

## THE PASTOR'S 2012 CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

*Dear Parish Family of Assumption,*

*As we end the Third Sunday of Advent and come closer to celebrating the Birth of Christ we do so in context of serious issues that impact us: the world is challenged, according to scientific fact, to either change or prepare for more frequent destructive weather patterns. We are still at war with the Taliban in Afghanistan, our women and men are deployed there and now in Turkey, the Egyptians struggle to adjust to new leadership, the cease fire between Israel and the Palestinians is so fragile, Iran and North Korea push to secure nuclear power, weapons or both hoping one day, to wield the influence Pakistan enjoys with it's nuclear capability. Our nation finds itself between election and inauguration day, pressed to deal with the fiscal cliff that presents itself, prior to the new year, a required action, to avoid falling off the cliff.*

*If this was not enough . . . Friday morning past, we listened as the reports of death in our own Diocese stunned us all. First it was just the Principal, then the psychologist and before long we learned the hard truth that 20 innocent 6 to 10 year olds, were killed in one of our Fairfield County Elementary Schools along with 6 brave staff members who tried to shield the children from harm, only to lose their own lives. Furthermore, we have the personal issues not shared in common: family relationships, financial woes, friendships, work, health, stress, anxiety and depression. This still does not embrace the entire picture of our Advent journey as we depart from the Third Sunday in anticipation of Christmas day. The picture is much larger, however, than our collective and personal challenges, heartache, unfairness. This is not the whole story.*

*In the midst of the mess . . . are stories of love, courage, heroism, selfless generosity of time, talent and treasure, healing, comfort, mercy, reconciliation. Just in Assumption alone, the graciousness of God is revealed in your Gifts of Plenty Thanksgiving outreach . . . which now in 7 years has raised over \$61,000 to help feed the poor. Today you swamped us with your Advent Angel Christmas gifts to brighten the poor with gifts they cannot afford for their children or themselves. Hundreds of gifts . . . this took your time to shop and to wrap. Imagine the happy faces and uplifted hearts thanks to your thoughtfulness, your involvement, your time. Behind the scenes in preparation for Christmas . . . the staff and volunteers, those who minister to clean, decorate, making our Church and Gym look beautiful for the multitude of Faithful on Christmas Eve and Morn who share their precious time and energy for our sake.*

*O come Emanuel . . . God is with us in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist . . . really present sacramentally and also mysteriously present in you - our faithful people who serve the parish with an "outreach and inreach". . . as we near the Holy Nativity and New Year, my prayer to the parish family is first a big heartfelt thank you for all you do to sustain, nourish, support and serve our parish community as well as all the good you do and have done for the poor near and far. The poor Christ who has no place to rest his head has been loved! Thanks to you, his good, faithful and generous families of Assumption. Fr. Larry, Deacon Juan, Sister Catherine and I offer our prayers, warm Christmas blessings and wishes to a parish ever so deserving. You are good, holy and compassionate. By your love and charity you drastically, ease the unfairness of life, which, if we are not careful can hold us captive.*

*With awe and esteem for your faith in action, I pray God who loved us first, bless you with love, hope, faith and health. Merry Christmas & Happy New Year Father Tom*