

Greetings!

“Blessed is the fruit of your womb”

It's such a beautiful time of year! Yes, I know this is not everyone's thinking when the weather can be cold and miserable, but I'm not exactly thinking so much about the temperature (*though I'm sure I will be in the middle of February*) as I am about *The Story!* You know the one, it's often buried in the 'umpteenth' Christmas song on the radio, the corner of the shopping mall store window, or sometimes sung in its 'edited' version during 'holiday' concerts (*though in my foolishness I'm still asking myself if not 'Christmas' what's the 'holiday' on December 25th that's so important that school is out for a week*).

The Story as you know is the one about a little Child born in Bethlehem, in a manger where animals feed. Not exactly the place a new, young expectant mother looks to deliver her first child (*or any child*), and not even a norm for children born 2,000 years ago. But, this is where our salvation begins: *the muckiness of earthly life (global warming notwithstanding)*, and where our humanity begins anew: *Emmanuel – God is with us!*

But, the picture of new life I think of often at this time of year in light of the birth of Jesus, is the birth of children in general. With several parishioners having just delivered a child or preparing to deliver, and one pregnant sister due to deliver her tenth child just a few days after Christmas (*and nineteen other newborn nephews & nieces to my sisters and sisters-in-law over the years*), I love to picture a little, new born child small enough to rest in the palms of my hands. To say they are cute sometimes sells them a little short: *precious & beautiful, just awesome* are words that rather come to mind!

Yet, whatever our picture of the beginning stages of a child's life, we must always recall that God so much loved the world, that He sent His only-begotten Son to dwell among us. He so much wanted us to be saved from sin by one like us in all things except sin that He chose to come into this world as a baby, beginning in conception as an embryo (*just Google: 'stages of life from conception' for the scientific & medical journals' support of what Catholics believe - surprise, surprise*), and advancing in age and wisdom under the care of a mother and father. Life truly is beautiful, though yes, we know it's not perfect.

So, why then this growing hostility toward children? One editorial last week said the real cause of *Global Warming* is too many children. *Oh, really?* It's now generally accepted by population planners that 'over-population' is a misconception and some would say that the world's total population can live comfortably in the geographical area of the southern United States and be fed completely by food generated in our own nation. And in turn, why are so many children suffering *not* from hunger, illness or poverty (*though much of the world's poor are women & children*), but rather a lack of *love (and often, self-love)*? With no less care for God's creation, I'd say the *real*

global warming we need is 'hearts set on fire' for Jesus Christ, whose very birth assures us that every human life is precious and loved by the Father in heaven! And, this is the message I hope we can genuinely convey in word and deed to all children, most especially our youth: *we love you and you are precious! Merry Christmas!*

God bless!

Mass Intentions for the Week

Saturday, December 19th

4:00PM Dick Tobin 10th Anniversary

Sunday, December 20th

7:30AM Parishioners of St. Joseph Parish
 9:30AM Ellen Dorney and Celia Casey
 Memorial Mass
 11:30AM Paul E. Norman 1st Anniversary
 and John C. Hawe 26th Anniversary

Monday, December 21st

4:00PM Troy Phillips Memorial Mass

Tuesday, December 22nd

9:00AM Parishioners of St. Joseph Parish

Saturday, December 26th

4:00PM Lisa Fucile 10th Anniversary

Sunday, December 27th

7:30AM Eugene McCoy Memorial Mass
 9:30AM Parishioners of St. Joseph Parish
 11:30AM Peter Giovanello 20th Anniversary



**Our Mass Schedule for Christmas is
 Christmas Eve**

**4:00PM Upstairs (Children's Choir)
 and 4:00PM Downstairs**

**6:00PM (Adult Choir beginning at 5:30PM)
 Midnight (Teen Musicians)
 Christmas Day at 10:00AM**

Wedding  Banns

II. John Murphy and Heather MacDougall

Congratulations! And let us joyfully pray for all our engaged-couples as they prepare for their marriage in Christ!

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH MINISTRY PROGRAM

The Ski trip planned for Monday December 28th is cancelled since not enough students signed up. There will be a middle school dance on Tuesday December 29th. We are looking to host another social event for our young people during vacation week. Some folks have suggested a movie night, a game night or a New Year's Eve party after the 4:00 Mass until about 8pm. If you are interested in organizing any of these events, please contact Fr Ed or Maura Burke at 781 767 – 0563 ASAP.

WE HAVE A WISH LIST!!! Do you have (or know someone who does) an LCD projector or plasma TV that can be donated to our youth group? We also find ourselves in need of a multi passenger van or bus. There are many times we take trips and the cost of renting transportation is quite high. We would like to partner with someone who can help lower the cost of our transportation needs. Please contact Fr. Ed or Maura Burke at 781 767 0563 if you are able to help.

Pro Life Rally: The Pro Life Rally in Washington DC is scheduled for January 20-22nd and we will be traveling by bus with other parishes in the Archdiocese. If anyone - teenager or up - is interested in attending, please let Fr. Ed know ASAP.

♪♪ *Sing to the Lord for Christmas!* ♪♪

Please join the Adult Choir this year for Christmas!

There is only one more rehearsal:

7pm Wednesday December 23

In preparation for the Christmas Eve 6pm Mass,
Thursday December 24! The choir meets at 5pm on
Christmas Eve.

Contact Choir Director Steve Williams with questions.
and

We are looking for some musical teens interested in
enhancing the Midnight Liturgy on Christmas Eve.

We need singers and instrumentalists to participate
before Mass at 11:30pm and also for singing during Mass.

Rehearsals will be held in the church on

Sunday December 20 at 5pm,

Monday December 21 and Wednesday December 23 at 5pm.

Participants will be asked to arrive at church by 11pm
Christmas Eve, Thursday December 24.

Please contact Mrs. Laura Grant 781-767-1469 or Mr.

Stephen Williams 781-767-2763 or just come to rehearsal!

Parish Giving

I am very thankful for every gift that helps us do all that we do here, and I am grateful that some parishioners are able to help by increasing their weekly giving knowing a good number of families in our parish have been greatly affected by the loss of jobs and income. The first collection last week was **\$4,104**. The Second Collection for the Retired Religious was **\$2,075**. Next weekend's second collection is for Support of the School.

Note from Mammás

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

First of all I want to wish you a Blessed Advent season. May I ask you to consider this analogy? An important person wants to come to your house and dine with you. Can you imagine the pressure and the preparation to welcome this person? If we get this excited for a celebrity, how much more excited we should be to know that Christ will be coming soon, not as a celebrity or as a king but as a simple kid in a manger so humble and so loving. I believe this is the main message of Christmas, a message of Love. I have been reminding the 8th graders to love one another as Christ loved them.

Mammás Habtegiorgis

Advent Confessions

There are additional times scheduled this weekend for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to experience the Lord's healing gift: *Saturday evening 5:00pm-6:00pm; and Sunday morning, 8:30-9:15am and 10:30am-11:15am, and 12:30-1:00pm*. Of course, you can always call Fr. Ed at anytime!

Fourth Sunday of Advent

You may wish to look for more great ways to prepare for Christmas! You can get some great ideas by going to the Bishops website for Advent: www.usccb.org/advent/.

Parish Grand Annual Collection

Thank you! We look to complete this collection, and if you can help us reach our goal of \$38,000, I would be very grateful. We are now at \$30,503. Certainly, your pledge may be paid over any period of time you wish. Whatever offering each individual or family might make will be used to renovate the lower and upper Church this year to provide more space for our adult and youth activities.

Christmas Collection

As you may remember, the Christmas Collection each year goes directly towards the retirement and healthcare of priests in the Archdiocese of Boston. I ask that you would be extra generous in this *Year of the Priest* to help defray the tremendous cost of caring for the very priests who gave their lives to caring for you and your family through many years of priestly service and now need your help! *Thank you!*

Save the Date!

Do you remember the priest who baptized you? Gave you First Holy Communion? Married you? Visited your dying family member? In this *Year of the Priest*, what better way can we show our love for priests assigned to this parish over the years than '*An Evening of Appreciation*'. Please save the date: **Saturday, March 20th** for an *Evening of Appreciation of Our Priests* here at St. Joseph with Cardinal Sean! More information to follow (*and an invitation for you to help make this evening one to remember for our whole parish!*)

DECEMBER 20, 2009

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL

Did you know...

that St. Joseph School seventh grade students Abigail Gordon and Caroline Callahan organized a used book sale that collected \$395.00. The money was donated to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, an organization committed to finding cures for pediatric cancer!

St. Joseph School Registration 2010-11

Registration for the 2010-11 school year has begun. There will be an Open House on Monday, February 1st. St. Joseph School offers a full day 4 year old program and full day kindergarten program. For more information about the school please visit the school website at www.stjosephholbrook.com or call the school office at 781-767-1544.

Make a Book Donation the Gift of the Season

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Saint Joseph School library. All donations are used to improve the reading and research opportunities for our students. Each \$15 donation purchases a hardcover book with a commemorative bookplate that notes the name of the honoree and the donor. What a wonderful gift an honorary book at Christmas would make. Thank you for making a lasting educational gift to the school for our students. We appreciate your donation!

New...Stop & Shop A+ Bucks Program

Please register and help support St. Joseph School by going to www.stop&shop.com and register for the A+ Bucks Program. After a series of questions including the first letters of your last name and your 15-digit card code, the question where do you live will appear. When Holbrook is entered a school list will drop down with St. Joseph School. Thank you for participating and helping our school!

Shaws Supermarket Neighborhood Rewards Program

This holiday season please help support St. Joseph School by registering online at: <http://www.albertsons.com/cp/shaws/> and follow the steps to join by logging on as a *Shopper*. Next you will be prompted to enter your Rewards Card Number and Phone Number. To support St. Joseph's the eleven-digit number to enter is **49001018952**. Thank you!

**CHRISTMAS
DANCE**

Grades 6, 7 & 8
St. Joseph & St. Michael Youth Groups
Tuesday, December 29th
7:00PM – 10:00PM
St. Michael's Church Hall
Avon
Admission \$5.00

DECEMBER 20, 2009

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

There will be **NO** CCD classes the weeks of December 20 and 27th due to the Christmas Vacation. Merry Christmas!

TENTH GRADE CONFIRMATION CLASS: The second part of our two year Confirmation class begins on Sunday, January 3, 2010. This class is a Prayer Service with St. Michael's Parish and will be held at 2pm at St. Michael's in Avon. Most other classes will be at 5pm. Remember, you must reregister for the second part of the program. No student will be accepted into the program after January 10th.

THANK YOU to the many generous Religious Education Families who contributed over 500 toys, games and needed supplies for My Brother's Keeper. Our 7, 8 and 9th graders donated money so that we could buy gift cards. My Brother's Keeper serves thousands of families in our area, including those in Holbrook. **THANK YOU!**

Giving Tree

The gifts for the Giving Tree are due back **this** weekend.

Sacramental Life

Baptisms

Third Sunday of each month at 1:30 PM. Preparation Classes the Saturday evening *before* at 6:30 PM. Please call the parish office in advance.

Confirmation

Please contact a priest if you are an adult or Director of Religious Education if you are a youth.

Confessions

Saturdays from 3:00-3:45 PM or by contacting a priest.

Eucharist

Join us Weekends:

Saturday 4:00 PM Vigil

Sunday: 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 AM

Join us Weekdays:

Monday – Saturday 9:00 AM

Marriage

Please make arrangements with a parish priest six months prior to wedding.

Holy Orders

If you or someone you know is thinking about priesthood (*or religious life*) please contact a priest or religious sister.

Anointing of the Sick

Please call the rectory if you or someone you know is sick, homebound, preparing for surgery, unable to participate in Sunday Eucharist, or would like a visit by a priest.