



# The Weave

Christmas Season 2020

Volume 24 Issue 1

A Newsletter of St. Mary Parish Family, Franklin MA

## ***The Future of the Patrimony of our Parish***

*Fr. Brian Manning*

Our Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) is continuing its work regarding the future of the Patrimony of our Parish (the buildings and land at 201 Main Street, formerly aka the School Property) and how this all will best serve the long term Mission of our Parish. This is being achieved with research, dialogue, and prayerful reflection among the PPC and also by sharing with and listening to our Parishioners. In the last four months there have been two Council meetings at which the majority of time has been invested in this critical topic. The three Open Parish Meetings of late Spring and the emails which were sent in place of attending a meeting have influenced the shape and focus of our meetings. I have invoked the principle that it is better slowly and deliberately to arrive at what is best for our Faith Community. Also, as we know in life, if there are 100 people in a room, there will be 115 opinions! Everyone in the Parish may have an opinion, but every individual needs to speak “in person by name” to a PPC Member. Opinions and thoughts need to be made public and owned publicly by the speaker.

Our PPC Consultant, Bernard Swain, Ph. D., took all the recorded comments and suggestions of every open public meeting along with the addition of received emails and sorted them into common themes. (Document available at: [stmarysfranklin.org/pastoral-council](http://stmarysfranklin.org/pastoral-council)) He also analyzed these and presented common themes or actions for the Council to consider at our June 2019 Meeting via a printed document. And then we began our initial discussion about understanding what was offered by concerned Parishioners. What made the meeting powerful was the recognition that no decisions were needed at this time or for the foreseeable future. We also learned that it takes a lot of time to absorb the possibilities and ultimately work out what is best for our Parish. We realized that simplistic or impulsive thoughts and decisions would not help our Mission to support the faith of our members. The space of time over the summer was to allow PPC Members to pray, think and also discuss with other Parishioners what we had theorized as

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## **Seekers**

*Joan McGuire*

Have you noticed that in the Christmas scenario everyone is seeking something? Mary and Joseph were seeking an appropriate place to give birth to Jesus. The shepherds in answer to the message of the angels were seeking this special child. The Magi were following the star seeking this special person foretold to them in the ancient astrological texts, Even Herod was seeking the child. Unfortunately his seeking had malevolent intentions. So if we too are seekers at this Christmas season, we fit right in.

There is one other person who is a seeker: Jesus. He came into this world for us and is still looking for us. Be sure he can find you. Invite him in. Each year we are a year older and although our basic reason for being is still “to know, love and serve God in this world (Baltimore Catechism, page 1), the depth of our relationship increases as we increase in age. Think how your relationships with your friends change with time. Make room in the inn of your heart.

In order to get to know him we have to stop saying prayers at him and take time

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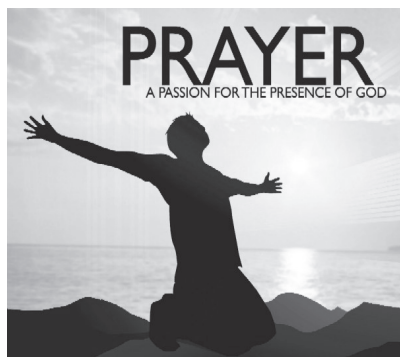
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**...Seekers**

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to let him speak to us. At Sunday Mass after Communion take time to thank him for the gift of Communion instead of rushing out. What would you think of a person who left your home without saying a word after he or she finished the meal you served? Make room in your day for your dear friend. Take time in your day to chat. Say a personal "Thank you" before meals. Ask Jesus to get you safely on your trip when you get in your car. Take a few minutes to read scripture each day. Aren't we always interested in the activities of our friends?

During the Christmas season this year, try to find ways to include Jesus in your daily life. He has certainly done his part to show that he cares.



**Jesus: Born to Take Care of Other People**

*Fr. Jack Sullivan*

Long ago Saint Irenaeus proclaimed that Jesus Christ "brought all newness in bringing himself." Irenaeus also observed: "God indeed needed no one's company, but he shared his company with those who needed him." During his lifetime, Jesus enjoyed the company of the human family. Jesus still enjoys our company – so we sing in the Christmas carol Hark the Herald Angels – pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel. Friends, Jesus is one of us, a brother to all of us.

Don't overlook the newness of Christmas here at Mass, the annual liturgical commemoration of the birth of Jesus. The Risen Lord Jesus is sharing his company with us here. Here at the altar-table Jesus gives himself to us as food, the Bread of Life. The Risen Jesus is present here – present with us and for us, and for all people of every age and time and place.

Our parish nativity scene is on display on the Piazza di San Rocco and inside the church building, in the sanctuary. These parish nativity scenes stand as our visual message which proclaims the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem so long ago. As is true of all babies, Jesus in the manger-crib was weak. As is true of

many babies, Jesus would grow and mature, and become a strong adult. When we describe Jesus as our Savior, we declare that Jesus has the strength to take care of people who are weaker than he is.

It took some time for theologians to grasp the full significance of this birth in Bethlehem. Saint Augustine (354-430) enriched our appreciation for this birth of Jesus so long ago. Augustine looked at the nativity scene, and then reminded his congregation that the eternal Son of God has a human face – long ago in Bethlehem and now and forever. Augustine, with his gift for classical rhetoric, contrasted two descriptive words, strong and weak. Augustine never forgot that the eternal Son of the Father was strong – God from God, light from light, true God from true God (Nicene Creed). Yet at his birth in Bethlehem, Jesus in his manger-crib was weak. As a skilled teacher, Augustine displayed the benefits for us and for all people, the benefits to be gained from Jesus' birth. Augustine's word-play is memorable: "In order that weakness might become strong, strength became weak" (sermon 190).

Yes, friends, here we discover the surprising newness of Christmas. Yes, friends, Jesus our Savior has made us strong, strong enough to take care of our neighbors-in-need – every day until the Risen Lord Jesus returns with power and great glory.



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## ...Parish Future

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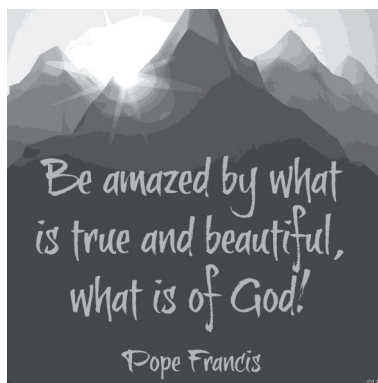
possible ways forward. The first meeting in the fall was to focus on what our Members had learned over the summer and to address questions which would result from pondering the entire matter.

At the meeting on Tuesday, October 22, 2019 the members of the PPC received two documents which were the distillation of our Consultant Bernard Swain of every comment or opinion expressed at the three Open Meetings or sent in by email. (for documents, see [stmarysfranklin.org/pastoral-council](http://stmarysfranklin.org/pastoral-council)) These were sorted by common themes which meant many comments were similar. No opinion was edited out. Dr. Swain also presented four logical Paths Forward as analyzed from all the data presented in the opinion gathering meetings. The PPC focused a great deal of time on discussing the common themes and topics so that the nuances of everyone's thoughts and feelings would be understood. They also spent time discussing, without any conclusion, the suggestions of the four possible Paths Forward. No true consensus was reached in the Paths Forward discussion. The members were asked to use the coming time before the next meeting to pray, reflect, and ask others about what they think. The PPC also asked for our Parish Finance Council Real Estate Consultant, Matt Kelley, to come to the December meeting to address the future of 201 Main Street in terms of what are the possibilities for 201 Main Street. The PPC did not wish to spend time and effort on impossible or "pie in the sky" plans that ultimately could never happen. Clearly, they wish to provide a vision that is achievable for us in terms of the long term Mission of our Parish.

At our December 10, 2019 meeting Matt Kelley began the meeting with official maps of the Town's zoning districts, a detailed map of our property and the neighborhood, and many schema of zoning regulations for our Town. The PPC

questioned him to understand how what we might desire to achieve must be acceptable to our Town. The presentation was very clear, but we all realized it takes time to comprehend all the land use and zoning material. Bernard Swain then proceeded to lead us in a discussion based on the previous meeting and this new information. He re-presented to the PPC a comprehensive list of the comments made by the PPC at the last meeting and helped us to re-analyze them in light of the new information and the time spent in reflection. The PPC reached positive consensus that our Path Forward appears to be Number 4: "Sell or Lease unneeded land & Build a new building" (possibly at the corner of Queen & Pleasant Street) as the best for the long-term good of our Parish. As an outside worry, we kept Number 2: "To simply sell everything outright, though this leaves us with no place for (Faith Formation / religious education). Our meeting concluded with the recommendation that we need more time to pray, reflect, and ask others. We know that by taking this process slowly but steadily, and also asking and communicating frequently, we will end up with the best possible decision for Saint Mary's Parish Faith Community.

The PPC is providing the prayerful, thoughtful and sensitive leadership which will help our Parish Community come to answer in the best way, "How does the Patrimony (i.e., the land and buildings at 201 Main St.) help us fulfill the long-term Mission of Saint Mary's Parish?"



### Mission Statement

**We, the community of St. Mary, a Roman Catholic parish of the Archdiocese of Boston, within the Town of Franklin, exist to honor and glorify God.**

**By imitating the life of his Son, Jesus Christ, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, we work for the fulfillment of his kingdom on earth.**

**We dedicate the gifts and talents unique to each member of the community to continued growth in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.**

**As Christ's disciples we are called to be living examples of his teachings to everyone we encounter in our daily lives. We acknowledge the need for the active involvement of all our members in order to reach our full potential as a Christian Community.**

**Motivated by the Word of God, sustained by the gifts of the sacraments, enriched by one another, and committed to the mission described above, this community pledges:**

- To spread the Good News of Jesus Christ announcing his salvation
- To reach out to the needs of the poor, the homeless, the dispossessed, the addicted, and others needing social justice
- To attend to the ongoing faith development of our children, youth, adults, and the unchurched
- To foster an ecumenical spirit and a caring, loving community with our brothers and sisters of all creeds
- To support and encourage Catholic Christian values within the family, the workplace, and society
- To commit ourselves to the elimination of all that impedes the fullest development of each person

## With Open Arms

*John M. Ristaino*

It is a time of year when I seem to spend a lot of time in church. So, again this year, I often find myself inside our beautiful and inspirational St. Mary Church as well as other churches, chapels, and places of worship. Recently I have been stuck by the arms of Christ. Have you ever noticed that they are almost always open? Whether it is the Christ child in the manger who we seek during Advent for his birth at Christmas or the crucified Jesus hanging on the Cross for our sins, or the triumphant risen Jesus pictured having risen from the grave, or even statues and images of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Christ's arms are portrayed as open. I have been contemplating these images and what they signify. The conclusion I have reached is that Christ's arms are always open to us as an invitation to love him and to follow him.

The Christ child in the manger with his infant arms outstretched says, "I am here to save you because I love you unconditionally as does the Father, and I want for you to love and to follow me." This invitation is first offered to poor ordinary people of Bethlehem, shepherds in from the fields after hearing the angels' good tidings of great joy which is for *all* people. The baby found in the manger with his arms outstretched has come as our Savior, to be a source of hope and of light to the poor, the wealthy, the addicted, the abused, the victims of injustice, the successful, the struggling, the immigrant, those battling illness, the homeless, the disappointed, the imprisoned, the hurting, the popular, the forgotten and all the suffering and pain-filled on the earth. With his arms outstretched he claims that *all* are saved, *ALL* are loved, and *all* are invited to follow him.

The wood of Christ's cradle evolves to the wood of Christ's cross. Here again we see arms outstretched, even at the point of death. So, even in his pain and suffering, Jesus conveys his love for us and reminds us that we are invited to love him and to follow him and that he has redeemed us by his suffering and death. By the wood of his Holy Cross Christ redeems the world. Jesus comes to save at Christmas and our

redemption is complete in his death on Good Friday. Both events are depicted with open arms to love us. Images of the risen Christ repeatedly depict the open arms of Jesus. So, how can we return the love that we are reminded of every time we see these images? The ways are many and here are some simple suggestions for you to consider during this holiday season and the fast approaching new year.

One wonderful way to return the love of Christ is to volunteer here at St. Mary Parish. You are invited to stretch out your arms and volunteer to serve others in our parish as a volunteer. The unconditional love of Christ is remembered and truly celebrated each Sunday in each Mass. In order to offer these celebrations St. Mary Parish, **our Parish needs you!** We enjoy a terrific team of priests and deacons. Beyond these wonderful religious leaders altar servers (young people who assist at Mass), Lectors (people to proclaim the Readings and lead the Prayers of the Faithful), Eucharistic Ministers (people who assist distributing Communion), cantors (people who lead us in song) greeters and people to help take up the weekly collection are

needed in order for our Masses to happen. Will **you** respond to Christ's open arms by embracing his love and invitation to follow him by volunteering at our Masses in one or more of these capacities?

You can learn about all of these volunteer opportunities as well as many others when you visit the parish web-site at [www.stmarysfranklin.org](http://www.stmarysfranklin.org) and select the Parish Life tab. Please consider learning more about these wonderful opportunities to return the love of Christ. Remember that **we are the Church**. That's right: you and I are the Church and our service to it is needed. Our church and our parish **need** you and me. They need **us** to serve as volunteers.

Each time you see the child in the manger, or the suffering Christ on the Cross, or see images of the risen Christ, please be reminded of Christ's unconditional love for each and every one of us, his invitation to follow him — and St. Mary's Parish's need for volunteers. The opportunity to volunteer has no deadline. Like Christ's offer of unconditional love, these volunteer opportunities never end.



## Stronger Child Protection Policies Begin at St. Mary's

*Stephen May*

Ministerial Behavior on file.

For the sake of society and families, our Catholic Church must continue to strive to be a leader in the protection of children. It is more important than ever to make St. Mary's and all our churches places where children can gather with their families and with each other and be able to feel confident that procedures are in place to keep them safe. Here at St. Mary's, Fr. Brian has recently expanded the scope of some of the procedures that we currently use to keep children safe.

### Code of Ministerial Behavior

In the past, before starting their ministry, nearly all volunteers were asked to read and sign a document written by the Archdiocese of Boston, which outlines each parish's expectations regarding acceptable and unacceptable behavior of its staff and volunteers. Effective immediately, all staff and volunteers, ages 14 and over, must read and sign this document before beginning ministerial efforts on behalf of St. Mary. Each person retains a printed description of what they have signed so that they can review the parish's expectations at any time. The parish keeps a permanent record of the volunteer's acceptance of this Code of

### Protecting God's Children

In the past, the parish expected only volunteers with direct access to children to participate in a once-in-a-lifetime, 1.5–2-hour workshop called "Protecting God's Children." It has become increasingly important to invite as many parishioners as possible to these workshops to increase our ability to keep our church safe from those who might intend to harm our children or others. To that end, Fr. Brian has decided to go beyond the Archdiocese's former guidelines and now require all volunteers, regardless of their proximity to youth, to attend this important workshop. Several additional dates are being scheduled over the next several months and will all take place here at St. Mary. All volunteers, if they have not already done so, will be asked to attend an upcoming workshop. We invite all parishioners to participate, as well.

### Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI)

The only requirement that volunteers must repeat annually is to fill out a CORI form. This form gives the Archdiocese of Boston permission to run a Massachu-

setts-based criminal background check on each staff member and volunteer. The parishioners of St. Mary have been very gracious and cooperative in filling these forms out annually. Tracking more than 400 volunteers each year is a daunting task so that cooperation is much appreciated. Moving forward, those who miss the CORI deadline (usually in October each year) will receive a friendly reminder that they have not yet filled out this year's CORI form. Those who are still unable to fill out a form within a reasonable time frame may be asked to please refrain from volunteering until they can complete a CORI form. Fr. Brian feels that the best message we can send to who might consider harming our children is to show them that we annually CORI 100% of our volunteers.

We hope that these tighter child protection policies will give you greater peace of mind that your beloved St. Mary Parish is an ideal place to bring your children, grandchildren and vulnerable adults. St. Mary's is not only one of the safest places in town, but it also provides you and your family the most significant opportunity to encounter Jesus Christ, the reason we gather at all.

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### PARISH COMMUNICATION

This parish is very large and active. It is important for us to be able to give you accurate information and for you to be able to contact us as needed. If you wish to contact anyone at the rectory we can be reached by phone, 508-528-0020; Fax, 508-528-1641; or email. Here are email addresses for the clergy, Religious Education, and rectory staff:

Father Brian Manning: [bmanning@stmarysfranklin.org](mailto:bmanning@stmarysfranklin.org)  
 Father Jack Sullivan: [jsullivan@stmarysfranklin.org](mailto:jsullivan@stmarysfranklin.org)  
 Deacon Guy St. Sauveur: [deaconguy@stmarysfranklin.org](mailto:deaconguy@stmarysfranklin.org)  
 Deacon Ron Gerwatowski: [deaconron@stmarysfranklin.org](mailto:deaconron@stmarysfranklin.org)

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 Patricia Murphy: [businessmanager@stmarysfranklin.org](mailto:businessmanager@stmarysfranklin.org)

If your parish group or organization would like to place a notice in the bulletin, we must receive it in writing (email is preferred) by 5pm Sunday afternoon for the following weekend. Information can also be submitted for inclusion on the parish website at any time. Bulletin or website information can be emailed to [parishpublishing@stmarysfranklin.org](mailto:parishpublishing@stmarysfranklin.org)

If your organization is planning to use any parish facilities, such as the church, church hall, lower church meeting rooms, or the Center, for your meetings or events, it is necessary that you call and reserve the time and place that you want. This is the only way that you can be assured of having your activity at the desired location.

**CHECK OUT OUR PARISH WEBSITE:** [www.stmarysfranklin.org](http://www.stmarysfranklin.org). There is a wealth of information available there.



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## Music Notes

Terry Kerr



### Festival of Lessons and Carols

St. Mary Parish began the Advent and Christmas Season with the celebration of our Sixth Annual Festival of Lessons and Carols on Gaudete Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. A sincere debt of gratitude is extended to all those who helped make the program such a success. Our lectors did an excellent job reading from the various verses of scripture. Father Brian Manning and Father Jack Sullivan, in their pastoral ways, wonderfully promote the Lessons and Carols Program. Lastly, the Adult Choir sang magnificently, truly setting the tone of prayer in preparation of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

### Adult Choir

The St. Mary Adult Choir will begin the second half of their Choral Season! The Adult Choir rehearses Thursday Evenings and sings weekly at the Sunday, 10:30 a.m. Mass from October - June.

The First Rehearsal for the second half of the season will be held on Thursday, January 16 at 7:30 p.m.

Mark your calendars:  
**First Choir Rehearsal**  
Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m.  
Upper Church Choir Loft!

## Holy Hour

Deacon Guy

**Holy Hour  
for Life, Forgiveness and Healing  
Sunday, January 26  
1:15-2:15pm  
St. Mary's lower chapel**

The Holy Hour is a part of the Archdiocesan observance of the National Day of Prayer and Penance marking the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision legalizing abortion on demand.

We will pray together for respect for the dignity of human life from conception to natural death; for those who have been wounded by abortion; for those facing death; and for increased holiness in the Church.

The Holy Hour for Life, Forgiveness and Healing is organized by Boston Deacons for Life in collaboration with the Office of Diaconal Life and Ministry & the Pro Life Office of the Archdiocese of Boston. Please join us, all are welcome.



## A New Home

Karen Ackles

Our new home!!! After over twenty years, Religious Education has a new office!!! With the recent departure of the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School, the Religious Education Office is now located in the modular building front office.

Over the summer the transformation was made after weeks of painting, cleaning, carpeting, and rearranging. High school students even came in and made bulletin boards for our students so that they would not have to come into rooms with no decorations. It was amazing what they were able to accomplish. We can finally say we feel at home again.

It has been a very busy start to the year with our students (approximately 1200) involved in so many different things.

Grade One students are really concentrating on learning their prayers and recognizing the importance of going to Mass each week. On December 10<sup>th</sup> all of our First Communion students received the Sacrament of Penance for the first time. Fr. Brian, Fr. Jack, Fr. Peter Conley, Fr. Steve Linchan from Pope St. John's Seminary, and Fr. Gregory Vozzo from St. Jude's in Norfolk were there to help our children.

Students in Mrs. Carol Colella's fifth grade class made Thanksgiving cards for her to send to her son, Adam Colella, who is serving active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps. Adam joined the Marines last summer after he grad-

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## ...for Religious Education

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uated from high school. Carol shared with me that the students did such a great job that some of the cards brought tears to her eyes. We are sure that Adam enjoyed getting cards from his home parish.

Mrs. Cinelli's seventh grade class helped the parish out by "stuffing" the 1280 books that Fr. Brian gives out to all families at Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses. This helps the students learn that they need to give back to the parish, which, for many, has been their parish since they were baptized.

Many of our students have been like little "Hallmark Creators" making cards for our home bound parishioners to receive for Thanksgiving and Christmas. We had a request for Christmas cards for a young heart transplant patient at Boston Children's Hospital and our students were so excited to do this as well. All these little acts of kindness go a long way.

Mrs. Selley's eighth grade students have been trying something new this year. They are using a "Facilitated Learning" approach to teaching. Students pair together to actually plan and teach their peers each week. This has been very successful. Matthew Miller, an eighth grade student, told me, "It is really fun. The kids actually have to read and answer questions. Sometimes the questions get turned into a game. I think the kids are paying more attention and it is giving us more time to participate. Everyone is doing a really good job."

Many high school students have volunteered to help in so many ways. They assisted at the Boston Children's Hospital Blood Drive, the Knights of Columbus Comedy Night, Respect Life Baby Bottle Drive, Knights of Columbus Pie Distribution, First Penance, changing the missalettes when Advent began, deco-

rating the church for Christmas and acting as Greeters at the Confirmation and Christmas Masses. We receive countless compliments about what a wonderful representation of St. Mary's Parish our young people are.

We also need to compliment the many high school students who come back after Confirmation to teach our young people. We are extremely fortunate to have such a vibrant group of young adults.

As you can see we have had a very busy year so far and we look forward to 2020. As always, we welcome anyone who would like to join the Religious Education Team. Just give us a call.

**St. Mary Religious Education**  
**508-528-1450**



## Peace

Setting out on a journey of peace is a challenge made all the more complex because the interests at stake in relationships between people, communities and nations, are numerous and conflicting... Peace emerges from the depths of the human heart and political will must always be renewed, so that new ways can be found to reconcile and unite individuals and communities.

The world does not need empty words but convinced witnesses, peacemakers who are open to a dialogue that rejects exclusion or manipulation... Peace "must be built up continually"; it is a journey made together in constant pursuit of the common good, truthfulness and respect for law. Listening to one another can lead to mutual understanding and esteem, and even to seeing in an enemy the face of a brother or sister...

This is a social undertaking, an ongoing work in which each individual makes his or her contribution responsibly, at every level of the local, national and global community.

Pope Francis, World Day of Peace 2020



**Monsignor Peter Conley**  
A member of the faculty at  
the Pope St. John XXIII  
National Seminary in Weston  
will speak about  
*Men's Spirituality*  
at the Men's Faith Formation group  
Saturday, February 8  
8:45-9:45am  
in the St. Mary Parish Hall

## View from the Pew: The Call to His Coming

Joan McGuire

Many years ago when I was teaching at St Gabriel's in New Rochelle, I first heard the compelling Call.

The school property abutted the synagogue and the Pastor welcomed the Rabbi to use the property. At the close of the Day of Atonement, the blast of the electrifying trumpet pierced through the silence.

The ancient sound of the Shofar was God's voice sending the message of God's deliverance of his people. I took my class out to observe and the Rabbi explained to us that this was a call to share in God's plan. As I listened, the Advent-Christmas season came to mind. I thought of our deliverance: "And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). We too have our own Call in the "O Antiphons" that begin on December 17th and continue for seven days. They show us how we can cooperate in God's plan for the human salvation — every day.

The following Antiphons are condensed. Starting on the 17th they can be found in many daily prayer books such as the Magnificat.

O Wisdom ...  
Come and show your people the way to salvation.

O Leader of the House of Israel...  
Come reach out your strong and mighty hand to set us free

O Root of Jesse ...  
Come let nothing keep you from coming to our aid.

O Key of David ...  
Come break down the walls for those in darkness and lead them into the light .

O Radiant Dawn ...  
Come shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death

O King of all nations ...  
Come and save the creatures you fashioned from dust.

O Emmanuel (God with us) ...  
Come and set us free O God.

**Each day ask God how you can reach out to someone. Then listen and be alert! You will meet the person who will benefit from interacting with you. Remember: "Ask and you shall receive." — God always takes us up on our offer.**

See the complete form of the O Antiphons at <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/the-o-antiphons-of-advent.cfm>



**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.**

John 1:1

### inside...

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