

Christmas 2008

Dear Friends of the Cathedral,

The great message of the Season of Advent is one of hope. The story of every character God uses in the Bible is the story of hope. Being filled with hope allowed Abraham to leave his home. Hope made Moses willing to take on Pharaoh, and it drove the prophets to keep taking on city hall.

Jesus' Message of Hope

Jesus showered people with hope. Every crowd and every encounter revealed the spiritually and morally bankrupt: beggars, thieves, lepers, and prostitutes, all barely getting by; all wanting to see Jesus. Jesus stepped into their lives and preached forgiveness, compassion, change, and understanding. He turned bad habits and behaviors into distant memories.

This year you may feel that you are in a deep pit. There is an economic unrest that has visited us. We all know families who have lost their homes. Retirement savings are at risk. Thousands have lost their jobs. Throughout our society many are increasingly concerned about their ability to provide for their family's basic needs. Vulnerable people have been harmed by the actions of some corporate leaders.

But you will make it. Happiness and courage will return to your life. Jesus drops a rope down the pit. It has a big knot at its end. He's looking at you and saying, "Don't look down. Look up. Hang on. Start climbing. I'm here, right beside you!" His gentle but powerful encouragement provides the confidence to climb higher.

As you slowly but surely climb out of the pit, stay focused on Jesus. He'll be close beside you, holding your hand, helping you dodge those tugs from below. Empowered by his love and faithfulness, you will not go down there again.

When you're finally out of the pit, brush yourself off and savor the new day with refreshing opportunities written all over it. Gaze eye-to-eye at Jesus, who'll be smiling and saying, "You did it!"

It is my wish this Advent/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

Yes, these are hard economic times. However, St. Matthew's is still committed to bringing life to Jesus' command to love one another, and we know you support us in this mission. The number of clients helped by our homeless project has reached as many as 60 per week. Our Adopt-A-Family program, which provides essentials for needy families at Christmas, will serve 35 families this year. We continue to offer adult English classes to immigrants in our community.

Your support also is evident in your presence with us. Many of you have visited the Cathedral at one time or another. I know you appreciate the Cathedral's charitable work, its spiritual offerings, its physical splendor and prominence. I also know you understand just 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 those less fortunate who ask us for help. You, our friends, are so important to us in fulfilling this mission! Your gifts are our lifeline!** You have been so kind to us, and we need you more than ever this year. May I please ask you to consider a special gift to St. Matthew's this Christmas? Help us to share Christ's love with the hundreds of people who come through our doors. With your gift, many will see the face of Jesus and feel his love. I assure you that our benefactors will be remembered at our Masses during the Christmas season. Thank you so much. Muchas gracias.

Advent & Christmas Liturgies & Events



We have a beautiful program of Advent and Christmas liturgies and special events planned. On Sunday, December 14, at 7:30pm, we will have Lessons and Carols—an evening of Advent scriptural, literary and musical reflections on the coming of Christ. The Schola Cantorum and the musicians of the Cathedral Music Ministry will be featured. On Thursday, December 18, we will celebrate our annual Advent Communal Penance Service—*Come Home for Christmas*—at 12:10pm. There will be many priest confessors available, including several foreign language confessors. On Christmas Eve, I will celebrate the Vigil Mass at 5:30pm. Archbishop Wuerl will celebrate the Midnight Mass. The Cathedral opens at 10:30pm and no tickets are required. A Christmas Prelude will be presented at 11:00pm featuring the St. Matthew's Festival Singers. On Christmas Day, Masses will be at 8:30am, 10:00am, 11:30am and 1:00pm in Spanish. There is so much to enjoy. We invite you to visit us at www.stmatthewscathedral.org where you will find listings of all our seasonal activities, as well as the weekly bulletin and notices of upcoming parish events.

Our New Cathedral Book!

A special note—we have recently published a beautiful new book on the Cathedral as well as a set of note cards. Please see the enclosed flyer and order and consider ordering several copies to give as Christmas gifts. You won't be disappointed.

Prayers from the Eternal City

I also have a special Christmas gift for you this year. Last month I was privileged to travel to Rome and Assisi with a group of parishioners and friends. As we visited the many holy sites, I remembered all of you, our special friends and benefactors. We also attended the weekly audience with our Holy Father and as he blessed us, I asked the Lord to bless you.

I look forward to seeing you with us in the coming months. You are always most welcome. May the birth of Christ be a time of great hope and God's blessings for you and your family this year and always.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. W. Ronald Jameson
Rector

Enclosures