

## 23 December 2012 - 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent (Year C)



On this last Sunday of Advent, we are expected to give the final touches to the preparation we have been carrying out during the past weeks. The Lord is already at the gate. It is now for us to open wide the door of our hearts to welcome him as he deserves. In practical terms, this means to have in ourselves a deep desire to do the Father's will, as the eternal Son himself proclaimed when he was about to come into this world. It means to receive the Lord with the same eagerness, humility, and gratitude with which Elizabeth welcomed him, though still hidden in the womb of his earthly Mother, Mary Most Holy.

The Sun of the day of our salvation is about to rise. Let us open the doors and windows of our hearts that he may flood us with the splendor of his grace and the abundance of his peace!



The **SIMBANGGABI 2012** is being held nightly at 7:30 p.m. until December 23. We hope you are joining us in this age-old Filipino tradition of preparing for the Birth of Christ with full solemnity and devotion as an expression of our faith in God. Bring your friends along!



**YEAR 2013 ENVELOPES** are now available for pick-up after each Mass. Please contact Mr. Mel Villanueva, Mr. Pedro Diaz, Jr. or the FCMM Office.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER: YOU HAVE UNTIL DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup> TO GIVE YOUR DONATIONS WHICH YOU WISH TO BE CREDITED TO THE TAXATION YEAR 2012,**



**December 24 (MONDAY)**

- 8:00 p.m. - CHRISTMAS EVE MASS

**December 25 (TUESDAY)**

- 1:00 p.m. - CHRISTMAS DAY MASS

**December 26 and 28 (WEDNESDAY and FRIDAY)**

- Regular Schedule - 6:00 p.m. Mass

**December 30 ( SUNDAY )**

- 11:30 a.m. - FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY MASS

**December 31 (MONDAY)**

- 7:00 p.m. - NEW YEAR'S EVE VIGIL & Thanksgiving Mass

**January 1, 2013 (TUESDAY) SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD**

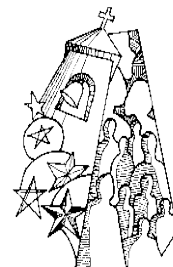
- 1:00 p.m. - NEW YEAR'S DAY MASS

**January 2 and 4 (WEDNESDAY and FRIDAY)**

- Regular Schedule - 6:00 p.m. Mass

**January 6 ( SUNDAY )**

- 11:30 a.m. - THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD





The SANCTUARY LAMP this week is burning for the **GLORY OF GOD** and **AS THANKSGIVING** offered by **CARING, BUTCH, BABY LYNN and LAIZA.**



The usual hospitality, acknowledgment, and stewardship corners of our news bulletin will be back in January 2013.



## CHRISTMAS 2012

Dear Members, Benefactors, and Friends of the FCMM, Greetings of peace and love to you all !

Each Christmas, Christians affirm their faith in God who took on our human nature and brought salvation and deliverance to people of good will.

On many occasions, through the words of the prophets, the Lord reminded his people, that despite their infidelities, they would always belong to him and that one day, he would come and save them.

During the holy night of the first Christmas, this promise was fulfilled with a fragile infant, born of a young woman, Mary, a humble housewife from Nazareth.

The Christmas mystery is that God sent his Son to save men. God took on our human nature and we then became worthy to receive God. From that time on, all our hopes could be fulfilled.

As we celebrate the Feast of Our Lord's Nativity, are we capable of ridding ourselves of encumbrances in our lives and opening our hearts to receive the One who came to save us ? Christmas brings us back to essentials: **GOD IS NOT ONLY CLOSE TO US; GOD IS IN OUR MIDST !**

Christmas is the Feast of hope. An Infant Saviour has become one of us. Our hearts are filled with joy and thanksgiving as we welcome our *GOD-WITH-US*.

With the arrival of the New Year, we hope for a year with more fraternity and peace among nations. This hope for the future includes our own immediate surroundings, communities, work environments, and families.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY GRACE-FILLED NEW YEAR !**

Fr. Frank Alvarez, pme



May the Baby Jesus fill you and your family with the abundance of his grace.

**A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO ONE AND ALL!**

## A CHRISTMAS WISH

Oh, how I wish that every day were Christmas in every corner of the world!

Not so much for the ever-favorite carols or the touching cribs; not even for the long vacation, nor for the bonus or the big parties . . . For all their pleasantness, these things are not Christmas. They are just "wrappers" meant to highlight the preciousness of the gift within. Christmas is much more than we can make or dream. Christmas is *GOD WITH US*. Christmas is *GOD IN US*. Such is the wonder that He alone can bring about. And, as He does it, deep in the secret of our hearts, we are made "new."

This is the reason why people feel different at Christmas. We all feel "good," joyful and generous. Even the fighters refrain from fighting, thieves stop their evil trade. For one day, at least, people intend to live as *loving beings*. And everybody wonders what the world would be like if every day were Christmas. And if I could have my way and make the Christmas spirit last for ever in me and around me, we would have "Christmas-day



two," then *three*, then *four* . . . And we would stop only when numbers end. Thus, Christmas would become an ever-lasting event, as it was meant to be. That was God's plan when He "invented" Christmas – the first, the original, the best . . . the one that was meant to last. How sad we spoiled so much of it, or invented ever new wrappers while ignoring the gift . . . But I know things can get better again. So, dearest Jesus, on your Birthday, may I be granted my Christmas wish: Make all months December and every day in it the 25th. Then will this "season of love" become a permanent event. Then will all men and women become "Christmas people," thanks to the wonders that You effect in us, on Christmas day.

—Anonymous



## **THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS**

Just a week before Christmas I had a visitor. This is how it happened: I just finished the household chores for the night and was preparing to go to bed, when I heard a noise in the front of the house. I opened the door to the front room and to my surprise, Santa himself stepped out from behind the Christmas tree. He placed his finger over his mouth so I would not cry out. "What are you doing?" I started to ask. The words choked up in my throat, and I saw he had tears in his eyes. His usual jolly manner was gone. Gone was the eager, boisterous soul we all

know. He answered me with a simple statement. **"TEACH THE CHILDREN!"**

I was puzzled; what did he mean? He anticipated my question, and with one quick movement brought forth a miniature toy bag from behind a tree. As I stood bewildered, Santa said, **Teach the children! Teach them the old meaning of Christmas. The meaning that now-a-days Christmas has forgotten.**

Santa then reached in his bag and pulled out a **FIR TREE** and placed it before the mantle. *"Teach the children that the pure green color of the stately fir tree remains green all year round, depicting the everlasting hope of mankind, all the needles point heavenward, making it a symbol of man's thoughts turning toward heaven."* He again reached into his bag and pulled out a brilliant **STAR**. *"Teach the children that the star was the heavenly sign of promises long ago. God promised a Savior for the world, and the star was the sign of fulfillment of His promise."*

He then reached into his bag and pulled out a **CANDLE**. *"Teach the children that the candle symbolizes that Christ is the light of the world, and when we see this great light we are reminded of He who displaces the darkness."*

Once again he reached into his bag and removed a **WREATH** and placed it on the tree. *"Teach the children that the wreath symbolizes the real nature of love. Real love never ceases. Love is one continuous round of affection."*

He then pulled from his bag and ornament of **HIMSELF**. *"Teach the children that I, Santa Clause symbolize the generosity and good will we feel during the month of December."* He then brought out a **HOLLY LEAF**. *"Teach the children that the holly plant represents immortality. It represents the crown of thorns worn by our Savior. The red holly represents the blood shed by Him."*

Next he pulled from his bag a **GIFT** and said, *"Teach the children that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son."* *"Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift. Teach the children that the wise men bowed before the holy babe and presented him with gold, frankincense and myrrh. We should always give gifts in the same spirit of the wise men."*

Santa then reached in his bag and pulled out a **CANDY CANE** and hung it on the tree. *"Teach the children that the candy cane represents the shepherds' crook. The crook on the staff helps to bring back strayed sheep to the flock. The candy cane is the symbol that we are our brother's keeper."*

He reached in again and pulled out an **ANGEL**. *"Teach the children that it was the angels that heralded in the glorious news of the Savior's birth. The angels sang 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will toward men.'"*

Suddenly I heard a soft twinkling sound, and from his bag he pulled out a **BELL**. *"Teach the children that as the lost sheep are found by the sound of the bell, it should ring mankind to the fold. The bell symbolizes guidance and return."*

Santa looked back and was pleased. He looked back at me and I saw that the twinkle was back in his eyes. He said, **"Remember, teach the children the true**



*meaning of Christmas and do not put me in the center, for I am but a humble servant of the One that is,  
and I bow down to worship Him, our Lord, our God."*

