

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

Dear friend in Christ, blessed member of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament,

At the beginning of a Christmas story that is familiar to us all, Bob Cratchit greets his uncle cheerfully, "A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" His uncle, the notorious Ebenezer Scrooge, responds with his famous sneer, "Bah! Humbug!" Then he demands of his nephew, "What right have you to be merry? You're poor enough." Cratchit counters this remark with: "What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough."

As we celebrate Christmas this year, we recognize our many blessings and are grateful to God. At the same time, we are acutely aware that there is much fear and anxiety in the lives of many of our fellow Americans. We all hope that we have seen the worst of the economic crisis, but knowledgeable prognosticators tell us that it will continue throughout the coming year. That means that our lives will be consumed with more people having fewer resources. And we will see our own co-workers struggle to maintain a quality of life for their families as well. These challenges will affect all of us as we struggle to be creative in our response. But we will succeed.

We need this celebration of Christmas to remind us that success is not only measured in numbers of bags of groceries distributed or shelter beds provided, but more importantly in how each person in need is received. As Catholics we see in each person the image of God and, in many the suffering person of Christ. Whatever else we are able to offer them, the greatest gift we give is the assurance of God's love and compassion. As Pope Benedict XVI reminds us, we are people of hope who everyday witness to God's kingdom in our midst.

The work of being the church in this country and throughout the world is evidence of our faith and hope put into action. You as parishioners of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament respond to a profound calling to this work. The mystery of the Incarnation is made visible in your dedication and leadership. You have taken the words of the medieval mystic, Meister Eckhardt, to heart: what good is it for Christ to have come into the world so long ago, if he is not born anew in my heart this year?

In the Christmas opera Amahl and the Night Visitors, the mother of the poor crippled boy Amahl in her need tries to steal the Magi's gold meant as a gift for the newborn king. The response of the kings is not one of condemnation, but rather of generosity:

**"O woman, you can keep the gold.  
The Child we seek doesn't need our gold.  
On love, on love alone he will build his kingdom.  
His pierced hand will hold no scepter.  
His haloed head will wear no crown.  
His might will not be built on your toil.  
He will bring us new life and receive our death,  
and the keys to his city belong to the poor."**

My dear parishioners we are privileged to serve the poor, the marginalized, the needy, the forgotten. This is truly holy work. As you gift your community in so many ways, my prayer for you is that you be truly blessed in your life and your work. May you know the joy of Mary and Joseph, the wonder of the shepherds and the peace of the Christ Child who brings meaning and purpose to our lives.

## ~ CHRIST IS BORN, LET US REJOICE! ~

The Gospel writer Luke 2:8-20 describes the Shepherds' experience with Jesus' birth. Luke tells us that the angels who appeared to the Shepherds first said "be not afraid". As the story goes, those shepherds then travelled to Bethlehem to see for themselves the Messiah whom the Angels said had been born there. After they had heard from the Angels and then seen for themselves, they were of great joy, fearless and could not shut up – they sang the praises of the Lord and told everyone the same good news.

It seems to me that there is a lot of fear, even despair in our daily lives today. Many people have lost all or a large portion of their savings. Many have lost their jobs and with that loss, their sense of purpose, sense of identity, and ability to care for self and family. I see it every day and hear about it in discussions with my peers across the State and the country. Sadly our work at Catholic Charities, especially in providing for emergency services, is a double-digit growth industry. Many of the new folks asking for help are entirely new to that process which can be humbling, embarrassing and devastating.



And yet there is very much Gospel (good news) here. We are keeping up with these increased demands. We are doing it by working hard, at times feeling exhausted, and hoping for an end in sight. And we are doing it because so many good people, many who themselves are hurting in this economy, are sacrificing to share with those even less fortunate. I see hope that in these desperate times, it has not been a case of every man for himself; rather it has been the case of recognizing we are our brothers and sisters keepers.

So perhaps this Christmas season we might do well to read and re-read Luke's story of the shepherds and take particular comfort in this good news; and be like those shepherds by first of all letting go of our fears and then go out to find Jesus. The

shepherds found Him in Bethlehem. We don't have to go to Bethlehem to find Him. With very little effort we can find him all around us. And when we find him, let's not keep it a secret. Be like the shepherds, sing His praises and let others know!!!

In closing I offer this quote from St. Jeanne Jugan which includes a short prayer you may wish to use: "Go and find him when your patience and strength run out and you feel alone and helpless. Jesus is waiting for you... Say to Him 'Jesus you know exactly what is going on. You are all I have and you know all things. Come to my help'. Then go and don't worry about how you are going to manage. That you have told God is enough. He has a good memory."

This Christmas, "don't be afraid ... good news ... the Savior has been born."

## ~ PRAYER OF ST. THERESE OF LISIEUX TO KNOW GOD'S WILL ~

Lord grant that I may always allow myself to be guided by you, always follow your plans, and perfectly accomplish Your holy will.

Grant that in all things, great and small, today and all the days of my life, I may do whatever you may require of me. Help me to respond to the slightest prompting of Your grace, so that I may be your trust-worthy instrument. May Your will be done in time and eternity, by me, in me, and through me. Amen.

Dear Parishioner,

As the year comes to an end, I provide you with a special way to help our beloved Cathedral Parish.

## ~ PLANNED GIVING ~

### ***End-of-the-Year Contributions***

In order to take advantage of this year's tax benefits, checks must be dated and envelopes postmarked on or before December 31, 2009. If you are in the position to make end-of-the-year contributions, please consider the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament Parish as a beneficiary of your support. Donating securities such as stocks, bonds or mutual funds can give special tax benefits.

### ***Remembering The Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament***

The people of our parish family are so generous in the general and special collections. How wonderful it is when, on occasion, people leave all or part of their will to the Cathedral, depending on their circumstances. If everyone in the parish were to do this in some amount, it would be a marvelous, long-term blessing for our parish community. Knowing how giving our people are, I am confident of a generous response to this will request. Last year such a bequest kept the parish going and I am confident this year will bring good news also. Thank you for considering this opportunity to build up the Cathedral.

Please call at 443-4675 if you have any questions or would like material explaining this process. God bless you for reading this letter.

Rev. Michael F. Kiernan, Rector

## ~ UNEMPLOYED ON POPE'S MIND DURING HOLIDAYS ~

### **Calls for Solidarity With Those Affected by Financial Crisis**

This Christmas, Benedict XVI will be thinking of those affected by the current economic crisis, and in particular those who have lost their jobs.

The Pope recently said, "Approaching Christmas, I think almost naturally about the unemployment crisis that worries all of humanity. Whoever has the possibility to work, give thanks to the Lord, and open your spirit with generosity to those who are unemployed or who are encountering economic hardship."

"May the Christ Child, who was born on that Holy Night of Bethlehem, draw near us in our difficulties, and look with kindness on those who are sorely affected by this world crisis, awakening in them feelings of authentic solidarity."

# GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST GLORIA A DIOS EN LAS ALTURAS

AT CHRISTMAS MAY GOD OPEN

YOUR HEART TO HIS LOVE ...

YOUR MIND TO HIS WONDERS ...

YOUR EARS TO HIS VOICE ...

YOUR LIFE TO HIS PRESENCE.

A HOLY AND JOYOUS

CHRISTMAS TO YOU!

Jesus, thank you for coming among us to reveal just how much we are loved.  
We join with your people everywhere to give praise and thanks to you today.  
May the whole world come to know of your great love for us.

## ~ CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR'S MASS SCHEDULES ~

### CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES

Thursday, December 24

5:00 p.m. - Vigil Mass (Children's Mass)  
Most Reverend Francis A. Quinn, Presiding

7:00 p.m. - Mass (Spanish)  
Most Reverend William K. Weigand  
9:00 p.m. - Mass (English)

11:30 p.m. - Musical Prelude

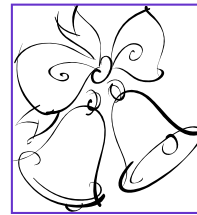
12:00 a.m. - Midnight Mass of Christmas  
Most Reverend Jaime Soto, Presiding  
Cathedral Choir

### SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

Monday - Friday 11:30 a.m. - 12 noon

Saturday 4:00 - 4:45 p.m.

Christmas Eve 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.



### CHRISTMAS DAY MASSES

Friday, December 25

7:30 a.m. - Mass (English)

9:00 a.m. - Mass (English)  
Most Reverend William K. Weigand

11:00 a.m. - Mass (English)  
Most Reverend Jaime Soto, Presiding  
Cathedral Choir

1:00 p.m. Mass (Spanish)

No Evening Mass

### NEW YEAR'S DAY MASSES

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

NEW YEAR'S EVE MASS  
Thursday, December 31  
5:00 p.m. - Vigil Mass



NEW YEAR'S DAY MASSES  
Friday, January 1  
10:00 am. - Mass (English)  
1:00 p.m. - Mass (Spanish)

No Evening Mass

The parking lot across the alley will be available for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. At these and all Cathedral Masses you simply need to have a bulletin with you to show as you exit.

~ CHRISTMAS BASKETS FOR THE POOR ~



The Cathedral Parish will donate Christmas Baskets to the poor this year on Saturday, December 26. We are looking for volunteers to make the baskets, money donations, and turkeys. For information call Deacon Don DeHaven at 916-451-1925 or leave a message at the Rectory 444-3071.

~ SANTO NINO JANUARY 9 ~

The 2010 Santo Nino Festival will be celebrated by the Filipino-American Community on Saturday January 9 at the Cathedral. Mass will be celebrated at 11:00 am, Fr. Michael Kiernan as the main celebrant, with Fr. Nicholas Ho and Fr. Pol Gumapo concelebrating. Traditionally this Mass has been preceded by a novena of Masses. This year participants are encouraged to attend the regular 5:10 pm Mass in the Cathedral to fulfill this novena.

Following the Mass on January 9, there will be a pot luck meal and reception at the Sisters of Mercy Hall in the Cathedral Lower Level. Families with surnames beginning with a letter (A-I) are asked to bring Chicken, (J-R) Pansit, (S-Z) Lumpia, and each family is requested to bring 1 dozen of can soda or 1 dozen of bottled water whichever you prefer. This year we shall have Perla and Romy Maulino, Vicky Alonzo, and Lu Capuchino as the Hermano/Hermana Mayor.

The festival commemorates the miraculous preservation of the statue of the Holy Infant from the fire in the City of Cebu in the Philippines during the war between the Spaniards and the natives.

~ VOLUNTEER CHAPLAIN PROGRAM ~

Sacramento's volunteer community chaplain program responds with law enforcement to homicides, suicides, drowning, and other tragedies, providing profound comfort to traumatized survivors. It is the model program of its kind throughout the nation. If this is the kind of ministry to which you think you might be called, please visit [www.sacchaplains.com](http://www.sacchaplains.com) or call 916-857-1801 for more information.

~ CATHEDRAL YOUTH GROUP ~

The Cathedral Youth Group (English and Spanish young people) meets every other Wednesday evening in the Lower Level from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm. The next meeting will be Wednesday December 30, 2009. For more

information, contact Leticia and Edgar Hilbert at 457-1552 or Sister Jenny at 444-5364.

~ COPING WITH LIFE ALONE ~

BEGINNING EXPERIENCE SUPPORT GROUP

The focus of Coping with Life Alone is to offer you the support and encouragement you need to deal with the pain of your loss and to help you look with renewed hope towards a fulfilling future.

- When:** Fridays, Starting January 8, 2010 (For Ten (10) consecutive weeks)
- Time:** 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. (Please come by 6:45 the first week to register)
- Place:** Our Lady of Assumption Church 5057 Cottage Way Carmichael, CA 95608
- Fee:** A registration fee of \$10.00 and a weekly meeting fee of \$5 per week or you can prepay \$40 for all ten sessions (\$50.00 including the registration fee.)
- Contact:** For more information call (916) 835-2282 or visit our web site at: [www.sacramentobe.org](http://www.sacramentobe.org)

Beginning Experience Support Group has been offering special programs for more than 30 years. Its purpose is to offer a community for friendship, guidance, strength and companionship for men and women of all faiths who are now alone due to the death, divorce or separation from a loved one.

CATHEDRAL MASS SCHEDULE

- MON 12/21/2009 LATE ADVENT WEEKDAY**  
**Sg 2: 8-14 or Zep 3: 14-18a ; Lk 1: 39-45**  
 12:10 pm: Mary Ann Warmerdam, S.I.  
 5:10 pm: Elda Ayala, S.I.
- TUES 12/22/2009 LATE ADVENT WEEKDAY**  
**1 Sm 1: 34-38; Lk 1: 46-56**  
 12:10 pm: Phero +  
 5:10 pm: Sally Trujillo, S.I.
- WED 12/23/2009 LATE ADVENT WEEKDAY**  
**Mal 3: 1-4, 23-24; Lk 1: 57-66**  
 12:10 pm: Maria Becerril & Family, S.I.  
 5:10 pm: Elda Ayala, S.I.

[SEE CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY SCHEDULE AT LEFT]

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT  
 WED & THUR 12:40PM-4:45PM FRI 12:40PM-3:45PM  
 TO SIGN UP CALL ISABELLA CAZARES 391-1760 OR 833-1948,  
 OR E-MAIL [BECAZ96@SBCGLOBAL.NET](mailto:BECAZ96@SBCGLOBAL.NET)

CATHEDRAL TOURS EVERY SUNDAY  
 AFTER 9:00 AM AND 11 AM MASSES