

FROM THE  Dear Friends,

Last December someone expressed their disappointment that we were not singing Christmas carols in anticipation of December 25. I made a mental note to offer a few Priest comments on the liturgical year and the season of Advent. In many ways the Church is counter cultural; the celebration of Christmas is a very obvious instance. Christmas has become a very secular season; the substitution of holiday for December 25 is a clear example. We Catholics observe two seasons: Advent and Christmas. Advent is the four weeks preceding the late afternoon of December 24. We remember the original waiting of the Jewish people for the coming of the Messiah, and we anticipate the second coming of Christ in glory. The prayers and scripture passages alert us to the fact that through baptism and the other sacraments Christ has come and abides with us. We pray also that the celebration of Christmas will make us more aware of the Lord's presence. The liturgical music should reflect our anticipation of Christmas, but not the feast itself. The Christmas season begins in the late afternoon of December 24 and extends through the feast of the Baptism of the Lord on January 11, 2009. During that time we sing Christmas carols and maintain as far as possible the Christmas decorations. Many years ago I gave up the effort to remind people that Advent is supposed to be a time for reflection and anticipation of the second coming. However, at least our weekly worship reminds us to be ready and prepares for the spiritual joy that is Christmas. The Church's Christmas season provides the opportunity to remember its meaning without all the busyness.

Fr. Joe Ford; email: jjford67@maine.rr.com

Mass Intentions and Mass Schedule

November 29	4:00 PM	William G. Ziemer, by the Longinetti family
November 30	8:30 AM	Health for Terry Dorrington, by Charlotte O'Connor
	5:30 PM	The Parishioners
December 1	7:30 AM	Monique Marchassault, by Barbara Keefe
December 3	7:30 AM	Mr. & Mrs. John Scanlan, by the girls
December 4	7:30 AM	Communion Service

Next Weekend Masses

December 6	4:00 PM	William G. Ziemer, by the Longinetti & Palmieri families
December 7	8:30 AM	The deceased family members of Carlita Brown, by Carlita Brown
	5:30 PM	The Parishioners

Last Weekend's Offering: Thank you for your offerings of **\$4,948.00** last weekend. \$3,445.00 was in 146 envelopes and \$1,503.00 was loose. **Our weekly operating expense is \$6,318.00.**

Monday December 8th is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, a holy day of obligation. Masses will be at 7:30 AM and 5:30 PM.

Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession

Cluster Penitential Service – Sunday, December 14th at 2:00 PM at Holy Martyrs.

Area Penitential Service – Wednesday, December 17 at 7:00 PM at St. Peter's Church, Federal Street, Portland.

Bishop Richard Malone is pleased to announce a new ministry designed to reach Catholics and non-Catholics in their homes at the beginning of each day. Thanks to the initiative and support of generous donors, the bishop will share a word of hope and spiritual wisdom Monday through Friday at 5:59 AM on WGME Channel 13, Portland and WAGM TV Channel 8, Presque Isle. These messages will begin during the advent season, December 1, 2008. We hope you'll tune in for daily inspiration and let the stations know how much you appreciate this new programming.

Christmas Pageant: Children of all ages are invited to participate in this year's Christmas Pageant, which will be held after the 8:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday, December 21st. Adult and High School volunteers are needed to help the children prepare. If you would like to participate in the pageant or can help with any of the preparations, please contact Meredith Charest at 781-8599 or mcharest1@maine.rr.com.

Pray for and join our candidates for First Communion and Confirmation as they approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession on Saturday, December 6 at 10:00 AM. Several priests will be available.

Pub Night with guest Bishop Richard Malone! Tuesday, December 16, 7pm. Veritas, Portland's Catholic Young Adult Group, invites all young adults (18-39) in faith sharing and discussion at Bull Feeney's, 375 Fore St, Portland. Talk begins at 7pm. Come earlier for dinner and fellowship. FMI contact Lisa at veritasportland@yahoo.com or Craig Bossie at 831-0852. **Wednesday evenings 7pm,** ~ Hour of Power Praise the Lord with music, worship and Eucharistic Adoration! Veritas, Portland's Young Adult Ministry invites community members of all ages to this weekly event at St. Peter's Church, 72 Federal St in Portland. Please note that the first week of each month we are 'On The Road'. No Hour of Power on November 26. To offer your musical talents or for event information contact Becky at hourofpowerportland@gmail.com. This event is open to ALL AGES.

McAuley Academic Excellence Scholarship - Catherine McAuley High School will be holding their second High School Placement Test (HSPT) on **December 6**. A full tuition scholarship will be granted to the 8th grade student who has shown academic excellence by being the top ranking tester. For more information, or to register, call the Admissions Office @ 797-3802 or visit their website at www.mcauleyhs.org.

Music Ministry: There's still time left to join the Christmas Choirs! The Family Choir (children, parents, grandparents etc. included) will sing at the 4:00 pm Christmas Eve Mass. Rehearsals for the Family Choir are Tues. 6:30--7:30pm. The Adult/Young Adult Choir will sing at the 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Mass. Rehearsals for the Adult/Young Adult Choir are Tues. 7:30--8:30pm. For more info contact Diane Beaton at 781-9869 or sbeaton@maine.rr.com.

Christmas Fair Sign Ups in the Narthex!

Come join the fun on Sunday, December 7 from 9:30 AM-1:00 PM. We need your help to make the fair a success:

Silent Auction - donate an item or create a themed basket for the auction. Sports tickets, gift certificates and art are all popular. FMI contact Sharon Leskanic at sharonL23@maine.rr.com or 797-7072.

Crafts - handmade items such as ornaments, accessories and decorations are a wonderful addition to the fair. For ideas or to help, please contact Nancy Miller at nfmiller78@gmail.com or 797-2220.

Gift Items - new and gently used home decor and bric a brac items are very popular with parishioners and can be dropped off in the parish hall the week before the fair. FMI contact Cheryl Hurley at churley@maine.rr.com.



Bake Table - whip up your favorite cookies, breads or cakes for holiday celebrations and gift giving! This year we are also seeking chutneys, jellies, jams and pickled items for the bake table. We will also again feature the cookie walk. FMI contact Amy Saffian at saffian7@verizon.net.

Books - donate used books, CDs and DVDs for the book table. Drop off in the parish hall the week before the fair. **Volunteer** to set up or work at the fair. Set up on Saturday, December 6; fair day volunteering on Sunday, December 7. **We are also seeking parishioners who can help make holiday evergreen centerpieces and swags** for the fair. Please contact Kathy Coster at kbcmaine@aol.com (781-3723) to help out, join the fair planning committee or with questions.

Caring Tree – In the Narthex, you will find the teen youth ministry's caring tree. It is beautifully decorated with white lights and ornaments which we invite you to take. The ornaments are tags that represent presents for those who depend on the generosity of others at Christmas time. Please take a tag, purchase the present(s) and then return them **unwrapped**, and in gift bags. Please attach the tag to the gift bag so that they can be properly sorted and delivered. We are also in need of slightly used clothing that would be appropriate for a job interview. If you would like to donate clothing for this purpose, please bring those items in separate bags and place them under the tree. For more information, please contact Deb Meahl at 781-8251.

THANKSGIVING: Many thanks to those who contributed goods and funds for the thanksgiving baskets, and to our young people and others who prepared and distributed the baskets.

Holy Martyrs Weekly Calendar

 First Sunday in Advent Sunday November 30	Mass at 8:30 AM Mass at 5:30 PM <p style="text-align: right;">NO Religious Education Classes Readings Begin at #879 <i>2: Is 63:16-17,19;64:2-7; Ps 80; 1 Cor 1:3-9; Mk 13:33-37</i></p>
Monday December 1	Mass at 7:30 AM <p style="text-align: right;"><i>175: Is 2:1-5; Mt 8:5-11</i> Religious Education Classes</p>
Tuesday December 2	Mass at St. Gregory's at 8:00 AM Contemplative Prayer Group 9:30-11:00 AM <i>176: Is 11:1-10; Lk 10:21-24</i>
Wednesday December 3	Mass at 7:30 AM <i>177: Is 25:6-10a; Mt 15:29-37</i>
Thursday December 4	Communion Service at 8:30 AM <i>178: Is 26:1-6; Mt 7:21,24-27</i>
Friday December 5	Mass at St. Gregory's at 8:00 AM <i>179: Is 29:17-24; Mt 9:27-31</i>
Saturday December 6	Mass at 4:00 PM <i>180: Is 30:19-21,23-26; Mt 9:35-10:1,5a,6-8</i>
 Second Sunday in Advent Sunday December 7	Mass at 8:30 AM Mass at 5:30 PM <p style="text-align: right;">Christmas Fair 9:30 AM -1:00 PM Connected Catholics 2:00 PM <i>5: Is 40:1-5,9-11; Ps 85; 2 Pt 3:8-14; Mk 1:1-8</i></p>

New parent's baptismal preparation program: The celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism is important not only for understanding its significance, but also to help parents appreciate and reflect on the responsibility to help them and their child continue to grow in the relationship with God begun at Baptism. At Holy Martyrs and St. Gregory, baptismal preparation for your first child includes: Initial meeting of the parents with the pastor or deacon; attending a parent preparation session; scheduling the Baptism; and a follow-up program to stay connected during early childhood. Bethany and/or James Hanley (829-4568) will offer Pre-Baptism sessions on Sunday morning from 9:30-10:30 A.M. on the following dates: 2008 December 7; 2009 February 8; April 19; June 7; and August 2. Baptisms will be scheduled on the third weekend of the month.

Would you like to receive parish emails? We are creating an email distribution list that will be used to periodically send out messages on upcoming events such as the Christmas Fair, Brown Bag Sunday, Soup Kitchen, etc. If you would like to receive parish emails, and have not already received an email from us this week, please sign up today in the Narthex. Or, submit your email address to Deb in the parish office. Please be sure to include your full name and address. She can be reached at 781-4573 or via email at office@holymartyrs.org.

MASSES:

Saturday Mass: 4:00 PM
Sunday Masses: 8:30 AM & 5:30 PM
Daily Mass: Mon & Wed at 7:30 AM
Communion Service: Thurs. at 7:30 AM
Confession: Sat. 3:15-3:45 & by appointment
Monday – Friday 8:30-3:00

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday – Friday

PARISH OF THE HOLY MARTYRS OF NORTH AMERICA

266 Foreside Road, Falmouth, Maine 04105
www.holymartyrs.org

PARISH DIRECTORY:

Parish Office: 781-4573
 Religious Education: 781-2847
 Fax: 781-3961
 Email: rectory@holymartyrs.org

ADMINISTRATION:

Administrator: Rev. J. Joseph Ford
 Catechetical Leaders: Deacon Dennis Popadak
 Judy Dominick

PARISH STAFF:

Christian Initiation: Judy Dominick
 Youth Ministry: Scott Ross
 Music Ministry: Diane Beaton
 Parish Secretary: Debra J. Coppinger

BULLETIN DEADLINE:

Notices for the bulletin must be at the rectory office by 12:30 PM on Tuesdays.

NEW PARISHIONERS: Welcome! We invite you to join in our parish community. Please register by contacting the rectory office.

DEPARTING PARISHIONERS: Please inform the rectory office when you move from the parish.

HOMEBOUND & HOSPITALIZED: Please contact the rectory office to arrange for a visit.

BAPTISMS: By appointment – please contact the rectory.

MARRIAGES: Couples should contact the rectory at least six months in advance.