

December 17, 2010

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

You recently heard my plea for more volunteers for our annual *Cookies and Caroling* which brings joy to many of our parishioners who are homebound or in nursing homes. Thanks to your generous response, we were able to visit everyone on the list, with cookies to spare.

I've already received notes from those who received a sweet, song filled visit - here's one that captures the spirit of them all:

"In all events through winter's darkness and cold, Holy Family parish shines and brings warmth. Consider my day: Communion in the morning from a Minister to the homebound, then carolers with home baked cookies and a home-made Christmas card in the afternoon. The cold outside only reinforces the warmth. If I wanted to complain, what possibly could I gripe about, as Church members braved the cold to make me happy? Thanks Holy Family parish!"

Just as wonderful to read are the emails from families and individuals who participated and realized in their journey from home to home that they were encountering the real spirit of the Christmas season.

More than one person commented that we shouldn't wait until Christmas to make such visits again - and that's a great idea! We'll have to come up with some Easter carols pretty soon!

A special thank-you to those who organized this wonderful event and those who helped to make it happen last Sunday afternoon.

I've also heard that this was a banner year for participation in the Giving Tree project. *Especially* heart-warming is the "rate of return" for those who took tags from the tree. I heard that this was the best year ever for folks getting the gifts back on time. And a special thank-you to those who, for the past month, have organized this project and who have now collected, sorted and delivered the gifts to those who gratefully receive them. I know there's work involved in taking a tag, getting the gift(s), and wrapping and returning them. But that pales in comparison to the work of those who make this happen every Christmas and Easter. Thanks, too, to all who filled those bags for the Prison Gift project. Isn't it amazing that such simple gifts will bring some Christmas joy to those who are not free to be home with their families...

This past Lent, along with all the parishes of the Archdiocese of Boston, we participated in a program called, *The Light Is On For You* in which all parishes offered the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession). This Advent we'll be doing the same:

The Light Will Be On For You

in all parishes of the Archdiocese on two Wednesday evenings,
December 15 and December 22, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve liturgies are the most popular and the 4:00 Mass is a *very* popular time with folks begin to arrive at church as early as **3:00** -- often, all seats are taken as early as 3:30! Seating will be on a ***first-come, first-seated basis***. Saving seats is not allowed in fairness to those who do indeed arrive early. Usually, the 6:30 and Midnight Masses are "comfortably full," with no crowding. Please keep these thoughts in mind as you make plans for coming to Mass for Christmas.

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While there will be a full program of **music at all of our Christmas liturgies**, please know that there will be a **half-hour program of Christmas music** before the **4:00, 6:30 and Midnight Masses**.

Friday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

4:00 - Fr. Fleming

6:30 - Fr. Fleming

Midnight - Fr. Fleming

Saturday, December 25 - Christmas Day

8:00 - Fr. Medas

10:30 - Fr. Sheehan

Sunday, December 26 - Feast of the Holy Family

7:30 - Fr. Medas

9:30 - Fr. Fleming, Deacon Clough preaching

11:30 - Fr. Fleming, Deacon Burch preaching

NOTE: *There is **NO** 5:00 Mass on Saturday, Christmas Day!*

*The Mass schedule on Christmas morning is **NOT** the usual weekend schedule!*

Merry Christmas!

Fr. Fleming