



strengthening our faith

by rebuilding our heritage

Christmas 2011

My dear parishioners,

The great message of the Season of Advent is one of hope. The story of every person God uses in the Bible is the story of hope. The hope that filled Abraham enabled him to leave his home at God's prompting. Hope made Moses willing to take on Pharaoh, and it drove the prophets to keep taking on city hall.

Jesus' Message of Hope

Jesus showered people with hope. Every crowd and every encounter revealed the spiritually and morally bankrupt: beggars, thieves, lepers, and prostitutes, all barely getting by; all wanting to see Jesus. Jesus stepped into their lives and preached forgiveness, compassion, change, and understanding for those who would repent and turn to the Father. He turned bad habits and behaviors into distant memories.

This year you may feel that you are in a deep pit. Economic unrest has visited us. Families have lost their homes; retirement savings are at risk; jobs have been lost. Throughout our society, many are increasingly concerned about their ability to provide for their family's basic needs.

But you will make it. Happiness and courage will return to your life. Jesus drops a rope down the pit. It has a big knot at its end. He's looking at you and saying, "Don't look down. Look up. Hang on. Start climbing. I'm here, right beside you!" His gentle but powerful encouragement provides the confidence to climb higher. As you slowly but surely climb out of the pit, stay focused on Jesus. He'll be close beside you, holding your hand, helping you dodge those tugs from below. Empowered by his love and faithfulness, you will not go down there again. When you're finally out of the pit, brush yourself off and savor the new day with refreshing opportunities written all over it. Gaze eye-to-eye at Jesus, who'll be smiling and saying, "You did it!"

It is my wish this Advent/Christmas that you will be free from discouragement and assured that Jesus is always by your side, showering you with deep, lasting hope.

Helping St. Matthew's to Give Hope & Help

Even, or perhaps especially, in these hard economic times, St. Matthew's remains committed to bringing life to Jesus' command to love one another. We know you support us in this mission—you are generous with your time, talent and treasure. I know you appreciate the Cathedral's charitable work, its spiritual offerings, its physical splendor and prominence. I also know you understand how difficult it is to maintain such quality and service. In spite of budget pressures, we will continue to care for the spiritual and physical needs of our parishioners and those less fortunate who ask us for help. **You, our parishioners, are so important to us in fulfilling this mission! Your gifts are our lifeline!** You have been so kind, and we need you more than ever this year. May I ask you to consider a special gift to St. Matthew's this Christmas? Please use the enclosed envelope to make your Christmas offering. Help us to share Christ's love with the hundreds of people who come through our doors. I assure you that you will be remembered at our Masses during the Christmas season. Thank you so much. Muchas gracias.

A Prayer of Thanksgiving

During this time of the year, we are reminded of our many blessings. As a parish family, we will gather on Thanksgiving Day, **November 24** at 10:00 a.m. for a bilingual (English and Spanish) celebration of the Eucharist—the greatest act of thanksgiving for Christians. We are challenged by the words of the Communion Antiphon for that day, "What return can I make to the Lord for all that he gives to me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord." Let us together take the cup of salvation offered at such great cost, making just return to Him of our very selves! Reach deep! The offertory collection on Thanksgiving Day will benefit the many Social Justice & Community Services Ministries at St. Matthew's. In honor of the holiday, the parish offices will be closed on Thanksgiving Day and the following day, Friday.



Adopt-a-Family: A Special Way to Give Back

Again this year, the Cathedral will sponsor its very successful Adopt-a-Family program. This year, 35 needy families and approximately 70 individuals will receive food and gifts through this effort, which enlists area businesses to “adopt” a family that lacks resources. There are many ways in which you can help the effort this year; most are one-time commitments that will take only a few hours of your time. For more information, see the bulletin or our website, or call Fr. Evelio Menjivar at emenjivar@stmatthewscathedral.org.

Christmas Liturgies

The holy season of Advent prepares us for the coming of Christ on the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord. I will celebrate a Vigil Mass of Christmas on Saturday, **December 24** at 4:30 p.m. with a 4:00 p.m. prelude by our Contemporary Choir. Fr. Evelio will celebrate another Vigil Mass at 6:30 p.m., in Spanish, accompanied by the Spanish Choir. Cardinal Wuerl will celebrate the Solemn Mass of Christmas at 10:00 p.m. with the Schola Cantorum giving a prelude beginning at 9:15 p.m. The 10:00 p.m. Mass replaces our traditional Midnight Mass—there will be NO Midnight Mass.

Partake With Us!

Enclosed you will find our *Advent and Christmas* brochure, which lists the full Christmas Mass schedule and the Cathedral’s other upcoming liturgies and events, including those listed below.

—Join us for our annual Advent Day of Recollection – “Following the Way of Jesus” – on Saturday, **December 3**, with Sister Patricia A. Parachini, S.N.J.M., D.Min. An excellent way to prepare for Christmas, this morning retreat will begin at 9:00 a.m. in the North Conference Room and conclude with our 12:10 p.m. Mass. Please register by Sunday, **November 27** with Heather Kinney at hkinney@stmatthewscathedral.org.

—Join us in celebration of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, a holy day of obligation, on Thursday, **December 8**. Masses will be celebrated at 7:00 a.m., 8:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 12:10 p.m. (no confessions), 5:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. (in Spanish).

—One of the most anticipated holiday Cathedral offerings is our annual Advent Lessons and Carols followed by the singing of Christmas Carols in the Great Hall. Join us on Sunday, **December 11** at 7:30 p.m. when St. Matthew’s acclaimed Schola Cantorum and Festival Singers join with our finest lectors to present this meditation on the Coming of Christ. Enjoy the Christmas sweets, wassail and eggnog at the sing-along.

—Our *Come Home for Christmas* Penance Service will be celebrated on Tuesday, **December 20** at 12:10 p.m. We have invited over twenty confessors, including those fluent in Spanish, French, German, Italian, and American Sign Language. Make this most important preparation—the preparation of your heart for the birth of Christ.

I remind you also that you may purchase Christmas cards featuring the Cathedral’s Crèche (in boxed sets of 10 with envelopes) in the rectory. You also may order cards by contacting us at gharrington@stmatthewscathedral.org.

Christmas Flowers and Decorating

For those who would like to get into the Christmas spirit and help decorate the Cathedral a few days before Christmas, please contact Fr. Regan or check the bulletin in early December. Enclosed you will find an envelope for your offering to help offset the cost of the Christmas flowers and decorations. Our Cathedral always looks beautiful at Christmas. However, the cost of flowers, plants and trees continues to rise each year, and we need your help to cover these costs. Together, we can make the Cathedral splendid with beauty this Christmas!

May the Lord Jesus bless you as we enter Advent and prepare for Christmas. I will continue to remember you in my prayers each day. May the birth of Christ be a time of great hope and blessings for you and your family.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. W. Ronald Jameson
Rector

P.S. Visit our website at www.stmatthewscathedral.org where you will find our weekly bulletin, the Mass schedule, event listings and much more. Feel free to email me (rjameson@stmatthewscathedral.org) with any suggestions or if you see anything that needs updating or correcting—we will continue to build our website for a long time to come!
P.P.S. If you would like to receive my letters by email rather than by U. S. mail, please let us know in an email to Reply@stmatthewscathedral.org. Please include your name. Thank you.