



# The Messenger

**St. Edward the Confessor Mission**

*A Roman Catholic Community Serving  
Cedar Park Heights in Pointe-Claire*

## Christmas in Hong Kong

Christmas in Hong Kong 2005

I experienced a different culture and a different approach to Christmas last year when I visiting my daughter in Hong Kong. It was my first Christmas away from home and her first to have family with her on Christmas day. Debbie moved to Hong Kong in January 1997. She is the volunteer coordinator for a charity in Hong Kong. Many of her friends come are far away from home with limited financial resources as they are all volunteers. The spirit of Christmas, sharing and getting to the core of the meaning of the Nativity was evident to see for me.

It was advent when I arrived and preparations were well under way.

There was to be a Christmas exchange with each person that would be present on Christmas day. We were given a list of people that would be present over the holiday so that no one would be left out. The amount was limited to 5\$ Hong Kong per person which is equivalent to less than 1\$ Canadian. This is challenging even in Hong Kong. Some people formed groups for easier purchasing power. Debbie and I were fortunate to be in the Philippines in mid December. *Story cont'd on Pg. 4*

## St. Edward's Annual Christmas Bazaar A Huge Success

The St. Edward's Tea, Bake Sale and Bazaar was held on November 11, but the planning actually started in late June. Ann Howard, convener, along with numerous other ladies of the parish met through the summer planning for this annual fund raising event. The monies raised from this event are used entirely to support the St. Edward's Christmas Basket Fund. Parishioners were contacted, flyers and promotional material distributed, all in the hope of getting our community actively involved. The parishioners donated nearly



new and new items along with preserves, bake goods, sandwiches, crafts, gifts for the raffle and many other items.

The Bake Goods Table and Bottle Table sold out early. The Tea Room did a brisk business as did the Used Books, Country Kitchen, Nearly New etc. All the tables were very successful.

The main raffle had prizes galore, everything from a portable colour TV, original paintings, gift certificates, clothing to some excellent Christmas cheer, etc. Again this year, the drawing for the beautifully crafted Cedar Chest was a success. There were

many happy prize winners.

Because of your generosity and willingness to share, Christmas just became a little bit better for some families less fortunate than ourselves.

Ann Howard and her very hard working team succeeded in raising close to \$4800 a fantastic achievement.

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# Writing in Earnest

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As you probably know, I have worked with the Social Justice Committee ever since I first came to St. Edward's for my first time round in 1975. From time to time, some people ask what we mean by the term social justice.

Most of us have a pretty good instinct as to what justice is, but sometimes we run into trouble when we try to define it. From a Christian perspective, the Scriptures refer to it as being faithful to our relationships. A parent is just to a child when she respects, loves and cares for that child. The child is just to his parent when he respects, listens to, and loves her. Likewise, we are just towards an employer when we treat him with respect and do an honest day's work, do not steal from him, etc.

These are examples of individuals living justly; but today we are talking about social justice, which moves us away from the strictly individual plane to the social level. All societies and organizations have customs, laws, and attitudes that affect the way we, as individuals live. This is true of small organizations from bowling leagues to parishes, states and even to global society.

These customs, laws and attitudes are just when they respect and enhance each person's human dignity irrespective of gender, age, color of skin, language, religion, economic status, sexual preference and the like. They are unjust when they impede our ability to treat others with the dignity and respect befitting our brothers and sisters. For example, a law or

even an attitude that condones slavery would be socially unjust. Not only would it be unjust towards slaves themselves but it also would make it more difficult for those people opposed to slavery to resist it. In the same way, a custom of helping the poor makes it easier to do such things as supporting an institution such as Benedict Labre house.

This year, both the Social Justice Committee (SJC) and the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (D&P) are calling Canadian Catholics (and others) to work for laws that would require Canadian mining companies to fully respect the rights of people affected by their mines in poorer and weaker countries. Currently, there are many examples of people's quality of life being severely weakened by the activities of some Canadian companies in countries like Guatemala, the Philippines, Indonesia and the Congo.

Obviously, the companies involved and the governments of the host countries share the greatest responsibilities for acting in a socially just manner. However, in quite a few countries, governments lack the power and, perhaps, even the will to protect their people. Moreover, the world we inhabit is growing smaller by the day. What we do in Canada can have both positive and negative affects on people on the other side of the globe. For example, we might invest in these companies, either directly or indirectly, such as through pension funds, thereby giving them the financial

resources to do their work. Perhaps we purchase and use their products, or grant them assistance through government loans and programs. Almost without knowing it, we can contribute to unjust actions.

As a result, we have a Christian responsibility to help ameliorate the situation by perhaps withdrawing our financial support, refusing to buy the products in question or even working democratically for just laws. Even if we are not implicated ourselves, our Christian faith calls upon us to act justly towards all our brothers and sisters wherever they may be.

In 1971 the Catholic bishops meeting at a synod in Rome wrote: "*Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.*"

Fr. Ernie



**Christmas 2006**

# Pillars Need Your Support for our English Catholic Community

The Pillars Trust Fund has been supporting great causes within our English Catholic community for over 34 years. Pillars mission is to provide leadership, support and financial assistance to promote pastoral activities deemed essential to the English-speaking Catholic community of Montreal. At this time of year, Pillars looks to its constituents through an Annual Campaign to raise awareness and funds to promote continued good works throughout the year.

Contributing to Pillars is a wonderful way to provide help to many groups that strengthen our community, from supporting seminarians with the Diocesan Priesthood Guild, to the excellent work of the Catholic Times and the English Speaking Catholic Council. Pillars supports the Newman Centre as a vibrant focal point of Catholic life at McGill University and many charitable causes such as Benedict Labre House. In fact, Pillars is the only organization in Quebec that consistently raises money and provides support to a breadth of beneficiaries that build our English Catholic community.

**"Pillars mission is to provide leadership, support and financial assistance to promote pastoral activities deemed essential to the English-speaking Catholic community of Montreal"**



The financial objective for Pillars 2006 Campaign is \$250,000. Considering that we have approximately 223,000 English-speaking parishioners in our 38 parishes, this objective would seem easy to achieve. In fact if \$5 per parishioner were donated, Pillars could raise well over \$1,000,000 and support many more good works. Surprisingly, fundraising is Pillars greatest challenge.

With a strong and dedicated Board, Pillars makes the most out of funds entrusted to it by the community. We urge you to take a closer look at how your contribution can be leveraged for the good of Montreal area English speaking Catholics. The closer you look, the better you will feel about every dollar you can give. We encourage you to learn more, give more and become involved in Pillars and its beneficiaries in any way that you can.

*For more information please contact Mr. Richard Brisebois at Pillars (514) 937-2301 ext. 255 or Glen Brown, a Board member and witness to the good work of Pillars (514) 428-5956.*

Story by: Glen Brown

## Editors Note:

Glen Brown, a member of St. Edward the Confessor Mission, was appointed to the Board of the Pillars Trust Fund in June of 2006. He was born in Montreal and raised in LaSalle; attended Loyola High School, Mount Allison University and Queen's University; married Christine Meszaros in 1988 and they have three children: Lauren (14), Adam (11) and Liam (10). He practices law, serves on a number of charitable boards and coaches soccer in Pointe-Claire.



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Parish Office Hours:  
Tuesday -Thursday, 8:30 am-11:30 am  
Telephone: 514-426-4523  
Fax: 514-697-3764  
E-mail: stedward@vif.com  
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## Christmas in Hong Kong (cont'd from Pg. 1)

We were able to do some bargaining at the local market in Dumaguete for our gifts for the team members. It didn't solve our problem for the many visitors and family that had come for the holidays as volunteers. We decided to give a donation to Heifer International. This allowed us to buy a flock of ducks for a farmer in a third world country. So we symbolically gave "ducks" to that group. This gift exchange was scheduled for Christmas Eve. Supper that night was being provided by the community volunteers. It was a reversal of roles as we normally give gifts to volunteers at the holidays in Canada and they were gifting the group with a feast of goodies. This was different.

This was only part of the preparations. There was going to be a birthday party for Jesus on Christmas day. So naturally you bring gifts to party. There was a tradition among Debbie's friends to bring a gift to Jesus. What kind of gift depended on each person. It meant a lot thinking and praying. This was much harder than finding a tangible gift as it was a gift of self. This too is different.

Christmas Eve there was the usual business of wrapping presents for the gang of over 60

people. It was a daunting task as we had been busy every night. We were working until 1p.m. I also volunteered during my stay. Making tortiere for the Christmas day was challenging in a toaster oven but it did smell good. It helped to use another friend's toaster oven too. This was very different from my own kitchen.

We all had a great feast on Christmas Eve with pates, cheeses, salads, ham, scalloped



potatoes but no turkey this year. There was a lot of laughter and Christmas carols. Then the madness began of giving each other gifts.

Everyone was remembered and felt part of a family despite being away from home. Imagine 60 people giving small gifts and receive gifts as well. There was no time for us to open gifts at that time as Debbie and I left at 10 o'clock to go to her Church service. We arrived with 5 min-

*"The highlight of the day was giving our gifts to Jesus. For some it was a song, a poem, others gave him their hopes and fears. There was laughter and even some tears."*

utes to spare as it is about 50 minutes by minibus to Hong Kong Island and a taxi ride up

the hill. It was good to meet so friends of her church family again. I had met many of them on a previous visit 2 years previously. The service was spirit led and full of joy. We stayed for fellowship before making our way back to the Gold Coast. The minibus took us back in record time but we didn't get to bed until the early hours. This was different.

Christmas morning brought phone calls to Canada as the family was gathering for their turkey dinner. Debbie and I continued our family tradition of having bacon (very difficult to find at the local supermarket) and eggs Christmas morning. We had a birthday party brunch to attend. Everyone brought a traditional dish from their home country. The tortiere pies were part of our offering. It was wonderful spread from Germany, Australia, Zambia, Congo, South Africa., America and Canada. Just to name a few countries.

There was a birthday cake for Jesus.... we all sang Happy Birthday Jesus. What a good idea for our families in Canada to emphasize what we were celebrating.. The highlight of the day was giving our gifts to Jesus. For some it was a song, a poem, others gave him their hopes and fears. There was laughter and even some tears. It was good people going deeper in their relationship with Jesus. It was truly a gift for me to witness such amazing spirit and be a part of their loving community. This was different.

Debbie and I left the party at about 3 o'clock.

*Story cont'd on Pg. 5*



## Christmas in Hong Kong (cont'd from Pg. 4)

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I had always wondered what it would be like to experience Christmas in a warm climate. So we went to the beach about 15 minutes walk from Debbie's. We brought hors d'oeuvres and wine to fulfill my fantasy. There were lots of Cantonese families on the beach playing games and little ones making sand castles. We sat on the sand just waiting for the sun to come out through the

smog. We did witness a beautiful sunset before going back to Debbie's. Imagine walking barefoot on the sand on Christmas day! This was indeed different.

The evening ended with a friend dropping by to visit. It was a Christmas to remember. I was lucky to be able to share it with Debbie in her home and friends. It is a long way from Pointe-Claire but we were united in

celebration of the Christ child's birth. This required more than gifts but giving of self to Jesus. This should not be different.

Story by: Annette Kruse



## Advent 2006— A Reflection

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### *He Knew*

Advent begins a new year for the Church and this Advent we begin the last of the three lectionary cycles – year C. We will read the gospel of Luke, the first of a two-volume work (Luke-Acts) written about 85-90 C.E. after the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem. As far as we know, the work is anonymous and was written for a Greco-Roman audience.

I always think of the author of the Gospel of Luke as a gentle soul, a compassionate healer as he emphasizes God's compassion and willingness to forgive all. Luke's Jesus provides a powerful example for his followers to imitate in service, charity and good works.

Reading the Gospel of Luke (21:25-36) the first Sunday of Advent reminds me of a story that I read several years ago. Vs. 28 says, *"Now when things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."*

He knew. From the moment I saw his eyes looking at me – at my body – I knew he knew. He was a survivor; I was still a victim.

"He" was Robert, a hospital-appointed encourager who would help me. Robert would be around to cheer me up, to keep my attitude strong and my spirits up. He could help me because he knew.

Robert had had cancer twelve years ago and had experienced everything I was just starting to experience. Robert knew about the constant tears at unsuspecting moments. Robert knew about the preoccupation with hair loss. Robert knew about the never-ending feeling of nausea during chemotherapy sessions. He knew because he was a survivor.

I wasn't a survivor. I was still a victim, the disease taking everything I had, twisting it around and forcing me to make sense of it. Of course it made no sense.

Cancer has no grace. It has no mercy. It takes no rest.

Robert came to me the first day of my first round of treatment. At first I didn't want him around. He was a little too cheerful. A little too forced. A little too healthy-looking for me to relate. But he talked and talked and talked and shared his incredible story. He had looked at me with eyes that understood and I knew he knew what it was like. He could truly understand. He could help.

Robert had colorectal cancer when he was only 27 years old. He was a father of a four-year-old and two-year-old. He didn't want to die. He didn't want to have cancer. He didn't want to have a "bag" with him constantly. Robert fought, cried, and threw up. He lost his hair, lost weight, and lost hope. But he never forgot that he was loved. God loved him. His wife loved him. His children loved him. His three sisters loved him. His many friends loved him. Even the lazy old Labrador loved him.

*Story cont'd on Pg. 6*

# Advent 2006— A Reflection (cont'd from Pg. 5)

It was enough to make him want to fight. With time, bald was beautiful. Feeling down was not a sin. Prayer was constant and living life to the fullest was top priority.

Robert almost died, but after two years and two surgeries, Robert was “in remission” – a survivor. And ten years later, he planted two trees in he cancer center’s grove to honor his survival.

I had much to learn. I had much to *hope for*. *Mostly*, I had much to experience. But I had a good model and I knew I was loved.

For now I had the gift of life and I would live it to the fullest! (Berg 2000)

This story came from Constance Berg, a pastor and theologian in North Dakota, who also served as a missionary to Chiapas, Mexico. Her stories speak to the average person coming from all walks of life, from different experiences with varied outlooks and opinions. They inspire, touch, motivate, challenge, educate and provoke thought.

May God bless you as you use this story and meditate on Scripture.

*“Take a moment every day  
To read the Bible and to pray  
Set your sights on God above  
And He’ll guide you with His Love!”*

Story by: Ann Marie Di Michele



## St. Edward’s Christmas Basket Fund

The purpose of the Annual Tea, Bake Sale and Bazaar is to raise money for the St. Edward’s Christmas Basket Fund. This year Annette Tan and her daughter Daniele Bercovici have volunteered to coordinate this project. Once the financial results of the Bazaar were known Annette then contacted the West Island Assistance Fund. This organization provides the names of families requiring assistance in the West Island.

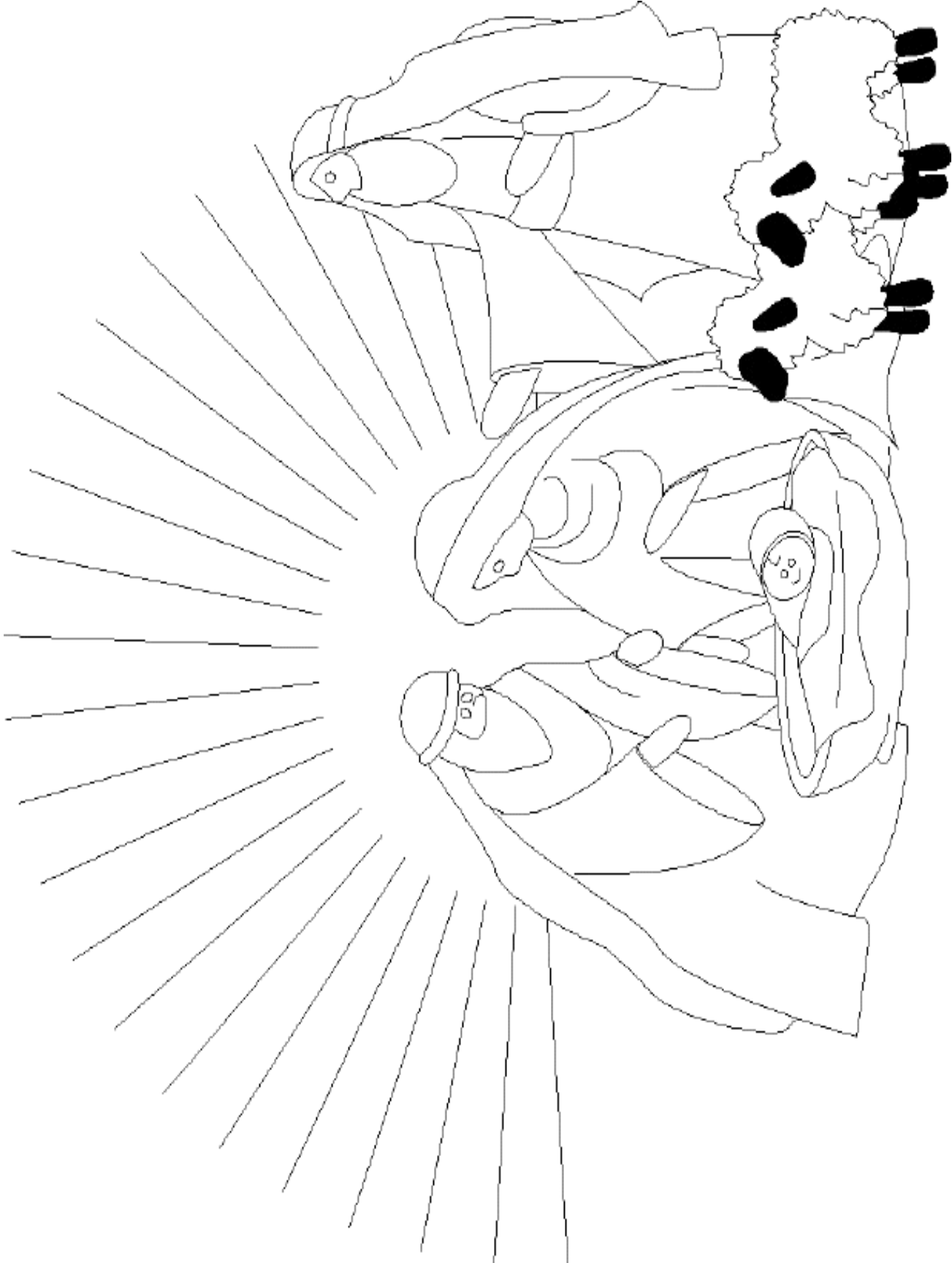
Each basket provided has a value of \$85.00 - \$250.00 depending upon the size of the family. Annette and Daniele are currently seeking parishioners to sign up to take names of families to receive baskets.

When you sign up to help with the Christmas Basket campaign you will receive the name of the family, and within a week or so a cheque so you can start your shopping. You will receive detailed instructions has how to proceed.

Shown below is a suggested shopping list for a family of 6 + people. It is important to note that the family should be contacted before purchasing food supplies to inquire if there are any dietary

restrictions due to diabetes, food allergies or other health issues or religious restrictions. If you would like to volunteer see Annette and Daniele before or after Mass on the weekend.

Family of 6 + people Christmas Baskets Suggested Shopping List			
Turkey	7-8 kilos	Oranges	2 dozen
Potatoes	20 lbs	Apples	2 kilo bag
Cranberry Sauce	1 can	Jam	1 large jar
Flour	2 kilo bag	Peanut butter	1 large jar
Oatmeal	1 large bag	Pasta	5 lbs
Brown Sugar	2 kilo	Spaghetti Sauce	2 large cans
Sugar	4 kilos	Tuna / Salmon	2 cans
Margarine	1 kilo	Ham	1 canned
Eggs	2 dozen	Rice	1 large package
Tea Bags	1 box large	Cookies	2 packages
Instant Coffee	1 jar large	Cheese	1 kilo
Soup	10 cans	Carrots	2.5 kilo
Vegetables	6 large cans	Bread / rolls	
Fruit	6 large cans	Non-Perishables –onions, cabbage, etc	
Fruit Juice	6 large cans	Hygiene products - toilet paper	
		Kleenex, soap, shampoo, tooth paste	





# **Advent – Christmas Schedule**

at

## **St. Edward the Confessor Mission**



### ***December 2/3 – First Sunday of Advent***

Father John Lyng, pastor of St. Kevin's parish and former chaplain at the Lakeshore General Hospital will preside at both Masses and give the homily.

### ***December 5***

Celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation for the children of our community at 7 pm in the church.

### ***December 9/10 – Second Sunday of Advent -***

Masses at 5 pm Saturday and 9 am Sunday.

### ***December 12***

Celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation for adults at 7:30 pm.

### ***December 16/17 – Third Sunday of Advent –***

Fair trade coffee, tea and chocolate for sale after each Mass.

### ***December 17***

Young people will lead us in Christmas carols 6:30 pm.

Free will offering for our faith community.

### ***December 23 – Fourth Sunday of Advent -***

Mass at 5 pm

### ***December 24 Christmas Eve***

5 pm – Family Christmas Mass preceded by children's choir and carols at 4:30

10 pm – Christmas Mass preceded by adult choir and carols at 9:30 pm

### ***December 25 Christmas Day***

10 am – Christmas morning Mass

### ***December 30/31 – Feast of the Holy Family -***

Masses at 5 pm Saturday and 9 am Sunday

### ***January 1 – Feast of Mary, the Mother of God –***

10 am - Mass

