

MANY THANKS FOR OUR FOOD PANTRY

Over 195 families were thankful for the St. Veronica Food Pantry this Thanksgiving. As you can see from the pictures below, the crying room in the back of church was filled with food, not babies Saturday morning. The gift boxes were filled with all of the traditional foods we are used to seeing on our tables. From turkey to pumpkin pie, squash and cranberries, all packaged and distributed with plenty of love from the wonderful parishioners who work in the food pantry or donate to it. To hold these families until their Christmas box of food arrives on December 17, the food pantry is overflowing with many non-perishable items collected from our school children at St. Thomas Aquinas Academy. The student council sponsored a food drive in hopes of earning a half-day off from school. The goal was 1600 items; the goal was exceeded by over 400 items.



There are many ways to help those less fortunate. During the holiday season, extra help is especially needed. There are opportunities to buy gifts, donate

wrapping paper, donate food or simply help in the food pantry. There is a giving tree located in the back of church. Simply, pick an ornament off the tree and buy the item listed. There is no need to wrap the gift. The gifts should be brought to church by December 11. Encourage your children to become involved, they will be thrilled to spend time in the toy section picking out the perfect gift for someone their age. If you have any questions on how you can do something special for someone this Christmas, please call the parish office.



Article submitted by Eileen Wernsman

WHY SHOP THIS CHRISTMAS?
YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED IF YOU JUST BELIEVE!!



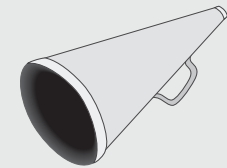
St. Veronica's Food Pantry

Open: 1st and 3rd Saturdays
9-11 am or, call-ins by appt. 482-2920
(also call to volunteer)

If you have ideas for upcoming newsletters or would like to join our group, contact:
Fred Schmitz, Patrick Urban,
Eileen Wernsman, and Tom Tarkowski.



St. Veronica's Voice
December, 2005



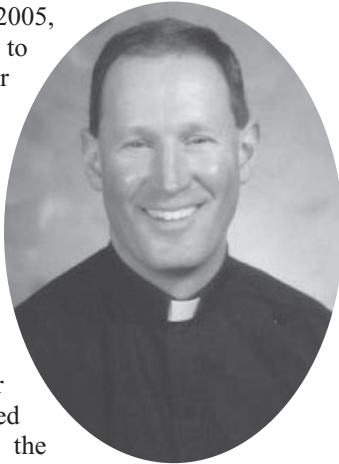
St. Veronica Parish Community
"Imaging Christ to the World"

A CHRISTMAS LETTER FROM FATHER MARK

A Joyful Advent and Merry Christmas to everyone from the parish staff and myself! I cannot believe that winter is nearly upon us. Yet, as I write this letter, there are snowflakes falling and a cold north wind is howling. Our church year has come to an end and we begin again with Advent and the liturgical cycle of Mark. After four short weeks we will store away the Advent wreath and dig out the lights, tinsel and ornaments of the Christmas season. Soon enough we will begin hearing the sound of carols wafting through the air.

As I reflect upon 2005, I give thanks to almighty God for all of the blessings bestowed upon St. Veronica parish. I extend gratitude to all who made a donation to Fr. Mark's wish list; allowing us to install electric door openers for those who need assistance entering the church or gym and a new sound system in Johnson Hall. Thank you to all who coordinate and participate in our community building events – fish fries, festivals, donut Sundays, pancake/omelet breakfasts, bus trips and so many more. I am grateful for those who minister to others: in the food pantry, Thrift shop, Knights of Columbus, St. Vincent de Paul, mission sewing, or visit our nursing home and homebound parishioners. I am encouraged by those who ensure that our liturgical ministries are celebrated well: musicians and singers; altar servers, lectors, and Eucharistic ministers; decorators, designers, and cleaners; ushers and greeters.

For all of the volunteers and families who strive to hand on our faith tradition in the elementary religious education program, special religious education, youth ministry,



and St. Thomas Aquinas Academy, I am grateful. It would take a much longer letter to individually acknowledge each of the hundreds of ways you have worked to build up the Kingdom of God. Just let it be said that I am amazed and overwhelmed by the generous Spirit which fills this congregation.

Please pray with me for anyone who will not be with family, friends or our faith community during this holiday season. Let us remember our armed forces in Iraq, Afghanistan, and countless other countries around the world. Remember those who are in nursing homes or health care facilities. Comfort those who have suffered the loss of a loved one this year. Keep in mind those whose only source of food or shelter is provided by a charity or the government. Offer a helping hand to anyone who is in need.



In the midst of this special time when we celebrate the birth of our Savior, may we recognize all of the gifts which we have received. May the greatest gift, Jesus, be in our hearts and always on our minds. Let His presence in our life be expressed through our actions. Just as Mary gazed upon her Son wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, tenderly look to Jesus to touch your hearts so that, you embrace the path of peace and the way of His love.

May the blessings of Christmas be with you now and throughout the New Year!

Blessings,

Fr. Mark Payne

ADVENT 2005

This year, Sunday Religious Education and Prayer and Worship committee have developed a joint Advent theme: "JESUS IS THE STAR OF CHRISTMAS". In a time before artificial lighting, the stars were often the only light to guide a traveler or seaman at night. The observance of a new star was believed to foreshadow a significant event. These heavenly bodies have even been assumed to foretell a person's future. For centuries, humans have looked up at the

night sky and found patterns among the stars which we call constellations. The North Star has assisted many a lost person to find their way to safety.

Jesus is the Light of the World. He is our Savior. He is our guide to understand how to live our lives. The feast of Christmas is the celebration of His birth. In the Gospel of Matthew, wise men from the East observed a star at its rising. Following that star, they came to Jerusalem looking for the king who had been born. The chief priests told Herod that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea for it had been written by the prophet Micah:

*"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel."*

Many years ago, the phrase "Jesus is the Reason for the Season" became popular. Its purpose was to remind us that Christmas is not meant to be about Santa Claus, holiday gifts, or decorations. All of these things are meant to point to the Nativity as a focal point in history. On that day, God became human and dwelt among us. Just as in a play or movie the star is the actor or actress around whom the story is developed; Jesus is the "star" of the Christmas story.

As Christians, we are called by Christ to be a light to the world. We must shine with the Light of Christ so that others will follow our example and come to enjoy a relationship with Him. The Advent season encourages us to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Savior. We are to look inward and to think about His presence in our lives. Is Jesus the star in our life?

If you would like to decorate a family star and have it hung in the hallway, they are still available. Please take one from the Order of Worship stands, decorate it any way you wish and return it to the boxes at the church entrances. During this time of preparation, let the light of Christ be a guide for your spiritual journey.

Karen Bushman

