



# A letter from the pastor...

Dear Parishioners:

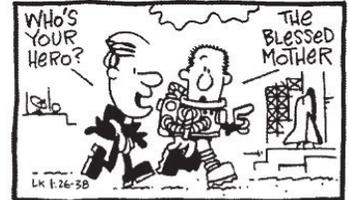
This is a unique time with the 4th Sunday of Advent and Christmas happening on consecutive days. For two days in a row, we come together to stand with Mary, St. John the Evangelist and a few others at the foot of the cross as we celebrate the deeper meaning of the Mass. Every Mass is the unbloody sacrifice of Jesus on the cross; we do not behold his bloody body; but it is the same sacrifice.

Mary stayed with her son as he was humiliated by the scandal of the cross. The Gospel for the 4th Sunday of Advent retells her blessed acceptance of God's invitation to become the "Theotokos," the God-bearer, the Mother of God. It was at that moment that Calvary began for a baby so small.

It seems almost too much to think that this small baby is a threat to the mighty Romans. The Romans, who had conquered the known world, with soldiers and weapons, how could they possibly be afraid? But they were since this baby had the mighty armies of saints, angels and grace behind him.

Mary's "Yes," leaves us better off because this brave young virgin, summoned from the depths of her heart, the grace of courage to trust more in God than in herself. It would have been certainly easy for her to cling to the narrow claim that her life was her own. But she had learned that something much bigger was at hand and only by surrendering, could she ever hope to be victorious.

And it was nine months later when Joseph and Mary came to the small town of Bethlehem. There without the pomp and circumstance of Rome, a new born babe generated great fear in the hearts of tyrants and bullies. The very powers of hell hovered over the hearts of many encouraging envy, fear, and hatred to ensure they would work diligently for the babe's death.



It took thirty plus years for them to think they won — a 'so-called' victory lasting a mere three days. The babe, without a doubt, to the acclaim of all the heavenly choirs, once and for all, proved that fear, hate, lies, impurity, unfaithfulness, and so forth, would not have the final say. No more will darkness rule the hearts of those who follow this newborn babe.

It seems so difficult for us to surrender ourselves to his [our] Father's love and goodness. We walk with great timidity into the world that is so against us. We know we cannot use the same weapons the enemy uses, and we may think we are at a disadvantage. But we are not! God is on our side and we cannot lose (cf. Rom. 8:31). We must not focus on this part of reality for it is not our destiny. We are set aside for much more, for we are predestined for greatness (cf. Eph. 1:5).

This modern world will try to make it just like any other Christmas (pleasant for a few days, a bit glad it's over, happy to get back to normal, etc.). But with Love's grace, let us make this time different. Let us make it alive and over-flowing with grace. I renew the idea that each person reserves one gift on Christmas morning by putting an "E" on the present, signifying it will not be opened until the feast of the Epiphany when the Three Kings gave their gifts.

**Keep playing and singing carols so we can carry on this seasonal joy. Keep your lights, wreaths, etc. out for people to see. Greet people with a "Merry Christmas," or "Christmas blessings." These small actions let the world know we are not just back to normal.**

I pray that this Christmas brings a wonderful renewal of hope into your heart. God has become one with the human race and loves us from the closeness of our hearts.

We have indeed been given the greatest gift ever because our Father chose to give us his only begotten Son Jesus out of pure love.

Pace – bene,  
*Msgr. Bill*

Msgr. William L. Young, III | Pastor