

EPIPHANY COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Advent and Christmas season

December, 2013

LITURGICAL SEASON OF ADVENT

The famous scriptural scholar, Raymond Brown, S.S., points out some interesting facts about the composition of what are referred to as The Infancy Narratives. He reminds us that only two gospels, Matthew and Luke, address the origin of Jesus and in some important details, the two gospels diverge. For instance, Matthew speaks of Mary and Joseph living in Bethlehem whereas Luke places their residence in Nazareth. There are more contradictions but Fr. Brown asserts that the gospels were never written as historical accounts or biographies of Christ. Rather the authors intended them to convey religious content about the identity of Jesus and how his life and death fit with the Old Testament writings to strengthen the case for Christ as God's Son.

These two themes give us rich meditational material for Advent. This is not to say that Matthew and Luke are not telling the "truth" as they understood it. They are truth tellers but they use symbols, metaphors, Old Testament references which convey more truth than just "facts". Think of something in your life that you "know" to be true that has a paucity of facts. When you refer to that knowledge, you are speaking to the heart of the matter from your own heart, not reciting an historical document.



As Fr. Brown and other scholars point out, much of the Gospel material was written with clear or oblique references to the Jewish Scriptures or the Old Testament. References from Isaiah abound. One that grounds my Advent meditation is read on the 3rd Thursday of Advent: Isaiah 54:2.

Enlarge the place of your tent,
and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out;
hold not back, lengthen your cords,
and strengthen your stakes.

Since Mario and I have just completed a difficult move and are struggling to get settled in our new home, I resonate with this passage that speaks of transitions. It calls us to enlarge our concept of the place of home and even our concept of self as we enter into our new life. The references to tents, cords, and stakes would have been familiar references for the Jewish people, some of whom were nomadic and wandered in the desert. Although few of us live in tents anymore, we can all use these

images to ask ourselves where we “live”, whether Christ’s coming “stretches” us out, and does it anchor my heart and prayer.

Another wonderful resource for Advent is Wendy Wright’s book, THE VIGIL, in which she suggests a basic theme for each week of Advent. For the four weeks, she offers Promise, then Preparation, Rejoice, and Wonder. She provides personal reflections and spiritual citations to invite the reader to unknown depths in what she calls “the waiting season”.

Epiphany Liturgical Schedule

Sunday Dec. 15 th	9:30 a.m. Mass at clubhouse	Presider Fr. Dan Moore, S.S.
Sunday Dec. 22 nd	9:30 a.m. Mass at clubhouse	Presider Fr. Charles Borges, S.J.
Tuesday Dec. 24 th	7:30 p.m. carols, 8:00 p.m. Mass	Presider Fr. Aniedi Okure, O.P.
	Please bring refreshments for the reception!	
Sunday Dec. 29 th	9:30 a.m. Mass at clubhouse	Presider Fr. Innocent Rugaragu, S.J.
Sunday Jan. 5 th	9:00 a.m. Mass at clubhouse	Presider Fr. Dan Moore, S.S.
	Following Mass there will be the annual Epiphany Community meeting and Potluck! This is an event not to be missed!	
Sunday Jan. 12 th	9:30 a.m. Mass at clubhouse	Presider Fr. Innocent Rugaragu, S.J.
Sunday Jan. 19 th	9:30 a.m. Mass at clubhouse	Presider Fr. Charles Borges, S.J.

Day of Reflection

The annual Day of Reflection at the Franciscan Friary on Sept 24th was a great success. Fr. Joe McCloskey, S.J., was the retreat master and moved all the participants with his intimate, compelling sharing about closeness to Christ. As one person said the day offered “insightful glimpses into the LOVE of God”. The gorgeous weather and the beautiful location were extra blessings.

DOR Afterthoughts by Renee Barney

It was a different Joe McCloskey who showed for the 2013 Day of Reflection. Different from the Joe we see at Epiphany’s Sunday Mass. This Joe was a more relaxed, more accessible, even downright “folksy” brand that set the stage for a truly at-ease retreat.



Our first notice of a change at the Franciscan Friary was the room in which to conduct it. The new location, tucked at the opposite end of the hall, with a smaller size and limited view to distract from the message, spoke of intimacy with a dash of solitude, perfect for the task at hand.

But the subject matter -- "How do you turn your life over to Christ" -- turned over dividends as the day wore on. The message, though cryptic at first, soon settled into our own connection with Christ. Questions such as "Do we believe explicitly in Him or doubt Him at times?" or "Are we prone to wonder about our own existence and our role in being here?"

Given the length of time to discuss his topic, with more than antequate breaks, a complicated message soon turned simple. It ended to its logical conclusion -- if you follow His message and believe in Him, then being who you are is enough to be with Him when your time comes.

This was the first Day of Reflection conducted by Father Joe McCloskey. Odd, since his hours outside of Epiphany usually involve conducting religious retreats to fellow priests and the faithful. It was obvious he was in his element that Saturday. Besides that, Father Joe continues to be a mainstay and a monument entrenched in this community's history.

In conclusion, give kudos to Father McCloskey, Mario Lytle-Vieira and Marie Cushing for their tireless work at organizing this year's retreat. Special thanks to those community members who supported them in their efforts.

Thanksgiving Food Drive



A total of 7 needy families received turkeys, all the trimmings, fruits, and many more staples through the generosity of Epiphany donors. Many, many thanks to Julie Hildebrand who continues to return annually to Epiphany for this occasion and to Lynn Evan for the organization and shopping for this endeavor. Thank you also to the other people who helped shop and those who delivered the car trunks full of food.

Member Profile of Nick Ruth

There is nothing in the world so much like prayer as music is. -- William P. Merrill

In 1982 the Epiphany Folk Group in residence at Manresa was looking for guitar players. I was finishing up my senior year as a biology major at St. Mary's College in southern Maryland but my father enthusiastically volunteered my services in absentia, bringing the Epiphany Community into my life.

I've been singing all my life. Some of my fondest memories revolve around road trips with the family where we sang entire musicals like Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat and Jesus Christ Superstar from beginning to end. I started playing guitar in my early teens and in 1975 I was playing in folk masses at St. Dominic's and the Maryland Penitentiary in Baltimore, so folk music has been integral to my faith for most of my life. I also played in a neighborhood rock band before I went off the college.

I've written many of the psalm responses for the Epiphany Community but what you hear is a group effort. Tom Risher writes the harmonies and Rita Murphy, Renee Barney and Karen Deacon all add their considerable talents to the music we sing. I've also written several of the meditations that we play. While I have written many other secular songs it's really the Epiphany Community that has led me to write music that has strengthened my faith and brightened my life.

I have been working as a computer administrator for the Social Security Administration since 1985. I married Sheila in 1988 and our son David was born in 1995 and now attends McDaniel College in western Maryland, majoring in Physics. In 2004, I wrote a fantasy novel for David called "The Dark Dreamweaver". Sheila was interested in publishing and took the lead to independently publish the book which won several awards for young adult fantasy. I wrote a sequel called "The Breezes of Inspire" and I may one day finish the 3rd book in the series.

So there you have it. My life in a nutshell.

Thoughts on the Year 2013 from Renee Barney

13...It's a number that evokes fear and foreboding in many. It conveys thoughts of mischief, spirits, and bad times. Even Wanamakers Philadelphia's premier department store, never included that number in its roster of floors on the elevator. Bad for business...bad, bad, very bad. When I learned in 2012 that the gig was up, that my heart was irreversibly damaged and my only chance was to make out a binding will or pray for a new heart, I knew that things had really gone from bad to worse.



So in December 2012 I became an active number on the national heart transplant list and prayed for the best. My time in waiting for a heart was remarkably short because on Friday, January 4, 2013 I heard the unexpected words-"We have a heart!" Against all the odds in the year 2013 on a FRIDAY I'd been given a second chance and ran with it all the way to 2014. **13** . . .the most unlucky, most frightening number the in the numeric system became the turning point in my life. So as the Son descends on 2013 and light reveals a new year, I count my blessings in this past year.

Hello,

Bittersweet, that's how I would describe my moving to and from Annapolis and the Epiphany Community. Bittersweet in that I left my job of twenty-five years, my home and family behind in North Carolina. It was also wonderful. I was starting a new life in Maryland with my soul mate and new husband. Bittersweet gain, when Hugh passed away. The Epiphany Community was there to celebrate his life as only Epiphanites can, with love, devotion, tears, laughter and honor for other spiritual practices.

I enjoyed living in Annapolis among such good friends, but my heart was with my grandchildren in North Carolina. My life was so entwined with Hugh's that when he departed, I didn't know who or what I was other than a "granny". That was a role I did well and enjoyed. Tiffany made sure that I was able to fulfill that role as often as I wanted and needed.

I searched on the internet for what seemed like thousands of hours, so finding a home in NC after I sold the one in Annapolis was rather quick. Making the new house my home is an ongoing process for me. It changes as life changes. I spend most of my time with the grandchildren. They are simply amazing.

My son, Shane and his wife separated in January 2013. It was painful in the beginning, but it seems they have both met their soul mates and are quite happy now. Their son Lance, who is five, is handling the separation beautifully. He spends a week with each parent. I think they are happier, so he's happier.

Tiffany and her kids are the one constant in my life. Kayden is now seven and in first grade. Academically he's doing so well, but he still suffers socially. He has to learn the societal rules that the rest of us know intuitively. Alora is now two and adorable. She's so smart it is alarming sometimes.

I promised Lance that he'd get to go on a big boat this year, so we're going on that trip next month. For quite a while he wasn't allowed to go on vacations with me, so we're making up for it now that he can. We went to Disney World this summer and they all loved it.

I began the process of looking for a job once I was functioning well enough to make it through an interview without crying. My last employment was with Hugh and it was difficult to talk about working with him. Jobs in this area are difficult to find and the pay here is embarrassingly low. It never occurred to me that I wouldn't be able to find a job. I basically drifted along, volunteering at church, the homeless shelter and other places.

I obtained some information about real estate at a job fair and sort of put it aside. Some friends visited from Annapolis and encouraged me to give it a try. The next thing I knew I was signed up for the course. I'm a good student and love to learn, but the courses were a challenge. I passed my class exam and the NC Real Estate exam in August. So here I am two years later, starting a new career as a Realtor® with Fonville Morisey.

I enjoy getting to know my clients, discovering their needs and then searching for the best solution for them. I am motivated more by helping others than by making money, but I hope one leads to the other. So all is well, I'm healthy, happy and enjoying what life brings.

(Mary's address is 3378 Perrin Drive, Haw River, NC 27258.)

Question to Ponder

Nancy Le Court inquires about the history and meaning of the phrase in Epiphany's Mission Statement that says one of our goals is "to enhance the spiritual growth and healing of its members". She asks what this meant when it was written and what it means to us today. Here's an invitation for people to write pieces about this for the next newsletter and/or does anyone want to organize an after Mass discussion group about this topic?

Save the Date

The Association of Contemplative Sisters, a national organization to which Peggy Maillett and I belong, is a group devoted to supporting sisters and lay women in contemplative prayer. There will be a "cluster meeting" of this group in Annapolis on Saturday, Feb. 15th at St. John Neumann's Church on Bestgate Road. Sr. Hildegard Pleva, a Redemptoristine nun, will present a program on the medieval Benedictine abbess, healer, composer, etc. Hildegard of Bingen. Details will follow.



A very Blessed Christmas to all Epiphany members and their friends and families! May there be Peace in our World.

Jane E. Lytle-Vieira

He is the Way.

Follow Him through the land of Unlikeness;

You will see rare beasts, and have unique adventures.

He is the Truth.

Seek Him in the Kingdom of Anxiety;

You come to a great city that has expected your return for years.

He is the Life.

Love Him in the World of the Flesh;

And at your marriage all its occasions shall dance for joy.

From "For the Time Being: a Christmas Oratorio" by W. H. Auden