



November 2012

My dear parishioners,

"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, for he has visited and brought redemption to his people."
What a wonderful message of hope!



Seeing the Hopeful Signs

A soldier hiding in a cave prayed that he would be saved. A spider weaved a web over the cave opening. As the enemy approached, searching the caves, they skipped his cave, thinking, because of the web, that no one had entered it in quite a while.

Given the challenges and circumstances constantly surrounding us—violence and abuse; war; oppression of the poor; suffering because of natural disasters; selfishness and carelessness in marriages, families, workplaces, and parishes—our first response may be that it is unrealistic to pray a prayer that is as trusting as the soldier's. . . .

God comes in compassion. 'You are not alone. I am with you. I am Emmanuel. Nothing is impossible with me.'

Do we do our part? Do we look around and see the hopeful signs in the world? Rather than dwelling on and perpetuating negativity, do we recognize the good that is happening? How are we planting peace and good in place of evil? What are we doing to bring kindness and compassion wherever we are?

—Sr. Janet Schaeffler, O. P., *Wondrous Days of Hope: Everyday Reflection, Practices, and Prayers* (23rd Publications)

It is my wish this Advent and 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. 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 the less fortunate who ask us for help.

You, our parishioners, are the key to fulfilling this mission! Your gifts are the lifeline! May I ask you to consider a special gift to St. Matthew's this Christmas? You may mail your Christmas offering to the rectory or drop it in the offertory collection. You also may make your donation online at www.stmatthewscathedral.org. (Choose *Make a Gift* on the website front page, then choose *Donate* under *Make a One-Time Gift*. After providing your address and credit card information, click *Review Donation and Continue*. Choose *Comments* and in the window, type "Christmas.") Finally, you may make a Christmas offering via Faith Direct (www.faithdirect.net; Church Code: DC284). 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 22** 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 Psalm 116, "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

The Cathedral will sponsor its very successful Adopt-a-Family Christmas program again this year. We will help over 40 needy families, the residents of four homes of the L'Arche Greater Washington community, and approximately 80 adults from our Homeless Ministry. All will receive gifts through this communal effort in which members of our parish community and local businesses are asked to "adopt" a family or individual in need. There are many ways to help, including one-time commitments that would take only a few hours of your time. For more information, see the bulletin or our website, or call the Social Concerns Office at the rectory.

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 Monday, **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 listing the schedule of liturgies and other events at your Cathedral parish during these holy seasons. Highlights are below.

~ **Advent Day of Recollection**, Saturday, **December 8**, with Sister Helen Scarry, RJM, DMin—An excellent way to prepare for Christmas, this morning retreat presented by Sr. Helen, a chaplain at Georgetown University, 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, December 2 with Heather Kinney at hkinney@stmatthewscathedral.org.

~ **The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception**, a holy day of obligation, Saturday, **December 8**—Masses will be celebrated at 8:00 a.m. and 12:10 p.m. The Vigil Mass will be celebrated on Friday, December 7 at 5:30 p.m.

~ **Advent Lessons and Carols** followed by the singing of Christmas Carols in the Great Hall, Sunday, **December 16**—Don't miss one of the most anticipated holiday Cathedral offerings as St. Matthew's acclaimed Schola Cantorum and Festival Singers join with our finest lectors to present this meditation on the Coming of Christ, beginning at 7:30 p.m. Enjoy the Christmas sweets, wassail and eggnog at the sing-along afterwards.

~ **Come Home for Christmas** Penance Service, Tuesday, **December 18**—More than fifteen confessors, including several who are fluent in Spanish, German, Italian, American Sign or other languages, will be available for confession during this service, which begins at 12:10pm. Make time for this most important preparation—the preparation of your heart for the birth of Christ.

Did you know that you may purchase Christmas cards featuring the Cathedral's Crèche (in boxed sets of 10 with envelopes) in the rectory? For delivery by mail, contact us at gharrington@stmatthewscathedral.org.

Christmas Flowers and Decorating

Our Cathedral always looks beautiful for the Christmas season! If you would like to get into the spirit by helping to decorate it a couple of days before Christmas, please check the bulletin in early December. Your financial help also is needed to help defray the cost of the flowers, plants and trees. You may mail your Christmas flower offering to the rectory or drop it in the offertory collection. You also may donate online at www.stmatthewscathedral.org or via Faith Direct at www.faithdirect.net. 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!

P.P.S. To receive my letters by email rather than by U. S. mail, email us at Reply@stmatthewscathedral.org. Please include your name. Thank you.