



Christmas, 2011

Heart of Jesus PNCC

Bayonne, NJ

Christmas Cheer

Every year around this time, I have a familiar experience. I'm out shopping, and I'll go through the checkout line, and pay for my stuff. When the cashier hands me back the change, they'll say "Happy holidays," or perhaps even "Merry Christmas."

I realize that this comment is not always motivated by the cashier's genuine interest in whether or not I enjoy my holiday. I'm aware that they may be saying this because they've been told to. I can envision the memo from K mart corporate headquarters directing cashiers when to switch from "Have a nice day" to "Happy Holidays," on the assumption that this will somehow help cement a lasting bond between the store and the customer that won't evaporate when a Wal-Mart opens across the street.

I'm aware of all that, and suspicious of the whole business. But at least once every year, I have a cashier who looks me in the eye and says "Merry Christmas," and really means it. And it changes my whole day.

There really is something genuine to this whole idea of Christmas cheer. As Dec. 25th draws near, people warm up just a bit. If you're out and around on Christmas Eve, you'll notice that people are friendlier than on any other day of the year.

Folks warm up when they are mindful of the Christ child's birth, and make an extra effort to practice the virtues the angels sing of – "peace on earth, goodwill towards men."

But consider this – why do we notice this at Christmas? Why does this surge in warm-heartedness stand out? I think it's because, despite our best intentions, good will towards men can easily become a seasonal event rather than a standing policy.

When Christ entered our world, he didn't come to brighten our Decembers, but to transform our lives. It can be hard work to practice good will towards one another. But John the Baptist's message was that as we prepare for Christ to come into our lives, we can change our ways.

The Gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry provide the blueprint for loving our neighbor in a busy and complicated neighborhood. Christ made a point of seeking out the broken and disenfranchised people of his day – the lepers, prostitutes and tax collectors – and he saw the value in each one of them. And in so doing, He helped them recognize the value in themselves.

This Christmas season, let us recognize that just as faith is a decision, good will towards people is a series of decisions that work themselves out not in temporary holiday cheer, but in the details of everyday life.

This meditation was prepared by Rich Miller of Lawrenceville, New Jersey. Rich is a lay speaker who attends the [The Hopewell United Methodist Church](#) in Hopewell Borough, N.J.

Advent 4 **Sunday, December 18**

.....according to the command of the eternal God, made known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith to the only wise God through Jesus Christ. - Romans 16:26

****10:00 AM** Holy Mass with intention for Leona Kopchinski offered by Thomas Grodkiewicz; and also with the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism to Elias Xavier Smith who will enter into Christ's Body, the Church, and into our fellowship

CHRISTMAS EVE

Pasterka – Mass of the Shepherds

Vigil of the Nativity of our Lord

Saturday, December 24

9:40 PM Carol Sing: Echo Choir and congregation

10:00 PM Holy Mass

CHRISTMAS DAY

Nativity of our Lord

Sunday, December 25

10:00 AM Holy Mass of the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour

Solemnity of the Circumcision of our Lord

Sunday, January 1

9:30 AM Holy Mass

FEAST OF THREE KINGS (observed)

Solemnity of the Epiphany of our Lord

Sunday, January 8

9:30 AM Holy Mass

The blessing and distribution of charcoal and incense will be done
for the Feast of Three Kings – Epiphany

Sunday, January 15

9:30 AM Holy Mass

11:00 AM Parish Committee monthly meeting

Sunday, January 22

9:30 AM Holy Mass

Sunday, January 29

Music Scholarship Sunday

9:30 AM Holy Mass

Oplatki - Christmas Wafer

Included within this Lamplighter mailing is an envelope marked "for Oplatki" and addressed to the parish. Any donation parishioners and friends might care to make to the parish for the Christmas wafers would be appreciated and can be made through this envelope.

The offering envelope can be placed in the offering plate anytime during the liturgies of Christmastide, or given to any Committee member or mailed directly to the address given on it.

More Oplatki are available in the narthex or, by arrangement, at the rectory.

Exterior Christmas Banner

The new banner announcing the season of Christmas and our Christmas Mass schedule is hung over the front entrance to our church building where the Advent banner was displayed. Along with the Advent banner, our Christmas banner is also offered to God's glory and in loving memory of Joanna and Jeremiah DiMeola by their children.

The beautiful 3' by 5' vinyl banner proclaims Isaiah's prophecy of the coming Messiah and lists the times of the Pasterka – Shepherd's Mass - for Christmas Eve and the Mass for Christmas Day. From our banner Isaiah proclaims that “ *unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given* “

Christmas Poinsettia Memorials

(ascriptions as of December 17th :
subsequent offerings will appear in the following Lamplighter)

*In loving memory of **Edward Grodkiewicz**
and the dearly departed of the
Grodkiewicz and Kopchinski families
Thomas Grodkiewicz (2 main altar pieces)*

*In loving memory of **Edward Rooth**
In loving memory of **Stefania and Frank Gnás**
Helen Rooth*

*In loving memory of **Henry and Bertha Grodkiewicz**
Jeffrey and Cindy Grodkiewicz
Devon, Travis and Jeremy Grodkiewicz
Steve and Christina Smith (3 poinsettias)*

*In loving memory of **John and Adele Mocki**
In loving memory of **Ed and Louise Busch**
In loving memory of **Ben and Frances Kucharski**
In loving memory of **Joe and Harriet Lapinski**
In loving memory of **Louie and Betty Christen**
Ed & Barbara Busch*

*In loving memory of **Henry and Carolyn Urbanowicz**
In loving memory of **Frank and Josephine Raczkowski**
Bill, Debra, Billy and Brooke Pandos*

Christmas Poinsettia Memorials (contd.)

*In loving memory of **Bernard and Celia Nowicki***
*In loving memory of **Frank and Cecelia Machinski***
*In loving memory of **Helen Mushalko***
*In loving memory of **Barbara Kosik***
*In loving memory of **Edgar Kopcza***
Father Bernie & Barbara

*In loving memory of **Edward Gnás***
*In loving memory of **Father Senior Stephen Gnás***
Sophie Gnás

*In loving memory of **Henry and Carolyn Urbanowicz***
*In loving memory of **Frank and Josephine Raczkowski***
*In loving memory of **Michael and Victoria Urbanowicz***
Bob, Lynne, Bobby and Drew Mulcahy

*In loving memory of **Lester Artz***
*In loving memory of **Pauline Loksa***
*In loving memory of **Joseph Loksa***
*In loving memory of **Edward Loksa***
The Artz Family

*In loving memory of **John and Mary Liberasky***
*In loving memory of **John, Lottie, Daniel and Mary Kopcza***
Jean Kopcza

ASKING and RECOMMENDING YET AGAIN !

Again as last year, I make this request: **“O come, all ye faithful.....”**

O come home this year to *Heart of Jesus* for Christmas.....

Coming home to church for Christmas is a precious Christmas gift to God.....

along with worshipping together with some regularity in the coming year.....

Your presence is your gift offering for God’s great gift to you of his only Son,
his Christ made flesh in the Babe of Bethlehem, Jesus, our Lord.

So - COME HOME THIS SEASON.....home where

..... you have fellowship with the crucified and risen Christ

..... you are forgiven

..... you hear the voice of God

..... you grow in the knowledge of the Bible, God’s Word

..... you feed your soul

..... you are fed and sustained by the Eucharist

..... you are loved and encouraged

..... you are prayed for

.....you love and encourage your fellow Christians

.....you help other people

.....you worship

.....you promote the gospel

.....you find the fullness of truth and grace

.....you and your children have a faith foundation

Come home to the small parish with a big heart.....

Come home to the little church others could be looking for if you show them the way.....

Come home to the intimate congregation you won’t feel lost in.

Blessings on you, your family and loved ones this Christmas season and throughout the New Year.

Fr. Bernie

Sincere thanks to.....

..... ***all*** who participated in the work of the Advent Tree by taking its ornaments and contributing items of warm clothing to the needy of Bayonne. The glory of the Advent Tree is its barrenness after the ornaments are removed from it. Its barrenness promises that the gold box before the Advent wreath in church becomes bountifully filled with gifts that will be distributed in town by Christmas Day through the efforts of the Bayonne Economic Opportunity Foundation.

..... ***everyone*** who offered the Christmas memorial floral pieces for their departed loved ones and friends which enhance the beauty of our worship spaces this season.

..... ***all*** who extended Christmas greetings to our parishioners and friends through this Christmas Lamplighter.

..... ***all*** our parishioners for having submitted their parish dues before the end of the year to facilitate our parish bookkeeping.

..... ***David Wissen*** for polishing our parish brassware for the season.

The Narthex Christ Statue

A significant presence is lost in our narthex with the absence of the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus with arms outstretched in benediction.

It has been removed for refurbishing. The colors had begun to separate from the form causing paint chips to drop to the pedestal base and leave unsightly gaps of white amid the lush red folds of the tunic.

We anticipate its return no earlier than the end of the coming January, however the artisans feel no obligation to meet that timeframe – and, in truth, we are happy they take that view. We are also happy to have received a very generous donation that allows us to attend to this work, and which will also allow us to refurbish and replace our parish's silver and gold sacred vessels used during Mass.

We thank Loreen Artz for blessing us with this special gift as we thank God for inspiring her to make this generous bequest in token of His blessings upon her.

A Christmas Prayer

by Robert Louis Stevenson

Loving Father,
Help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate
and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
and good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing
which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning
make us happy to be thy children,
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds
with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven,
for Jesus' sake.

Amen.