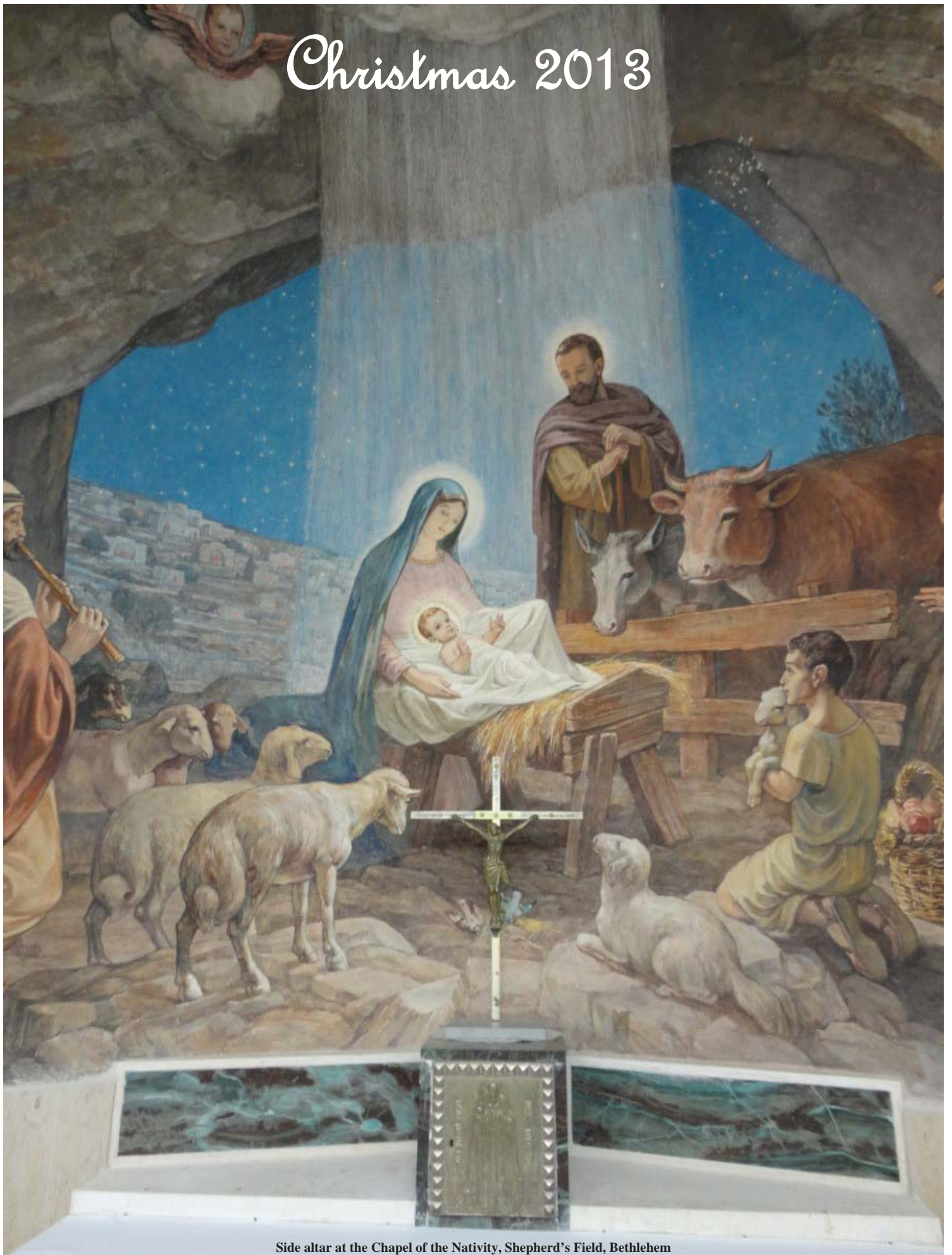


Christmas 2013



Side altar at the Chapel of the Nativity, Shepherd's Field, Bethlehem



Christmas 2013

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear.

The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord."

(Lk 2:8-11)

Can you imagine what the look of great joy would be on the faces of people?

I wonder what the faces of the students would look like if the school principal would get up in front of a student assembly and proclaim: "I am giving you the next two weeks of school off and you will not have to make the time up at the end of the year." There would be cheering so loud that the roof would probably rise!

I wonder what the face of a terminally ill person would look like if a team of doctors came in and said, "We have determined that you are totally cured. You will never have to worry about your illness again."

I wonder what the faces of people unemployed or under-employed would look like if someone came to them and said, "You have been assured of jobs that will take care of you and yours for the rest of your lives."

The above all seem to be rather unobtainable, do they not? I think a large number of people thought that salvation was rather unobtainable as well.

After all, God had promised His people a long time ago that He would send a Savior. But generations came and went and no Savior ever came about.

When all appeared to be lost, news was announced to a group of shepherds that the Savior was born, Christ the Lord.

The picture on the front of this year's Christmas bulletin as well as the picture at the top of this column were taken in the chapel of the Shepherd's Field where the grand announcement was made.

We may feel as if our lives are bleak. We may wonder if we have the strength to continue. We may wonder if it is all worth it. We may wonder if there is a God out there who loves us.

All is not lost. Christ has come and will come again. Merry Christmas!

Fr. Mike

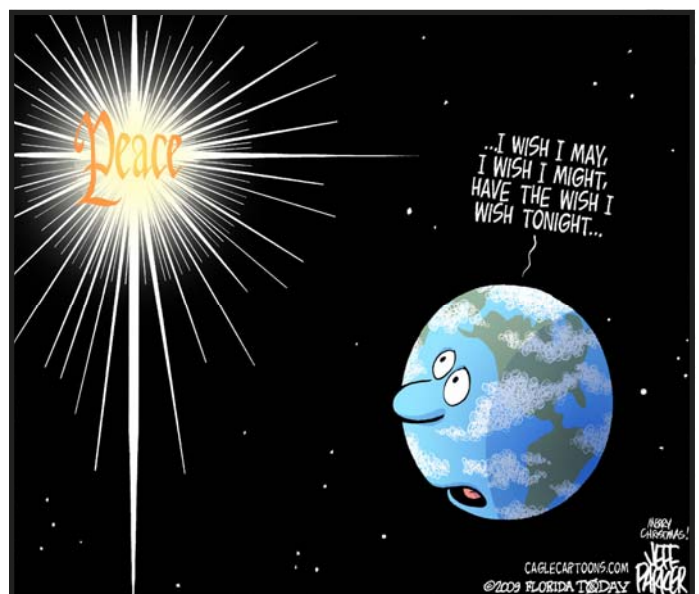


The Church and even the broader society has been very excited by our impressive Holy Father, Pope Francis. He has impressed us all with his humility from day one, asking us to pray for him before he gave us his first Apostolic Blessing. He has impressed us with his candid words of preaching and teaching about who Jesus truly is and especially by his actions — he is a man who walks his talk. He has especially impressed us with his poverty. Our Holy Father is the first pope to take the name Francis after the incomparable saint from Assisi, Italy who was a brother to all men and women, profoundly spiritual, and yet very practical in living the Gospel message.

This is my deepest prayer for all of you: follow the Holy Father's lead. Have a kind of spiritual poverty that opens up your heart to the Divine Infant who lies in the manger. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ came to us in poverty, and that is where we meet him. No façade, no mask, no posh feathers or plumes. He wants to rest in your heart no matter how messy you think it is: the Son of God laid in a dirty stable. Even if your preparations are straw, and it is no warmer than swaddling clothes, he will come, "For a savior is born for you today in the City of David who is Messiah and Lord."

Merry Christmas!

Rev. Benjamin J. Rose



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THE PRAYER



As we gather with our families and loved ones to celebrate the solemnity of Christmas, we remind ourselves what Christmas is all about. Christmas is a time to rejoice and ponder the fathomless meaning of mystery of the Incarnation.

God so loved the world that He gave us His only Son to share our humanity and to redeem us. God, Emmanuel, is with us a forever. He never left us. He is in us and among us. We hear His words in the scripture. He is ever present in the tabernacle. And He is the source of our peace and joy when we receive Him in the Eucharist.

Let us give thanks for all the blessings we have received and open our hearts so He may dwell in us always.

We hope this Christmas message finds you and your loved ones in good health and in the holiday spirit!! Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year to all!!!

Deacon Napoleon, Lynn and Family.

Christmas is finally here . We have wrapped all the presents and we have our homes decorated with holiday cheer. Many of us will see our family and friends and go to one of the Christmas Day Masses. We have a lot to be thankful for this Christmas. Our Church, too, will be wearing its best and the Nativity scene will be up and filled with Baby Jesus and the Holy Family.



It is also a time to reflect on their perilous journey they took to get to Bethlehem. It was because of the Roman census that they needed to travel with Mary carrying the Christ child in her womb. It was also tough not finding a room and having to bring Jesus into the world in a stable. It is with this reflection, that I think of all those that are struggling this Christmas. We are still in the midst of bad economic times and many are unemployed or under employed. They are working just to stay ahead on their bills. There are also numerous single parent and grandparents that are trying to raise their family in the best way that they know how. We see families that are separated with loved ones in hospitals and nursing homes. We have service men and women stretched across the world that are defending our country and unable to share Christmas with their families. There are also those that are in prison that will not be with their loved ones this Christmas.

In all of our celebrations, let us remember these families that are struggling for these and any other reason and keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

May Jesus truly be with each of you on this most Glorious Day.

A Very Blessed and Merry Christmas to all.
Deacon Dave and Kathy Kapala



As this year comes to an end and we look forward to the New Year, it is a great time to reflect on how well we have been doing on keeping Christ in our heart and mind.

You see, Christmas is a season that we may know and love Jesus more and come to follow him more closely, just as Mary said Yes to God to follow his initiative and become the mother of

Jesus, and Joseph said Yes to God through the request of the angel to be his earthly stepfather.

Let us increase our spirituality and prayerful life in the realization that the Christ child is the reason for this season that we call Christmas. Let us say our own Yes to God and bring Him closer to our hearts and minds. Let us show by our actions, by how we live our lives, just how important the birth of Jesus is to us.

Allow our savior, this Christmas season, to give us a brighter mind that we might more easily see the needs of others and to give us the courage and grace to fulfill those needs.

Let us also ask God to provide us with a humble heart to accept help from others, for we are all human and are in need just like everyone else.

Joyce and I would like to say thank you to all of the members of the St Thomas More family for their continued support and prayers of the success of my ministry.

My closing thoughts are for all of you to have a very prayerful and spiritual Christ filled season of Christmas. Let's begin the New Year with a resounding yes in our response to loving Christ and each other more.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Deacon Joseph and Joyce Stodola

Great things come in small packages.

God's gift to us in the form of Baby Jesus was the greatest gift in the history of the world. God took on human form!

It was not easy so why would God want to become human? He became human to affirm our humanity with all of its joys and sorrows, pain, suffering, illness, struggles, doubts and joy that we experience. On this Christmas, remember that Jesus came to us as one of us to save us. Remember that we are not alone in our struggles. As Jesus was human, so we too are made in His image and likeness. Let us thank God for sending Jesus to teach us how to love each other and to give us hope of salvation.



May the love of Christ provide you and your family and friends with peace this Christmas.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
Deacon Dan and Mrs. Mary Lou Zurawski

O God our loving Father, help us rightly to remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the Wise Men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Deliver us from evil by the blessing that Christ brings, and teach us to be Merry with clear hearts.

~ Robert Louis Stevenson



The birth of Christ is the most significant event, apart from His resurrection, in history. It is the Incarnation of God. The birth of Christ means that God became man, one of us, to save us.

When the angels spoke to the shepherds in the field, they were declaring the most exciting event that had ever been witnessed in history.

As did the wise men, we must present our gifts to Him. The bottom line is this: the greatest gift we could ever present to Him is the gift of ourselves. You see, when we give Him ourselves, we've given Him everything else. He will have us. That is exactly what He desires. To be a true worshipper at Christmas means that we present ourselves to Him, that we become His. The greatest treasure any of us has is our self. Let us, like the wise men, open our treasures up to Him and offer Him the precious things of our lives.

The little slogan, "Keep Christ in Christmas," is more than simply a cliché. It is a profound truth for us believers. Let us this year, by our attitudes and by our actions, be a living testimony to our neighbors and co-workers, our friends and family, other believers, and especially our children, of what Christmas truly means. Let's give our gifts, but in so doing, point to the greatest gift ever given to us: the One who left heaven's glory to be born in a stable for you and for me.

Wishing each and every one of you a Christmas filled with holiness and true joy. May 2014 be filled with health, peace, happiness, laughter and an abundance of spiritual blessings.

Merry Christmas!
Chet Nordyke,
School Principal



The Light is ON  for You.

Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Let us set things right, says the Lord:

Though your sins be like scarlet,

they may become white as snow; Though they be crimson red,
they may become white as wool.

Isaiah 1:18

As Pope Francis so famously confessed of himself, we are all sinners. We are all sinners but St. Francis de Sales asks us so powerfully, "Where is the foolish person who would think it in his power to commit more than God could forgive?"

God's forgiveness is within our reach, God's forgiveness and reconciliation with the Church, in the Sacrament of Penance.

All the parishes of the Catholic Diocese of Gary are presenting a wonderful opportunity for this healing sacrament, particularly offered for those who have not availed themselves of its life-giving benefits for some time:

THE LIGHT IS ON FOR YOU.

On Wednesday, March 12, 2014, all churches in the Diocese of Gary will be open from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. and offering to all the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Experience the healing power of the Holy Spirit ... the Light is truly on for you.



As we prepare for the season of Christmas, we hear about the coming of Jesus. We hear about His coming to us as an infant in the manger, when there was no room for Him in the inn. We also hear about His second coming in glory. However, as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' first coming and to reflect on His second coming, it is important to remember that Jesus comes to each of us each day in many ways.

He comes to us in the Mass, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and in each of the sacraments we celebrate. He comes to us when we pray, and when we read the Scriptures. Jesus also comes to us each day in our family, friends, coworkers and the strangers we encounter. He comes to us in the poor and the sick, which we are charged to care for.

Someday, when He comes again, Jesus will ask each of us what we did for our brothers and sisters, for that is what we did to Jesus Himself. My prayer for each of you this Christmas Season is that you, like Mother Mary, learn to recognize Jesus in each of His 'comings' in your life and that you welcome Him each time. Welcome Him at Mass, welcome Him in the Eucharist, welcome Him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and welcome Him in every person you encounter each day. If you are able to welcome Jesus each day, when He comes again He will welcome you to spend eternity with Him, and that is the best Christmas gift anyone could ever receive.

May God bless you and yours this Christmas Season.

Miss Emily Hackett,
Director of Religious Education