOK - \$100**

**CHOIR AND SERVER ROBES- \$100**

We still have other commemoratives, so please call the parish office or see Fr. Chieffo after mass.

I want to thank **Peter Lerro** for working on a photo album of our new church and **Ron Burns** for designing our new **SMM Stations of the Cross** pamphlet and Chapel photo album. The new Angel Window was designed by Beyer Studio and donated by **the Harvey Family**.

**NEW & EXPANDED GIFT CARD PROGRAMS NOW AVAILABLE**

We now have available an expanded gift card program to compliment our Scrip program. Gift cards from over 85 local and popular merchants are now available to you, your family, friends or anyone interested in helping to support our tuition fund. Gift cards to merchants such as **Home Goods, Home Depot, SuperFresh, Genuardi's, TJ Maxx, Borders Bookstore, Dunkin Donuts** and many, many more are now available to you...and you don't even need to leave your home! Take a look at the information posted on the homepage of our website [www.stmarymagdalen.net](http://www.stmarymagdalen.net) Complete instructions and order forms are available for you to print and submit. Orders will be taken on a monthly basis so there is no deadline. Order as much as you like, when you like. We hope you will take advantage of this wonderful program we have made available to you. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Nicky Verna at 610-627-2383 or [tnverna@comcast.net](mailto:tnverna@comcast.net)

**FOOD COLLECTION**

**PLEASE PLACE ALL FOOD DONATIONS NEAR THE SHRINE AREA**

Hard times are upon us and so it is only expected that Food Pantries are in need of your help right now. Items needed include: pancake mix and syrup, cereals, coffee, stews, macaroni and cheese, peanut butter and jelly, pasta and sauce, juices, tuna, spaghetti, canned hams, rice, soups, snacks, canned fruit, soup, cookies, crackers, cake mix and icing, canned potatoes, formula, and diapers. Gift cards are always welcome.

**INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY**

A hearty thank you to all of you in the parish for helping to keep this program, aiding homeless families, up and running. So far, **\$4400** has been collected but the network needs approx. \$6,600/mo. to stay in operation. It is never too late – donations can still be sent to: Delco IHN, P. O. Box 2384, Aston, PA 19014. Sue Fromhold [sfromholddcihn1@verizon.net](mailto:sfromholddcihn1@verizon.net). Thank you in advance for your generosity.

**2008 CARDINAL'S CHRISTMAS PARTY**

The annual Cardinal's Christmas Party for Children supports Catholic Social Services work on behalf of children in need. Last year,

Catholic Social Services served 9,000 children and their families who were struggling with homelessness, abuse or poverty. Please send your gift to The Cardinal's Christmas Party for Children, 222 North 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 708, Philadelphia, PA or on-line at [www.cardinalschristmasparty.org](http://www.cardinalschristmasparty.org).

**ADD YOUR HEAVENLY VOICE TO OUR CHOIR**

Calling all singers in the congregation who have meant to join the Adult Choir, and have not "gotten around to it." Our new church deserves some new people in the choir as well as our faithful members. Practice is every **Wednesday at 7:30 PM IN CHURCH.**

**ALTAR SERVER SCHEDULE**

**Saturday – December 20th**

5:30PM – M. Campbell, E. Campbell, Z. Maylish

**Sunday – December 21st**

7:30AM – E. Biancaniello, K. Cardamone, J. P. Kirk

9:30AM – S. Jensen, A. Keith, B. McCarthy

11:30AM – K. & M. Doyle, R. McLaughlin

5:30PM – J. Nolen, H. Laut

**FATHER CHIEFFO ON THE RADIO**

Each **Thursday on AM Radio 800, 5:00 – 6:00 pm. Fr. Chieffo** explains the **Catechism of the Catholic Church on In His Sign Radio.** You can also participate by calling your questions or sharing.

**LAUGH WITH THE PASTOR**

**Are you wrinkled by burdens?**

**Come to Confession for a faith-lift.**

One of our fourth grade PREP students asked our teacher Mrs. Matthews, "Who is God's wife? Another added: "Where is she anyhow?"

**CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

Saint James Alumni Choir will perform on December 14, 2008 at 2:00 PM at the Doghouse, 1499 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Eddystone Admission –Canned Goods.

**GO WEST WITH FATHER CHIEFFO**

Join Father Chieffo on a 9 day tour, June 18 – 26, 2009, including the Grand Canyon, Scottsdale, Bryce Canyon & Zion National Parks and much more. Call Maureen Ward Rennie at Kitty Ward Travel for more details 610-543-0680.

**TRAVEL TO WORLD FAMOUS CHINA**

with Fr. Stephen Curry, June 26 – July 7, 2009. Contact him at 610-259-7750 ext 1328 or [frscurry@gmail.com](mailto:frscurry@gmail.com).

### **PRAYER FOR THE MARINES**

Eternal Lord, who through many generations has united and inspired the members of the Marine Corps, grant your blessing on Marines serving all around the globe, by sea and by land. Make them strong in brotherhood and resourceful, gallantry and honor, loyalty and courage, in dealing with those who conspire to destroy the peace and harmony of the lands where they serve. We ask this in the name of Him whose word is always faithful, our Redeemer Jesus Christ. Amen

### **COMFORT CARE COLLECTION**

Thank you to all who donated to comfort care for our active troops. If you missed this opportunity don't fret, we will be collecting and shipping again in the spring.

### **CATHOLIC CHARITIES THANK YOU**

I write to thank you and your parishioners for your generous support of the 2008 Catholic Charities Appeal.

The allocation Catholic Social Services receives from the Appeal enables us to provide programs for pregnant women, parenting classes for mothers and fathers, professional counseling services, particularly in our suburban counties, and support for our senior citizen centers.

The allocation that Nutritional Development Services receives from the Appeal supports the Community Food Program. This program provides non-perishable food to parish food pantries and the CSS Family Service Center food cupboards. More and more people in our community are coming to these food cupboards for assistance during this period of economic stress. Last year over two million meals were provided through this program.

Your parish enables us to provide help and create hope in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. You and your parishioners are true partners with us in the works of charity that we strive each day to offer to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Please be assured of the gratitude of myself, my staff, and most especially the people whom we serve for your generosity and commitment to our mission.

Sincerely, Joseph J. Sweeney, Jr.

Secretary for Catholic Human Services

### **CHRISTIAN MARATHON**

The marathon race is a marvelous image of the stages of the Christian life. As in the Christian life the runners begin the race with enthusiasm and energy. They are pumped up to complete the 26.2 mile run. Similarly, the beginning of the Christian life is easy for many. The middle part of the race becomes more difficult. In a marathon it is called "hitting the wall". This also happens in the Christian life. One encounters the stress, turmoil and suffering that inevitably are part of life.

We Catholics have trained for the marathon run of faith. However many of us never anticipate "hitting the wall". For the marathoner the wall is the moment the body wants to quit. The mind and spirit must then force the body to do what it thinks it cannot do. Likewise in the Christian's "marathon run" we anticipate "the wall" and commit ourselves to press on to the finish line.

For most marathoners, placing first, second or third is not the most important thing. Though the media is interested in the top spots, most marathoners know that the most important thing to do is FINISH the race. Some runners will still be jogging into the night; others may cross the line walking, and still others in wheelchairs. Almost all will come to the finish line only through great suffering and agony. For the Christian, the most important thing is to FINISH the race of faith.

In ancient times the winners of a race received a garland of olive leaves as a crown of victory. However, St. Paul reminds us, we await a crown of glory that is imperishable. (I Corinthians 9:25).

As we celebrate Advent, we remember the men, women and children throughout the ages who completed the race of faith. Having endured the trials of this life they are rewarded with crown of eternal life in heaven. We rejoice that God has given us such a variety of modes of faithfulness. Some are canonized saints that inspire the whole church. Others are those personal acquaintances who have inspired us in our race of faith.

### **CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE**

#### **Christmas Eve Masses**

4:00 PM (Children's Choir)

6:00 PM (Adult Choir)

8:00 PM (Guitar Group)

#### **Christmas Day Masses**

7:30 AM, 9:30 AM and 11:30 AM

#### **New Years Day Masses**

9:30 AM and 11:30 AM

**THIS IS WHERE YOU WILL PLACE OUR  
OLD COVER PAGE OF THE St MARY  
MAGDALEN BULLETIN. (the one with the  
phones numbers of our ministries)**

**THE COVER STARTING THIS WEEK  
WILL BE OUR NATIVITY WINDOW FOR  
THE WEEKS OF  
DECEMBER 14, 21,28 & JANUARY 4**