



FROM THE VINEYARD

Newsletter No. 12; December 22, 2017

WHEN CHRISTMAS FALLS ON A MONDAY it means that the Fourth Week of Advent is but a few hours long! It also means a heavy schedule in our parishes, where priests will immediately segue from their Sunday duties into the frantic pace of Christmas Eve. It will be an exciting, busy and exhausting time. Thanks to the priests, deacons, parish workers and volunteers who will make it all happen over the next few days.

OUR PRIESTS HAVE BEEN BUSY HEARING CONFESSIONS IN ADVANCE OF CHRISTMAS. They have been working singly and in collaboration to ensure that this Sacrament of the Lord's mercy is readily available. Even I have been recruited to help in one local parish, something which I do happily. Amid all the other hustle and bustle of getting ready for Christmas, do take the time to make sure you are prepared spiritually to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

SACRED HEART PARISH IN PETERBOROUGH CELEBRATES AN ANNUAL MEMORIAL MASS in Advent. I was pleased to be the celebrant of that liturgy on Saturday evening. People were invited to come forward and light a candle in memory of their loved ones and we also blessed and illuminated the sanctuary Christmas tree. It was a beautiful and moving celebration topped off by Father Andrew Ayala, IVE (with choir) singing the Gospel in Greek!

THE FILIPPINO COMMUNITY has been gathering at St. Alphonsus Ligurori Parish in Peterborough for the Advent celebration of Simbang Gabi (literally "Night Mass.") This custom entails an evening celebration of the Eucharist on the nine days leading up to Christmas. I was the "lead-off" celebrant this past Saturday evening, and Father Jerry Tavares and Father Rey Abella have welcomed a whole host of visiting priests since then. It all concludes on Sunday afternoon, scant hours before the first Christmas Eve Mass.

'TIS THE SEASON FOR CHRISTMAS CONCERTS and I very much enjoyed the one I attended at St. Teresa Catholic Elementary School here in town. Staff worked very hard to prepare the students to present *Once Upon a Starry Night*, and the boys and girls did an excellent job. The music was a mixture of new and old, all focused upon the great "reason for the season," the birth of Jesus. Congratulations to all!

PRIESTS OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE INCARNATE WORD (I.V.E.) serve at St. Michael Parish in Cobourg and Sacred Heart Parish in Peterborough. On Christmas Day at St Michael Parish, their community will celebrate the Profession of First Vows of two young men from our locality, Dominic Kennedy and Ian Manley. We join in praying with them and for them.

MY FIRST EVER CHRISTMAS MESSAGE AS BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH has made it to the Diocesan website, and will find its way into Parish Bulletins this Sunday. I couldn't resist quoting G.K. Chesterton as a jumping off point for a few reflections about this holy season. Most importantly though, it includes my prayers and best wishes that all of you may enjoy a very Blessed Christmas!

FROM THE VINEYARD will go on a brief hiatus over the Christmas holidays and will make its return in the New Year.

Pax et Bonum, † Daniel