



Holy Cross

Connections

Merry Christmas!



Drawing by Maggie McKinney, age 9.

A child is born...

By Father Jerry Stluka

Christmas celebrates the wonder and the mystery of God becoming human. The creator of heaven and earth comes into our homes and hearts and world as a totally innocent and dependent infant!

The mystery of the Incarnation reveals the unity of humanity and divinity, heaven and earth, time and eternity. All become one in a helpless child who is Son of God and Son of Mary!

How precious and priceless is the miracle of every baby! How marvelous is the experience of new parents as their lives are changed dramatically and their focus becomes their newborn baby. The mystery of their creative love for God and for each other becomes flesh in their newborn child of God.

Jesus, the one who saves, draws all of us beyond ourselves into the mystery of God, an eternal community ---the Trinity who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, is the Christmas Gift of God with us. Christmas is a day, a season and a lifetime of receiving and giving and celebrating this wondrous Gift of God. God gives us the best of all Christmas presents: the Real Presence of Christ in the sacramental life of the Church.

You and I are children of God, heirs of the dignity and priceless treasure of God's own eternal life. The WONDER of Christmas is sharing the Glory of God within and among us. May this Gift of God fill our hearts, our homes and our world this Christmas and always.

In this issue of Connections we are focusing on the children and young people of our parish.

Christmas

By Sister Anne Keenan



The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Upon those who dwelt in a land of gloom a light has shone.

Isaiah 9:1-3

This reading that we will hear at the Christmas Eve Mass brings us a message of joy and hope. There are times during our lives when we feel that we too are, or have, walked in darkness but with the coming of Christ that darkness is banished, a weight has been lifted and we see everything differently – we see things and people in a new light. What relief, what joy!

This motif of light shining in the darkness conjures up for me many memories of Christmas. I believe last year I shared how my Irish ancestors always lit candles, (and they still do) to put in their windows to light the way for the Christ Child. As the people from the villages walked the gravel roads to Church they did so with a spring in their gait because, no matter how poor or rich one might have been, it became unimportant, and was overshadowed by the light that came from the window candles as well as the light that came from their faith. They greeted each other with a word of joy and sensed they were “in a thin place” where they were about to be enveloped and embraced with the divine. They were in a state of wonder that gave their inmost selves a sense of peace.

I have only heard from my parents, aunts and uncles, of these special times as they made their way to Midnight Mass – granted there was probably some exaggeration built in these stories (as the Irish are wont to do) but I really had not experienced any such moments during my Christmas walks on city streets to Midnight Mass.

Well, that is, not until I was in the convent and was “missioned” to a rural part of Connecticut. Our convent was only about a half a mile away from the Church which was up on a hill, so we always walked over to Church. Christmas Eve was no different and after we had cleaned the convent, did some baking, and prayed evening prayer, we set off for Midnight Mass.

It so happened that that particular Christmas Eve there was a good deal of snow on the ground and as we walked to Church it began to snow some more. I remember stopping for a moment and taking in all that was around me – soft falling snow, a lit up Church and happy, peaceful people near me. I think I knew at that moment what my family had been talking about – indeed there was a sense of joy and good will.

So, I wish for all of you, young and old, a child like sense of wonder and joy; may the hope of this blessed season settle in your soul and may the Light within you guide and direct you each day.

LETTERS TO JESUS

Many children are used to writing letters to Santa. We thought that in this year's Christmas Connections, it would be nice to ask children in our Parish School of Religion to write a "letter to Jesus," in honor of His birthday. Also on the opposite side of this page are some beautiful drawings by the children. Much thanks to Debi Mattews and our Holy Cross children.



Happy birthday, Jesus! Thank you for all the great things you do for us, like thank you for giving me a house to live in. Thank you for letting us have food to eat. I like that you are kind and giving. Thank you again. Hope you have a excellent Birthday!

Molly Mayzum, age 7
Daughter of Sarah and Jeff Mazum



Dear baby Jesus I am happy you were born and I am grateful you saved the world. And healed all those people. Love **Anne Marie Federer**

Age 7
Daughter of Jane and Mark Federer

Dear Baby Jesus

Thank you for all of the great things that have happened in the past year and I'm looking forward to see you at Christmas.

Thank you for my new baby sister and for my moms boyfriend Tim and his son Dillion and my awesome papa and my awesome mom.

We love you Your friend **Kaden Paul**, age 7

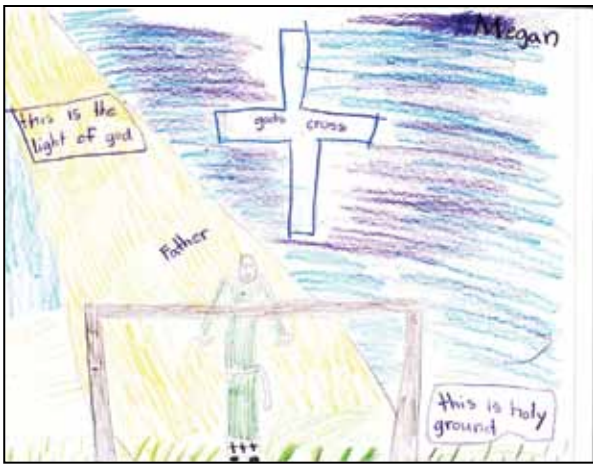


"Happy Christmas to you. I love you. I'm going to bring you a lego set when I die as a birthday present because I like Jesus. I like it when you were a baby. I like babies. I have a baaby just like you. Happy birthday Jesus."

Davy Sheridan, age 4
Son of Joe & Suzanne Sheridan

Happy birthday Jesus! I am happy you were born. Have a nice day.

Owen Mayzum, age 6
Son of Sarah and Jeff Mayzum



Above: Drawing by Megan McKinney, age 7.



Right: Drawing by Kaden Paul, age 7.



Right: Drawing by Carly Mayzum, age 10.



Above: Drawing by Matthew Federer, age 10.



Above: Drawing by Anne Marie Federer, age 7.



Confirmation Class 2011

Congratulations to our young people who received the Sacrament of Confirmation at a special Mass with Bishop Campbell at Corpus Christi Church on Saturday, November 19th.

This photo was taken by **Diane Huston**. Pictured from left to right are: **Katie Tripp**, and **Rachele Rice**; second row: **Tricia Tripp**, **Storm Boyer**, **Tyler Huston**, and **Blake Kelly**. In the back of course, are **Father Jerry** and **Bishop Campbell**.



Also, Ryan Stock and Sunny De Felice received their Confirmation at St. Joseph Cathedral recently. Congrats to all!

Baptisms

We welcome the newest members of our Church family who were recently baptized.

Richard Howell Stilwell IV, son of **Richard and Alice Stilwell**, who was baptized on November 13, 2011.

Natalie Patrice Wonderski, daughter of **Luke and Melissa Wonderski** who was also baptized on November 13, 2011.

Henry Edward LeRiger, son of **Chad and Michelle LeRiger**, baptized on November 27, 2011.

Margaret Ann Ward, daughter of **David and Kelly Ward**, will be baptized on December 18, 2011.

RCIA Rite of Acceptance into Catechumenate and *Welcome*

On Sunday, November 27th we formally welcomed adults who have completed the Inquiry stage into the Catholic Community. These candidates of initiation, for the first time, are recognized publicly as members who are participating in the Initiation process and have declared their intentions to the Church and the Church, in turn, accepts them as persons who intend to become its members. We congratulate the following and ask you to keep them in prayer:

Joyce Elliott, Brian Gibson, Brandon Haywood, Tina Searcy and Nancy White.

For more information on our candidates, see the March 2012 issue of the newsletter.

Dates to Remember

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|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday, December 11 | Reconciliation Service - 4:00 p.m. at St. Thomas the Apostle - E. Fifth Ave. |
| Saturday, December 24 | Christmas Eve Mass - 4:00 p.m. |
| Sunday, December 25 | Christmas Day Mass - 10:00 a.m. |
| Sunday, January 1, 2012 | New Year's Day - Mass at 9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
Open House after both Masses |



Holy Cross Catholic Church
 204 S. Fifth Street, Columbus, OH 43215



(614) 224-3416

www.holycrosscatholic.com

Parish Staff

Reverend Father Jerome D. Stluka, Pastor
 Rev. Fr. Ramon Owera, in residence
 Rev. Fr. Jose Manickathan, in residence
 Sister Anne Keenan, OP, Pastoral Associate
 Michael P. Agriesti, Administrative Assistant

Liturgy Schedule

Sunday: 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.
 11:30 a.m. Tuesday - Saturday

Reconciliation

Every Friday: 11:00 a.m.
 Every Sunday: 8:30 and 10:30 a.m.

Holy Cross Connections

Editor: Fr. Jerry Stluka
Associate Editor: Sr. Anne Keenan OP
Managing Editor: Jack Kustron

Layout and Design: Jan Kustron
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 204 S. Fifth St.
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