



**ST. MARY'S PARISH**  
**8 CHURCH ST.**  
**HOLLISTON, MA 01746**

Non-profit  
Organization  
u.s. postage  
**paid**  
Holliston, MA  
01746  
Permit no. 2

## CHRISTMAS MASSES

### **MONDAY, DECEMBER 24, CHRISTMAS EVE**

**4 PM** Masses in both the Church and  
Father Haley Hall (*Hall Mass includes the  
Christmas Pageant, 4 PM parking is  
difficult, plan accordingly*)

**5:30 PM** Mass in the Church

**7:30 PM** Mass in the Church

**11:00 PM** (Midnight) Mass in the Church



### **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25, CHRISTMAS DAY**

*\* Two Masses Only*

**9:30 AM** Mass in the Church

**11:30 AM** Mass in the Church



## **NATIVITY PAGEANT PREPARATIONS IN FULL SWING!**

Shown here, this  
year's Children's Christmas Pageant  
Cast participates in a full-dress  
rehearsal in preparation for  
Christmas Eve. Many thanks to  
our Pageant Director Debra Frey  
and her family for their leadership  
of this beloved St. Mary's tradition!





# St. Mary's Parish Newsletter

January, 2019 ~ Volume 44, Number 5



St. Mary's Parish  
8 Church Street  
Holliston, MA 01746

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Religious Education Email: [st.marysre1870@gmail.com](mailto:st.marysre1870@gmail.com)  
Parish Email Address: [st.marys1870@gmail.com](mailto:st.marys1870@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.stmarysholliston.com](http://www.stmarysholliston.com)

Mission ~ *"To Know Christ and to make Him Known."*

## Parish Clergy

Rev. Mark J. Coiro, Pastor  
The Xaverian Fathers, Weekend Assistance  
Rev. James Flynn, Weekend Assistance  
Deacon John Barry, Permanent Deacon  
Deacon Martin Breinlinger, Senior Deacon

## NEW ALTAR SERVERS INSTALLED AT ST. MARY'S

On Sunday, December 2, the First Sunday of Advent, four boys and two girls were installed in the Ministry of Altar Server at St. Mary's Parish.

Tiernan Beck Torres, Susannah Butler, Anthony Bonariggo, Sarah Eppinger, Paul McGrath & Tony Nunes spent four weeks in preparation for becoming Altar Servers. They learned the names of all the liturgical vessels and how to set them up for Mass, as well as how to assist during the celebration of Mass itself.

We congratulate these fine young people for their spirit of service and pray that their new ministry will be the source of many blessings in their lives.

*"Above all, Altar Servers, you are Servers of Jesus Christ, of the eternal High Priest. Thus, you are called in particular to be young friends of Jesus."* - Pope Saint John Paul II







## 2018 GIVE A GIFT

On Sunday, December 9, St. Mary's Sanctuary was piled high with gifts donated by the good people of our parish at every Mass that weekend. Parishioners attending the 11:30 AM Mass helped carry them to Fr. Haley Hall, where seventeen Knights of Columbus, some K of C family members, and ten Religious Ed. students sorted and packed the 479 gifts for delivery to the children of two Roxbury parishes. (This was up from 451 gifts last year.) Six Knights drove into Boston and delivered the gifts to St. Mary of the Angels and St. Patrick's. Thank you to all those who assisted in this annual St. Mary's Christmas Charitable effort! May God bless you!







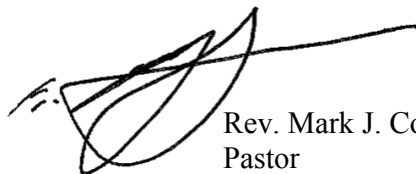
# From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Members of the St. Mary's Parish Family,

Like many of you, I am looking forward to gathering with my family on Christmas Day. I will get to see my parents, siblings, their spouses and my four nieces and two nephews. We are hardly a perfect bunch, but we love each other and are always there for each other despite whatever differences we may have. The last Sunday of 2018, December 30, will be the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Their family was not perfect either. The Holy Family knew trial, fear, struggle and suffering. But they were united and strengthened by their love for each other – a love that included Jesus. Just so, if we make Jesus part of our family, then our human love becomes something more – infused with the love of God Himself. How can you make Jesus more a part of your family life in 2019, so that He might walk with you and bless you in the New Year of His Grace?

On Tuesday, January 1, the Church focuses on a particular member of the Holy Family – Mary, the Mother of God. The Solemnity of Mary Mother of God finds its origin at the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD. This Council of the Church declared Mary the “theotokos” or “God-bearer,” since she bore into the world Jesus Christ in Whom both human and divine natures are fully present. The placement of this Holy Day of Obligation on January 1 is a wonderful blessing for us. What better way to start the New Year than by gathering as a parish family around God's table? And what better New Year's Resolution could we make, than to try like Mary to be “bearers” of Christ into the world?

May Christ bless you and your family richly in His love.



Rev. Mark J. Coiro  
Pastor



## **SOLEMNITY OF MARY MOTHER OF GOD**

**~ A Holy Day of Obligation ~**

**Vigil Mass:**

**Monday, December 31, at 6:30 PM**

**Feast Day Masses:**

**Tuesday, January 1, at 9:00 AM & 6:30 PM**

# Santa's Prayer on Christmas Eve

By Warren D. Jennings

The sleigh was all packed, the reindeer were fed,  
But Santa still knelt by the side of the bed.

"Dear Father," he prayed "Be with me tonight.  
There's much work to do and my schedule is tight.

I must jump in my sleigh and streak through the sky,  
Knowing full well that a reindeer can't fly.

I will visit each household before the first light,  
I'll cover the world and all in one night.

With sleigh bells a-ringing, I'll land on each roof,  
Amid the soft clatter of each little hoof.

To get in the house is the difficult part,  
So I'll slide down the chimney of each child's heart.

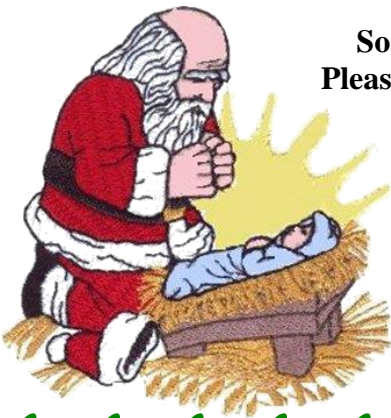
My sack will hold toys to grant all their wishes.  
An endless supply, like the loaves and the fishes.

I will fill all the stockings and not leave a track.  
I'll eat every cookie that is left for my snack.

I can do all these things Lord, only through You,  
I just need your blessing, then it's easy to do.

All this is to honor the birth of the One,  
That was sent to redeem us, Your most Holy Son.

So to all of my friends, lest Your glory I rob,  
Please Lord, remind them who gave me this job."







## 12<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL COOKIE WALK!

More than 2,500 cookies, all of them homemade with love, awaited the people of St. Mary's after all Masses the weekend of December 8 & 9. The delicious treats were made by the kids of St. Mary's Middle School Youth Group, who also manned the tables wearing plastic gloves to place cookies in customer's bags. A \$6 donation allowed you to "walk" along the tables piled high with every variety of Christmas Cookie imaginable and select a dozen to take home.

As always, the Cookie Walk proceeds all go to assist the poor of Haiti, the most impoverished nation in our hemisphere. This year \$2,140 was raised! Thank you to the Middle School Youth Group for sponsoring this event again, and thank you to all who contributed to its success. The following St. Augustine quote was on every Cookie Walk bag:

*"God has no need of your gift, but the poor have. You give it to the poor, and God receives it."*





*"A Christian steward is one who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord."*



## Stewardship of Retired Priests ~ The 2018 Christmas Collection

There is only one collection taken up at Christmas Masses and every penny of it goes to support the housing and healthcare costs of our retired priests – holy men who have given their entire lives in service to God's people. The Clergy Fund that provides for their needs is currently underfunded. So please, if you can, try to make a truly sacrificial gift for our priests at this year's Christmas Mass collection. Please also pray for these wonderful men. On behalf of all our retired priests, THANK YOU!

## Stewardship of Parish ~ The 2018 Grand Annual

Thank you to all who have already done their part in this year's Grand Annual – the single most important collection at our parish each year. For 56 years, combined with the weekly offertory, it has allowed our parish to cover its operating costs. If you have not yet done so, please return the orange Grand Annual envelope you received in the mail as soon as possible (extras at the church doors). Grand Annual envelopes may be placed in any Mass collection basket or mailed in or dropped off.

We ask every single family of our parish to please participate in the Grand Annual, doing the best they can according to their means. Thank you and God bless you. *"No one shall appear before the Lord empty-handed, but each of you with as much as he can give, in proportion to the blessings which the Lord, God has bestowed on you."* - Deuteronomy 16

### 2018 ST. MARY'S PARISH GRAND ANNUAL UPDATE FOR 12/16/18

2018 Grand Annual goal to cover operating expenses: \$ 150,000.00

Grand Annual parishioner support received to date: - \$ 121,081.00

Parishioner support still needed to reach 2018 Grand Annual goal: \$ 28,919.00

% of 2018 Grand Annual achieved to date: **81 %**

% of St. Mary's families who have now made their Grand Annual gift: **55 %**



As the Grand Annual continues, contributions may be placed either in the orange G.A. envelope you received in the mail, or in one of the extra G.A. envelopes available at the church entrances. G.A. envelopes may be placed in any Mass collection basket or mailed or dropped off at the rectory.

As explained in the November mailing to all parishioners, the \$150,000 goal will be applied to cover a number of parish operating expenses, including but not limited to: Interior Church Floor Replacement, Installation of New Pew Kneelers, Rectory Repairs, New Air-conditioning / Heating System for the Parish Library, Designated Improvements for our handicapped members to include exterior Church Lighting, and Salaries for St. Mary's dedicated and hardworking staff. Your generous support will assure the financial health of our parish continues.

**Thank you for your support of this most important annual collection!**

# St. Mary Parish

## Actual vs. Budget FY2018 and FY2019 Budget

	<u>FY2018 ACTUAL</u>	<u>FY2018 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY2019 BUDGET</u>
<b>OPERATING RECEIPTS</b>			
Offertory	684,170	679,000	680,000
Sacramental Offerings/Gifts/Donations	51,196	40,000	50,000
Religious Education Fees	70,977	75,000	75,000
Catholic Appeal Rebate to Parish	17,154	17,000	15,000
Other Income	10,011	8,000	10,000
Youth & Adult Programs	143,125	150,000	150,000
<b>Total Operating Receipts</b>	<b>976,633</b>	<b>969,000</b>	<b>980,000</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>			
Lay Salaries/Benefits	398,255	450,000	436,000
Clergy Salaries/Benefits	84,456	94,303	90,000
Total Salaries & Benefits	<u>482,711</u>	<u>544,303</u>	<u>526,000</u>
Office Expenses	58,432	80,000	75,000
Household Expenses	21,596	19,000	22,000
Utilities - Heat/Electric/Water	56,521	54,000	61,600
Property Insurance & Liability	16,721	17,000	17,000
Maintenance -			
Supplies/Equipment/Grounds/Building	78,167	70,000	80,000
Pastoral & Liturgical	46,895	45,000	46,000
Church Meetings & Transportation	17,170	14,500	17,500
Youth/Adult Programs*	154,756	115,000	150,000
Improvements -			
Furniture/Equipment/Buildings	20,606	75,000	40,000
Other Expenses	3,209	3,300	3,300
IFRM (Parish Tithe to Archdiocese)	81,432	81,432	83,532
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>1,038,216</b>	<b>1,118,535</b>	<b>1,121,932</b>
<b>Operating Gain or (Loss)</b>	<b>(61,583)</b>	<b>(149,535)</b>	<b>(141,932)</b>
<b>Unbudgeted - Grand Annual Collection Received</b>	<u>170,115</u>	<u>150,000</u>	<u>150,000</u>

The above Parish Financial & Budget Report was approved by the St. Mary's Parish Finance Council: Kevin Diamond (Vice-Chair), Kevin O'Connell, Ron Pipe, Diane McDermott Roy & Kim Latifi.

Any parishioners with questions / requests for clarification, etc., may contact St. Mary's Business Manager, Mary Sanning at 508-429-4427 x19. You may also email her at [st.marysbusinessmgr@gmail.com](mailto:st.marysbusinessmgr@gmail.com). Thank you for your faithful stewardship.





# POPE FRANCIS' NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR CATHOLICS



When Pope Francis recently met before Christmas with Vatican employees, mostly lay people with families, he asked them to do 10 things.

- *"Take care of your spiritual life, your relationship with God, because this is the backbone of everything we do and everything we are."*
- *"Take care of your family life, giving your children and loved ones not just money, but most of all your time, attention and love."*
- *"Take care of your relationships with others, transforming your faith into life and your words into good works, especially on behalf of the needy."*
- *"Be careful how you speak, purify your tongue of offensive words, vulgarity and worldly decadence."*
- *"Heal wounds of the heart with the oil of forgiveness, forgiving those who have hurt us and medicating the wounds we have caused others."*
- *"Look after your work, doing it with enthusiasm, humility, competence, passion and with a spirit that knows how to thank the Lord."*
- *"Be careful of envy, lust, hatred and negative feelings that devour our interior peace and transform us into destroyed and destructive people."*
- *"Watch out for anger that can lead to vengeance; for laziness that leads to existential euthanasia; for pointing the finger at others, which leads to pride; and for complaining continually, which leads to desperation."*
- *"Take care of brothers and sisters who are weaker ... the elderly, the sick, the hungry, the homeless and strangers, because we will be judged on this."*
- *"Making sure your Christmas is about Jesus and not about shopping."*

## NEED ANOTHER RESOLUTION? JOIN THE CHOIR!



On the cold night of December 16, the choirs and ensembles of St. Mary's Music Ministry joined forces to present our annual service of Lessons and Carols. Fr. Mark presided, and we were joined by nationally renowned organist Brandon Santini. It was a truly inspiring evening of music and scripture, where together we celebrated the mystery of the Advent Season and the Nativity.

In order to make sure St. Mary's Music legacy of great music is preserved, however, we need to continue to add new faces to our ranks. Do you like to sing? Do you enjoy playing an instrument? Do your children enjoy singing? Whatever your talents may be, we invite you to join our wonderful ministry. Our Adult Choir meets on Thursday nights and sings for the 11:30 AM Mass on Sundays; our Children and Youth Choirs meet on Wednesday afternoons and sing for select Sundays at the 9:30 AM Mass; our Contemporary Ensemble meets on Wednesday nights and sings for the 5:00 PM Saturday Vigil Mass. Our Children and Youth Choirs participate in the Royal School of Church Music's Voices for Life program, where each chorister receives free music training and materials. Interested? Come observe rehearsals, or just talk to us! Contact the Director of Music, Kevin Lyczak, at [musicatstmarysholliston@gmail.com](mailto:musicatstmarysholliston@gmail.com) or 508-429-6076. Also check out our Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/MusicAtStMarysHolliston](http://www.facebook.com/MusicAtStMarysHolliston). Welcome!



# women in WINGS God's spirit

## Winter 2019 Program Study & Sharing on Scripture

Please join us each Wednesday at 9:45 AM to hear an inspiring reflection on the upcoming Sunday Mass scripture readings. Small groups will discuss the readings after the speaker. *This is a great opportunity to grow in faith and knowledge of scripture. Nurturing childcare is provided! All are welcome!*



**January 23, 2019 – Mitch and Sandy Liro** have been members of St. Mary's Parish for 44 years. Married 51 years, they raised two children and have five grandchildren. Their Catholic faith grew stronger after experiencing a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend in 1978. Both completed four years of *Denver Scripture Study*, which studied most of the Old /New Testaments. Mitch has led a small faith-sharing group utilizing Renew International programs beginning with the Arise program in 2008. The group is now sharing using *Prayer Time*, which studies Sunday's Gospels. Mitch is a retired Manufacturing Engineer. Sandy is a retired English/Special Ed Teacher.



**January 30, 2019 – Fr. Carl Chudy** has been a religious missionary priest for more than 32 years who has worked in a number of cross-cultural communities, including the African American community and Chinese community in Chicago. Overseas, he has worked in Sierra Leone, West Africa, and 13 years in the Philippines. Most recently, he was provincial superior of the Xaverian Missionaries in the Philippines and the US for eight years. Currently, Fr. Carl is on sabbatical working on a degree in interfaith dialogue and religious atheist dialogue.



**February 6, 2019 – Mrs. Fran Crespi** is a former engineer, and has served the past sixteen years in ministry, eleven of which have been here at St. Mary's Parish. She completed her Master's degree in Theology and Ministry at St. John's Seminary in 2009, and is now certified as a Spiritual Director through the Oblates of the Virgin Mary. Fran lives in Canton, has two children and three adult grandchildren. She currently serves as St. Mary's Director of Religious Education.



**February 13, 2019 – Sister Agnes Therrien** was born and raised in Pawtucket, RI and attended Our Lady of Consolation where she was taught by the Sisters of St. Chretienne. She went on to attend St. Chretienne Academy in Salem, MA. Upon graduation she entered this community of Sisters. She taught for twenty-one years, was a pastoral associate for nine years, a spiritual director and retreat director for nine years, and held leadership positions in the community for twenty-five years. She has a bachelor's degree from Boston College, a master's degree from Wesleyan University, and a post-graduate certificate from Weston School of Theology in Cambridge.





# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

St. Mary's Council #14224 January, 2019



**ROSARY:** The Council recites the Rosary every third Wednesday of the month in St. Mary's Church at 7:00 PM. All are invited to share January 16 in this beautiful and powerful prayer.

**Grand Knight:** Albert Scaramella  
**Deputy Grand Knight:** Tom Anguish

**DECEASED KNIGHTS MASS:** At the 11:30 AM Mass on December 9, the Council prayed for the souls of deceased Knights Victor Terranova, John Gatti, and Tom Cunniff.

**CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AND CRECHE SETUP:** On Saturday December 2, Knights set-up the St. Mary's Creche and Christmas lights. Stumpy's Tree Service aided in getting the highest lights installed. How many Knights *does* it take to install a Christmas light? It looked like about 15 ...

**ANNUAL COUNCIL CHRISTMAS PARTY:** The Council held its annual Christmas Party on December 19. After pizza and ice cream, the Yankee Swap conducted by Knight Kevin Crocker resulted in many jovial moments among the brothers swapping gifts and camaraderie. The formal December meeting followed.

**ANNUAL RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE:** The Council will sponsor the Blood Drive in Father Haley Hall on Saturday, January 19, 2019. Knight Rodman Burgett is chairman. Details in the weekly bulletins.

**2019 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE:** All good St. Mary's men eighteen and older are invited to join our Council. The Knights of Columbus is the largest Catholic men's lay organization in the world. Our Council respects members' limited time but needs new members to share our faith journey as Catholic men. For membership information contact Grand Knight Albert Scaramella at 508 429-7588 OR [ajscaramella@comcast.net](mailto:ajscaramella@comcast.net) OR you can now **join ON-LINE** by going to the Supreme K of C website **kofo.org**. On-line membership allows you to obtain all K of C benefits including outstanding insurance plans and optional membership in our St. Mary's Council.



**HOLY HOUR FOR LIFE:** The bishops of the United States have established January 22 as a particular day of penance "for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion, and of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life." To mark this event, Holy Hours for Life will be prayed at parishes, college campuses, hospitals, convents and on the buses carrying Catholics to Washington, D.C. for the annual March for Life. All those faithful to the inherent dignity of all human life from conception to natural death are invited to participate.

Here at St. Mary's, the Holy Hour will take place on **Monday, Jan. 21 at 7 PM in the church.** It will include Adoration & Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Deacon John Barry will be preaching and presiding.

**ROSE FOR LIFE:** In every Sunday bulletin you see the name of an individual or family who has sponsored the "Rose for Life" that week. This tradition began at St. Mary's twenty-four years ago. The cost of sponsoring the rose is \$10. Part of this goes to purchase a single rose which is placed in front of the statue of Mary in our church

every Saturday morning, remaining there all week as a visible reminder to please pray for the health and safety of unborn children. The rest of the offering is given to the Pregnancy Help Program of the Archdiocese of Boston, a beautiful ministry that assists individuals in crisis pregnancies. Pregnancy Help offers free and confidential counseling, referrals and assistance on a wide range of medical, social service, housing and financial issues. Many women come to Pregnancy Help feeling totally alone, isolated and abandoned by family, friends and partners. Others have some support but they are confused and frightened about what to do. Whatever a particular woman's situation might be, Pregnancy Help provides a safe place where she can come, speak from her heart and find the support she needs.

**Want to sponsor the Rose for Life one week in 2019? We currently need many new sponsors.  
Please call 508-429-4427 to become part of this beautiful affirmation of life today!**



**St. Mary's  
EPIC**  
ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES IN CHRIST

**Pictures from the December 8  
Christmas Party with Caroling  
at Doolittle Home in Foxboro  
and December 9 Meeting  
The Cookielympic Games**

**Next Meeting  
Sunday, January 13  
7:30 – 8:45 PM  
Father Haley Hall  
High School Youth Group**



## **ST. MARY'S MISSION TRIPS ~ Announcing St. Mary's EPIC Mission Trip for Summer 2019!**

[Applicants for Leadership Roles Needed!]

This year, following the devastation caused by Hurricane Michael (photos below), we will travel to Gainesville, FL, from July 14 to July 21. We will be working out of a Catholic Heart Workcamp; check it out at [www.heartworkcamp.com](http://www.heartworkcamp.com). As we plan for an information session in January and an exciting spring, we need leaders – both teens and adult chaperones (over age 24). If you are an active member of St. Mary's and you are interested in sharing your faith and your talents in these roles, please email our Youth Minister Jake Thiringer at [st.marysym1870@gmail.com](mailto:st.marysym1870@gmail.com) and he'll send you the relevant application. A presentation on this summer's Mission Trip will take place at the January 13 EPIC Meeting.







# St. Mary's Parish Middle School Youth Group

Open to all 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, & 8<sup>th</sup> Graders for Faith, Friendship, Service & Fun.



**PAINTBALL:** On Monday, November 12, the MSYG had its annual fall Paintball Battle at PnL Paintball in Bridgewater. 111 teens took part in the event, which started with a safety instruction and prayer for veterans. Fr. Mark talked with the kids about the evils of real warfare and stressed that we play paintball as a sport and for teambuilding. Wouldn't it be great if all the world's guns shot paint!



**BINGO:** On Monday, November 26 almost thirty 7<sup>th</sup> Grade members of the Middle School Youth Group assisted with Bingo Night at St. Patrick's Manor. The Youth Group members split their time between visiting with residents up on their floors, and helping residents fill their Bingo cards for the big jackpots! The residents delighted in chatting with the 7<sup>th</sup> Graders who were wonderful representatives of the Youth Group. Many of these same teens also participated at the very successful resident's Prom at St. Patrick's last spring. The youth group members also excitedly reminded residents of the upcoming caroling visit. The evening ended with ice-cream served by the kids who also helped escort residents back to their rooms.



## Cross Walk

### *An Unexpected Gift*

by Cathy Stenquist

A beautiful smile highlighted with red lipstick. Nails, polished to a cherry shine. Outfit and jewelry just so. Pearl white hair thick and full, curved under in a bob with a vintage grey beaded headband. Her bangs combed down softly resting above her blue eyes. My dear, sweet friend, Carolyn.



Cathy and Carolyn

began and an unexpected friendship was born.

Each week, visiting my neighbor Don at the assisted living home in Franklin, I would pull a chair up to the table where our friends Carolyn, Phil and Vinnie enjoyed conversation over lunch. This group of four, forming a small family, watching out for each other and sharing stories. Wednesdays couldn't come fast enough. I looked forward more and more to seeing Carolyn and her bright smile. When Don moved to another nursing home, the thought of not seeing Carolyn and my new friends at The Estates again was unimaginable, so I added a second visit to my calendar each week.



Carolyn Bancroft and Don LaRoche

When my granddaughter, Hadleigh was born, I longed to introduce her to my mother who lived many states away. But due to my father's illness, my mom's trip always got delayed. When Hadleigh was three months old, I brought her to meet Carolyn. I remember holding Hadleigh on my



The moment Carolyn met Hadleigh.

saw me walking toward her, she dabbed her red lips with her napkin, pushed out her chair and rose to her feet. As if in slow motion, she lifted her arms out in welcome. The rest of the lunch room faded away as we embraced in a hug. My heart was full.

At each of the visits that followed, Carolyn always asked how "the baby" was before even saying hello to me. She immediately wanted to hear the latest news about Hadleigh. "I think I have some new photos," I would offer, her blue eyes lifting in a sparking anticipation as I scrolled through my phone. Seeing the image, she would giggle, grab my phone "talking" to Hadleigh as if she were right there, "Look at you, my little darling! Such a sweet little baby! My you're getting big!"

For nearly two years, Hadleigh and I visited Carolyn and her friends, making the rounds of each lunch table bringing the quiet out of their shell, creating a smile where there had been none, soft little fingers curling in friendship around wrinkled hands, peek-a-boo, singing rounds of "You are my Sunshine," and savoring dishes of strawberry ice cream.

Carolyn's love and friendship filled my heart in a way that I cannot fully explain. She needed me and I needed her. One day when I felt compelled to tell her how special she was to me, the words, "I love you, Carolyn" spilled out telling her how glad I was that we were friends. Her eyes welled up, shaking her head in disbelief, as if she couldn't believe someone could feel that way about her. "Unbelievable," she said.

As time went on, there were several falls, trips to rehab and the hospital. Each time, I would track her down showing up unexpectedly with flowers and a comforting hand. As the door slid open, her eyes would roll and with that shy smile, shake her head again and say, "Unbelievable." Then last May, Carolyn began to slow

shoulder, heading toward the doors to the lunchroom. With each step, my anticipation grew.

I smiled seeing Carolyn lifting her fork several tables away. I could feel my heart quicken. The minute she

down, her favorite soup grew cold and visits were shorter as she tired more, but each one a pearl in the necklace we were beading of our friendship. I slowly began to realize that Carolyn might be on her way home to God.

Now under hospice care, snuggled under a fleece blanket, her soft bangs still falling delicately on her forehead, she slept. Hadleigh, now shy of two, sat on my lap on the side of her bed. We talked to her like always, telling her the latest news, singing her the ABC's, and just being with her while she slept.

"We need to let Carolyn rest, Hadleigh" I said. "Time to say bye bye." And with that Hadleigh reached her little hand out and patted Carolyn's, leaving it there while she said, "I yah you, Carewin." Sobbing, I grabbed my phone and captured the moment.

During the next days, I sat on Carolyn's bedside as often as I could, softly singing her hymns, gently rubbing her hand while I prayed and reading to her stories of faith and friendship from *The Book of Virtues* by Bill Bennett. For a brief moment, the morphine fog lifted and she



stirred and I knew she was aware I was there. "Its Cathy, Carolyn, your crazy friend who can't seem to leave you alone." I laughed. After a moment, her eyes slipped open and she whispered, "Unbelievable."

The hospice nurse came in to make her more comfortable and she drifted off to sleep

Hadleigh saying goodbye to Carolyn

with a smile on her face. Rising from my chair, I brushed her hair back and put my cheek to hers whispering the words to her that she always said to me when I had to go home "I love you, dear friend. Be safe and be well." The next evening, she passed away peacefully into God's arms.

In reading this Crosswalk, one can easily feel sad. Was this difficult? Yes... but honestly, I would not have missed this moment or the many 'pearls' of visits we had together for the world. Looking back there were many unexpected gifts here that God gave: By reaching

out to my neighbor in friendship, I received the gift of nearly twenty 90+ year old friends; my granddaughter, Hadleigh came to learn about and give the gift of compassion over months of visits; Carolyn's children were comforted knowing a stranger who had become a friend, was giving the gift of her time to their mother, and after she passed, her son Robert gave me the gift of a lovely conversation where he shared a few of the Jewish prayers that Carolyn so loved.

#### **Kel Maleh Rachamim**

(Prayer of Mercy said for Carolyn, daughter of Frank)

*God, full of mercy, Who dwells above, give rest on the wings of the Divine Presence, amongst the holy, pure and glorious who shine like the sky, to the soul of Gavriel, daughter of Elkana, for whom prayer was offered in the memory of her soul.*

*Therefore, the Merciful One will protect her soul forever, and will merge her soul with eternal life.*

*The Everlasting is her heritage, and she shall rest peacefully at her lying place, and let us say: Amen.*

This Christmas Season, why not think of gift giving in a new way? Take some time to think of that sweet, little baby, Jesus, born so long ago that showed us how to bring light into a dark world in simple ways. Find inspiration in the Corporal Works of Mercy and see what gift you may be able to give. Reach out in a small way with your children and see the gifts that come back to you tenfold.



Cathy, Hadleigh and Carolyn

Merry Christmas to all my friends in faith. Thank you for taking this Cross Walk with me each month this past year. Your comments on how much you are enjoying it, mean so much to me. I can't wait to see what gifts the new year holds!

Walking in His name, Cathy



# ADULT FAITH RESOURCES

## JANUARY 2019

# got faith?

**PARISH ADULT FAITH FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Leo Racine will be facilitating a three-week reading and discussion group on Pope Francis' 2018 apostolic exhortation called *Gaudete et Exultate: On the Call to Holiness in Today's World*. The group will meet on Thursday evenings, January 10, 17 and 24 from 7:30 to 8:30 PM in the Parish Center. Please contact Leo at 508-429-7476 or [leoracine@msn.com](mailto:leoracine@msn.com) for more info. Fran Crespi will be leading a viewing and discussion of Bishop Barron's new Catholicism's Pivotal Players DVD series on Saints Augustine and Benedict. The group will meet on Tuesday mornings, 10:00 to noon, beginning on January 15. Call the religious education office at 508-429-6076 for more information. Finally, Earl King will be offering an eight-week series on the stylistically beautiful and theologically inspiring Gospel of John, beginning the evening of Monday, February 4, and running for several Mondays, ending in early April. Please call Earl at 508-361-8655 for more information and to register.

**SUNDAY READINGS:** In January we celebrate the end of the Christmas season and begin Ordinary Time. The gospel reading for January 6 recounts the adoration of the Magi at the manger (Epiphany) while the January 13 gospel reminds us of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River. January 20's gospel reading is the story of the wedding feast at Cana, where Jesus performed his first miracle. (Verses 1 and 2 of the hymn *Songs of Thankfulness and Praise* speaks of these three events in Jesus' life, which, along with his birth, make him manifest to the world. This hymn is in our misalette on page 226.) The gospel on January 27 recalls Jesus' startling announcement in his hometown synagogue that the scripture passage he had just read from Isaiah 61 was fulfilled in their hearing. You can prepare for the Sunday readings at <http://liturgy.slu.edu>.



**WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY:** We celebrate this week of ecumenical prayer from January 18 to January 25. See the Greymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute's website (<https://bit.ly/2AOh9CL>) for more information. The theme this year is "Justice, Only Justice You Shall Pursue" (Deut 16:18-20) and the materials for this year's week of prayer were prepared by Christians in Indonesia.

**WORLD DAY OF PEACE:** January 1, in addition to being New Year's Day and, on the Church's liturgical calendar, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, is the World Day of Peace. Each year, the Pope releases a statement about peace in recognition of this day. The 2019 message has not yet been posted on the Vatican website, but here's the address for the page on which it will appear: <https://bit.ly/1Ze3IDR>. Pope Francis' previous messages have focused on migrants, nonviolence, indifference, slavery and fraternity.

**JUST WONDERING:** Have you ever wondered about the Church's position on violence against women? Here it is: "Violence against women, inside or outside the home, is never justified. Violence in any form—physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal is sinful; often it is a crime as well" (US Bishops, 2002). The US Bishops' webpage devoted to this issue is at <https://bit.ly/1toRr39>. The National Domestic Violence Hotline phone number is 1-800-799-7233. The website is <https://www.thehotline.org/>.

**OUR ENVIRONMENT:** We continue our focus on the environment this month. In the book of Genesis (Gen 1-2) we are told that God created all the earth, including man and woman. We understand from this story that humans are made in the image and likeness of God and are given dominion over the earth and its creatures. Anne Clifford, CSJ, a theology scholar specializing in Christian thought and the natural sciences, wrote a chapter on creation in a 2011 publication on systematic theology. In this chapter she says that "Dominion is modeled after a loving God who protects the defenseless and gives justice to the oppressed". In her chapter, she argues for a "theology that the earth can live with", citing the writings of Pope St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict in the process. More to come next month.

--Leo Racine