

The Weave

November 2011

Volume 16 Issue 1

A Quarterly Newsletter of St. Mary Parish Family, Franklin MA

Meet the Seminarians

by Jeff Archer and Mark Storey

We are seminarians Jeff Archer and Mark Storey from Blessed John XXIII Seminary in Weston MA and we will spend this year's health care ministry working at St. Mary's. Every Tuesday we will be at the parish working closely with Nan Rafter, Pastoral Associate/Parish Nurse. Our health care ministry will focus on visiting St. Mary's parishioners who are home bound, spending time with them one-on-one and offering prayer service. We will visit nursing homes with Nan and Fr. Manning or Fr. Campo to administer daily Mass to the patients. We will work closely with Nan one-on-one and in our group of three so as to grow in the field of health care ministry. Finally we will visit with other people that Nan knows within the health care field to learn from them. All of this is extremely important to our growth as future Priests for the Archdiocese of Boston.

We would like to tell you a little about ourselves.



Jeff Archer

Prior to entering the seminary with an undergraduate degree and MBA, I had an extensive and successful

business career. Aside from my time at work I found myself volunteering with many organizations, including several soup kitchens in Boston, Special Olympics and many church related activities in both Connecticut and Massachusetts. I found both the 21 years in corporate America and my volunteer activities very rewarding and fulfilling. I learned a lot, I grew as a person, and I helped many others to grow. It helped to balance me as an individual while at the same time working with those who needed that little extra help.

Today I am a seminarian at Blessed John XXIII National Seminary in Weston MA. What led me to make this move? The biggest and most important - hearing God's call and being open to listening to what God had to say. Second, asking God some very tough questions and then listening with an open heart to what God had to say. Finally with God's help, understanding what it would mean to leave the life I was living and enter the seminary. Without serious thought to this question and the answers as I understood them I would not have made the decision I made.

What do I like about being a seminarian? The opportunity afforded me

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An Adult Christmas

by Joan McGuire

Watching children perform in a nativity pageant with all the characters - a gruff innkeeper, angels, shepherds, Mary and Joseph on a donkey and the majestic magi bring the familiar warm Christmas spirit to the audience. But if this was all it was, the rich story of God coming to live among us would be like a magical myth enjoyed for a time but then put away with the Christmas ornaments. For adults it is time to put the adult Christ in Christmas.

Only two of the evangelists, Matthew and Luke, tell us about Jesus' birth. Although we set up a crib that combines the two stories, they diverge on many points. In Matthew, the annunciation of the coming birth is made to Joseph, and Mary and Joseph have a house in Bethlehem to which the Magi come following the star. The story of Herod's slaying of the children necessitates the holy family's flight into Egypt and then going to live in Nazareth for safety.

In Luke, the annunciation is to Mary and they travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the census. Not finding any room in the inn they go to a stable and Jesus is laid in a manger. There are shepherds galore but no Wise Men. For all the differences both Matthew and Luke were trying to convey a central message about

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Words, Words, Words!

by John M. Ristaino

Words, words, words, Eliza Doolittle sings those words in My Fair Lady. She goes on to relay that she is “so sick of words.” Words can lose their meaning. Words and phrases we say become second nature to us. As they do, we forget to stop and reflect on their meaning, their impact and our motivation for saying them in the first place.

The first week in Advent brings with it changes in some of the wording of The Mass. Words! We attend Mass and we recite our prayers and responses. That practice might have led us to the point of forgetting to stop and reflect on what it is we are saying. What does our prayer mean? What do our responses convey? Advent and the new wording of The Mass gives us an early Christmas present; the gift of reflection and the opportunity to examine our wonderful faith and what The Mass means to us.

When we learn the new responses to The Mass, it allows us to think about those words and what they mean. We need to listen and to focus. We are learning new responses. When we learn we naturally pay closer attention to the words we are saying. They are new to us. We need to concentrate. In the process our prayer and our appreciation for the celebration of The Mass is deepened.

Words convey so much during this

wonderful time of the year. Often we will say and hear “Merry, Christmas!” What does “Merry Christmas” mean? “Merry Christmas” can mean many different things to many different people. We each hear and interpret “Merry Christmas” differently.

In Charles Dickens tale “A Christmas Carol” when Ebenezer Scrooge hears “Merry Christmas” his reaction is quite negative. We read and hear this reaction and naturally think that our response is different than that of Mr. Scrooge. Is it? Have the years and the hundreds and thousands of times we have heard “Merry Christmas” dulled our senses to its meaning?

“Merry Christmas” is a phrase of love. It carries with it the wish for peace on earth. It carries with it the meaning of the words, I am sorry. It carries with it the message I love you. “Merry Christmas” is a reflection of God’s great love for us. “Merry Christmas” heralds and celebrates the arrival of our eternal Christmas present; our Savior, Jesus, born in a lowly manger.

When we wish a “Merry Christmas” we are acknowledging that Jesus is born to save each of us, everyone. “Merry Christmas” says that despite our differences, we are all the same in the eyes of God.

When we wish a “Merry Christmas” to someone it lightens our hearts and our spirits. This Advent and Christmas season reflect on those simple but powerful words; Merry Christmas. How do you feel when you hear “Merry Christmas?” How do you feel when you say “Merry Christmas?”

Words are powerful tools. They convey so much. Words have meaning. In these seasons of preparation, celebration and love stop and think about the new words we say during the Mass. Stop and think about the wishes we extend to friend and foe. “Merry Christmas” is a phrase with a powerful message; a message of forgiveness, a message of redemption and a

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Families’ Corner

by Katherine Ginnetty

Decorating for Christmas is a delightful adventure every year. Once the manger is set up, we begin the labor of love called decorating the Christmas tree. To the accompaniment of Christmas carols, boxes are brought up from the cellar or down from the attic, and their treasures are unwrapped. As we deliver an ornament from its bondage of protective paper cushion, we are as excited as when we opened it for the first time, and the magic of Christmas begins anew.

The history of Christmas trees is rooted in ancient pagan Rome, where the festival of Saturnalia included bringing living tree branches into the home and attaching small gifts to the green boughs. However, as a Christian symbol, the Christmas tree is almost as old. Our Advent and Christmas traditions are both ancient and ageless, like our Faith itself. While you decorate your tree this year, you can share some of the history behind the ritual of hanging ornaments and some of these Christmas Tree “originals.”

The first Christmas tree was probably decorated in northern Europe and was called a “Paradise Tree,” used to explain the story about the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. It was decorated with small fruits and a larger apple and also with white wafers to resemble the Holy Eucharist. After some time, cookies, cut out into different shapes such as stars and circles replaced the wafers, and people began to hang more items, including small gifts wrapped in pretty paper, on the tree branches.

The German people made tree decorating their particular craft. Prince Albert of Germany, who married Queen Victoria of England, may have influenced her with his background, so that she began the English tradition of putting paper horns full of candy, animal-shaped cut-out cookies and pine cones on the tree in their palace. Whatever the Queen did

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The Weave



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Notes from Father Brian

by Father Brian

I find it difficult to believe that I have more than rounded the corner in year two of my time here and well into year three. I suppose this is the time for some brief philosophic reflections that maybe are not too deep, but deeply meant.

I enjoy being pastor here at St. Mary's very much. I find great satisfaction in the daily life and priestly ministry here. Certainly from when I first became a pastor in 1994, parish life has changed greatly. The milieu is far different now and the expectations by most people have changed. Whether it is easier or harder does not matter. I am more practical by nature and believe 'it is what it is' and we cannot live in the past or the future.

This past summer coronary problems seem to have resolved themselves. I am, for the first time in my life (!), following properly the doctor's orders and taking my medicine as directed. It is amazing at times what good things can happen when you follow the rules and advice of others. I am appreciative of your great concern for my health and thank you for your kindness.

I continue to appreciate the sense of giving and helpfulness that so many parishioners offer as volunteers here at St. Mary's. This generous giving of time and care is really wonderful. Lectors, Ushers, Eucharistic Ministers, Linen and church Cleaners, Leaders of Song, Choir Members, Mass Servers, Ministers of the Homebound and Hospitals, Religious Education Catechists, Health Care Ministry, St. Vincent de Paul, Bereavement Group etc. add up to the hundreds upon hundreds of volunteers. I am constantly in awe of the hundreds of volunteers for our famous St. Rocco Festa. I am blessed that the Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Council have been extremely helpful to me in trying to lead and guide the parish.

I know some of you have noticed that the upstairs church is brighter. It was time (almost 6 years) to change the light bulbs (they grow dimmer with age) and

wash the glass lanterns. Isn't it interesting how subtly things can dim and wear down in the church, or our lives and we do not notice it until something dramatic happens. It also time to paint the upstairs church (yes, again!). It has been over 12 years since it was last painted, except for water damage. The dirt and incense smoke etc. have built up (as on the lights and lanterns). On the right front side window are some color samplings. We are getting closer to the 'right colors', but are not there yet. Because of the length of time needed to stage and paint the church, this will probably take place in the winter of 2013.

The new space in the lower church continues to work great. The large hall and the 3 additional meeting rooms seem to flow well. Thank you Knights of Columbus. We continue to lack proper parish office space in the rectory and we must soon decide what we should do. The space in the rectory is a chicken coop of a mess. Times change and have changed. Parishes now demand much more office space for all the lay staff. It is hard to believe that Thanksgiving is but a few weeks away. I want you to know I give thanks to God that he allows me to be pastor here at St. Mary's and for your presence, kindness and support.

Fr. Brian



ADVENT CONCERT

Mark your calendars for
Sunday, Dec. 18!
The Prolatio Singers and Players
will be performing a concert of
sacred Advent, Marian
and Gregorian music
at our church.
More info will follow
in upcoming bulletins.

View From the Pew

by Joan McGuire

The Mirror of God's Love

When I am caught in the stress of daily life I imagine the world of Jesus as a peaceful and pastoral place governed by the ancient rhythms of the agrarian life. On my Spring trip to the Holy Land I was taken to the city of Sepphoris, only about 4 miles from Nazareth. It was called the "Ornament of Galilee."

Joseph and Jesus could have walked there daily for work. It was a wealthy, sophisticated metropolis, with all the activity and stress of our big cities.

Far from my idea of the stressless life of Jesus, Carol and Eric Meyers, archaeologists of Sepphoris, speculate that as a tekton (carpenter) Jesus would have to have been a tri-lingual businessman (Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic) to survive in the city. If he could find the time to look into the hearts of the people who approached him and support their needs, I have no excuse.

Carl Rogers, a well-known psychologist offers this thought, "everyone has the same basic need, but they manifest it with different symptoms." We all need to be understood, accepted and loved. Christ told us to love one another as we love ourselves. First we must accept ourselves with all our imperfections and thank God for loving us as we are. We must also reach out to others, manifesting by our attitude as well as by our words. "I accept you, I understand you and I care about you." We could be a mirror standing in front of everyone we meet manifesting God's love for them.



NOEL HALLELUJAH MERRY CHRISTMAS HAPPY NEW YEAR
Noel Hallelujah Merry Christmas Happy New Year



Mark Your Parish Calendar

- Nov. 24 Thanksgiving Day**
Mass at 8am
- Nov. 26** Rock Night
- Nov. 27** Baptisms
- Dec. 1** Mass Talk w/ Fr. Frank, 7pm
- Dec. 2** **First Friday Adoration**
- Dec. 3** Pageant Rehearsal, 9am
- Dec. 3** Nativity Display
- Dec. 4** Nativity Display
- Dec. 4** Baptisms
- Dec. 7** **Vigil Mass, 4pm**
- Dec. 8** **Immaculate Conception**
Masses: 7am, 9am, 7:30pm
- Dec. 10** Pageant Rehearsal, 9am
- Dec. 11** Baptismal Catechesis
- Dec. 11** Baptisms
- Dec. 11** Rock Night
- Dec. 14** Mass at Forge Hill
- Dec. 15** CWC Meeting
- Dec. 17** Pageant rehearsal, 9am
- Dec. 18** Baptisms
- Dec. 18** Prolatio Singers Concert
- Dec. 24** **Christmas Eve**
Masses: 4pm (3)
6pm, 7:30pm, Midnight
- Dec. 25** **Christmas**
Masses: 9am, 10:30am
- Dec. 27** Mass at nursing home
- Dec. 31** **Vigil Mass: 4pm**
- Jan. 1** **New Year's Day**
Masses: 7:30, 9, 10:30, 12
- Jan. 6** First Friday Adoration
- Jan. 8** Baptisms
- Jan. 11** Mass at Forge Hill
- Jan. 15** Baptisms
- Jan. 19** CWC Meeting
- Jan. 24** Mass at nursing home
- Jan. 29** Baptisms
- Feb. 3** First Friday Adoration
- Feb. 5** Baptisms
- Feb. 12** Baptisms
- Feb. 19** Baptisms
- Feb. 21** Mass at Forge Hill
- Feb. 22** **Ash Wednesday**
Masses: 7am, 12:10pm,
7:30pm
Prayer Service: 4pm

...Words

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message of love. Say it and hear it often this year. "Merry Christmas" is a gift we give and receive each time we say it and hear it. Don't let this season pass without pausing to really listen to and contemplate the meaning of "Merry Christmas!" Each time you say it and hear it, may its meaning be new to you. Merry Christmas!

A Place To Call Home

by *Samantha Moccia*

When some people think of homelessness, they imagine a person on the streets in a city, like Boston or New York, holding a tin cup; begging people for money. At one point, this was my perception of homelessness as well. Many people don't know that homelessness can happen to anybody, not just the very poor, and it happens right in our own town. I know; it's shocking. I was just as surprised to learn this, and was very curious as to why and how a family can get to a point of not having a place to call home. For most of my life, I have helped to deliver care packages to our town's needy families through *Friends of Franklin*, and now I realize that for some families, the line between



...Adult Christmas

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Jesus - His identity and the culmination of the history of Israel in the fulfillment of God's promise to send His Son.

In both infancy stories, once the child's identity is known it must be quickly shared, in Matthew to the Magi from the East and in Luke to the Jewish shepherds.

Although the cast of characters differs, each evangelist is teaching us that Christ's identity is never received to be kept as a private possession. In God's providence there are other people eager to believe in Christ's identity, even if they are people whom we least expect. Christmas is not just for a season; it is a commitment to spread the "Good News." The first evangelization shows that the message is not a group of rules or an individual's point of view of the event. Mary and Joseph sat back and presented the Christ Child to all who would come. All evangelization is, is a presentation of Christ, sometimes by words, more frequently by our actions. No one is excused from spreading the message: God so loved each of us that He sent His beloved Son. Let us unite with all of God's children in showing Him our gratitude.

their current circumstances and becoming homeless is very fine.

There are many different reasons why a family might become homeless. Sometimes families, some that you might know, are on the brink of becoming homeless, but they manage to pull just enough together to keep their home. Others aren't so lucky. No matter how hard they try, there just isn't enough money to go around. The parents have to make the hard decision of whether to put food on the table and clothe their children or to pay for their home or apartment. Many choose the former option, and housing then becomes a problem. They are faced with no home; where are they going to live?

Fortunately, there are places of refuge for these people in their time of need. Family shelters provide a safe haven for families that are having financial problems. Unfortunately, there aren't many of these types of shelters in our area anymore. In Medway, the *Medway House Family Shelter* houses up to twelve families at any given time. Each of the families there has their own private bedroom, and the rest of the common areas – such as the kitchen, dining room, living room, and bathrooms – are shared with the other residents. It is a wonderful facility where the families are well taken care of.

When a family moves to a homeless shelter, it can have overwhelming effects on the children. Before, they may have been used to living with only their family; now, they are surrounded by many strangers. Also, they may have been involved with extracurricular activities, such as sports teams, dance classes, or other fun activities. When they move to the shelter, many of these opportunities are no longer feasible. For young children, all of the new surroundings and situations may be strange and confusing. For example, they may wonder why they can't go to their old school, and why they no longer are able to play on the soccer team with their friends. Many families seeking temporary shelter need to relocate from their former environments, sometimes moving far distances from their current and familiar town or city, to live in unfamiliar surroundings.

When I learned about these children's situations, I was determined to do something to help them. I knew that, while I may not be able to change their current situation, I could certainly make their stay at the shelter more

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Comfort For Those Who Are Grieving

by Nan Rafter, Parish Nurse

As we look towards the celebration of the holidays, many hearts are filled with warm memories and eager anticipation. For those who have experienced the loss of a loved one, this time of year can be a very difficult time. I would like to share some ways that we can comfort people in our lives, in our community and in our church as they continue with their grieving process.

Jesus has won the victory over suffering and death, yet these are very real and painful experiences. The Bible reminds us that even Jesus cried at the death of His dear friend Lazarus (Jn. 11:35). Often we may wonder, "What can I say or do that will be a comfort to a grieving relative, friend or fellow parishioner?"

When someone in our life is grieving, there are several things we can do. First, we need to remember that there is not a right thing to say or do that will make their pain go away. We need to be willing to simply be a continuing presence in their lives. It can be difficult to be with them but try to remain connected in some way. You could send a "thinking of you" card or bring them a baked good or flowers.

Second, we need to take our cues from the person who is grieving. If they need to cry and experience sadness, we need to be with them and not try to "cheer them up". They don't want solutions. They want to be able to share the painful loss of their loved ones.

If they need reassurance of their worth, we need to be affirming. When they need to hear words of comfort, we need to speak these words. Third, we need to let those who are grieving know that they are in our thoughts and prayers. The pain and loss of losing a loved one creates a deep and abiding loneliness which is magnified, causing a sense of being forgotten or separated from others. Many times we slip back into our busy lives or unconsciously avoid our friend or relative who is grieving.

Finally, the holiday season is a difficult time for those who have lost loved ones. Let them know that you are not adding to the demands placed on them for gifts, cards, to show up at parties or even special worship services. During this time attending Mass can be difficult for them to attend alone. Make a gentle offer to go with them. (This year for our annual Mass of Remembrance, we put all of the names of those members of our

church who died this year on the flyers so friends could come and support those who lost loved ones.) Don't exclude them from your family, but let them come and go as they have need. Be flexible and help them to find options, or opt to do nothing during the holidays. Understand that they may find it difficult to concentrate and make decisions. Surround them with the safety of your love. Most of all, remember that the holidays are more than traditions and rituals, but are about hope, peace and "essentials of life" sought out by those who grieve, May we "comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Cor. 1:4).

...A Place To Call Home

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pleasant and fun. During the summer, I started holding activity classes for the children staying at the shelter. The "Funtime" classes have all sorts of enjoyable games, music, crafts, and other fun activities; anything and everything that any other kid would get to experience. These play sessions are also a way for the children to get to know the other kids that are staying at the shelter, so they can hopefully become friends with them. So far, both the children and I benefit very much from these times together!

Reading this, you may wonder how you can help needy families in your community. Well, there are many ways. One way is to volunteer at the *Medway Family Shelter*. They are always looking for volunteers to help out there. You can donate items, help beautify the yard, prepare and deliver a homemade meal, or go and play with the children. For more information on volunteer opportunities, contact Volunteer Coordinator Janet Michalos at janetm@smoc.org or (508)-533-1487.

Participating in and supporting the annual *Friends of Franklin* holiday care package program is another way to help needy Franklin families. Providing food and other necessities helps them stay in their homes. No matter how you choose to volunteer, you can be sure that your hard work is greatly appreciated by the needy families that you are helping out!

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

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If your parish group or organization would like to place a notice in the bulletin, we must receive it **in writing** 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

If your organization is planning to use any parish facilities, such as the church, church hall or new meeting rooms or school, for your meetings, events, etc. 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. There is a wealth of information available there.

A Good Catholic Soap Opera

by Father Frank Campo

An insightful man of the Church mentioned recently that if we, as Catholics, had a good Catholic soap opera on television, we would transform the world.

In nearly every country, with television or radio, there are countless people who tune into standard soap operas, fascinated by the episodes, virtually addicted to the dramas that occur all but daily, anxious to know what the next episode holds, what intrigue surrounds the actors and actresses, what scoundrel is creating mischief, and how the story or plot is going to unfold.

The more recent version of soap operas



Advent and Christmas Liturgical Celebrations

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Vigil: December 7
4pm

December 8
7am, 9am, 7:30pm

Prolatio Singers and Players
Sunday, Dec. 18

Christmas Eve Masses:
4pm (3 Masses); upper church, lower church, Horace Mann Auditorium with the Children's Pageant

6pm, 7:30pm

****Midnight Mass****

Christmas Day
Masses: 9am and 10:30am

New Year's Eve
4:00pm

New Year's Day
Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God

7:30, 9:00, 10:30, noon

are not as relatively benign as those which have been around for literally decades. The latter were never shining examples of morality; but were far less morally toxic than newer versions. Some of us recall our mothers with one eye on the tomato sauce they were stirring on the stove, and the other on one of the TV "soaps." And our immigrant grandparents watching and listening intently, as well, with the excuse that they were doing so only to improve their English.

If some of our talented Catholic actors, producers, and directors got together and managed to launch a good Catholic soap opera, not only Hollywood, but the media magnates throughout the world would be forced to take notice. Even if only for money reasons, for the Catholic "soap" would be far better than the others. For people long to see good drama, that leaves with it a sense of how things could be, and brings good out of the bad, joy out of suffering, love out of wayward passion.

The Catholic Church, after all, is the most intriguing organization in the world.

As an historian, no friend of Catholicism, wrote reluctantly, with all its blemishes, its mistakes, its scandals throughout its two thousand years, it nevertheless will be around, when all other world organizations and governments disappear, including ours. The reason being the Catholic Church is a divine institution, orchestrated by the Holy Spirit, and whose author is Jesus Christ himself.

For every scoundrel who has tainted the Church's image over the years, there is more than one saint to wash the image anew; for every mistake there are corrections, for every scandal there is the antidote of "amazing grace" which abounds far more than sin of any sort.

The Church is the drama of all dramas, with episodes that truly fascinate. It rises above all the lesser soap opera fascination with immorality, with corruption, with greed, with disloyalty, with family

life gone awry, with that failure of the modern world to see what the ancients called the three faces of God, "truth, beauty, and love." The Church drama was captured by the great medieval Italian poet, Dante, who imagined a poet of old, Virgil, traipsing through purgatory and Hell, observing characters, whose actual lives, would make those of characters in the soaps boring. Dante's great poem, **The Divine Comedy**, a medieval soap opera, had episodes which culminated in the poet Virgil climbing out of Hell to see the sun and the stars, revolving around love itself, a vision of Paradise.

As that insightful man mentioned, these themes could be captured today in a good Catholic soap opera, reflecting our everyday lives, and all that has taken place throughout the Church's long history, woven together in episodes, which not only fascinate, but edify. Episodes continuing every day, every hour of our lives until the end of time. The world would be then truly transformed, as the previously insightful man said.



Glory to God
in the highest heaven,
and on earth *peace*
among those whom he favors!

Luke 2:14 (NRSV)

...Meet the Seminarians

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to learn and grow in this vocation. If it is God's will that I am to be ordained a Priest someday I know, as a seminarian, that I am on the right path, the path that God wants me to be on.



Mark Storey

The Masters Degree in Chemical Engineering that I obtained in 1980 from Northeastern launched my 30-year career as an engineer.

My first wife

Sandy died in 1989 leaving me with a precious daughter Elizabeth who is now twenty-five years old. My second wife Mary, who was raised Catholic died in 1999. In 1991 I converted to the Catholic faith and was received into the faith from the Anglican Church at the Easter Vigil Mass in 1992. Over the next eighteen years I

was active in the Knights of Columbus.

Two years ago while praying before the Blessed Sacrament I discerned that the nagging feeling that something was missing in my life was a call to enter the seminary. Some people are not aware that formerly married men can enter the priesthood.

We have been at St. Mary's now for almost 2 months and we have already met a lot of great people. It is through meeting these people, and through Nan's assistance helping them maintain a connection with the parish and Jesus, that we have already started to grow. We look forward to continuing at St. Mary's for the academic year of 2011-2012. We hope to share our continuous growth with you in future Weave publications.

God Bless,
Mark Storey & Jeffrey Archer

A Christmas Blessing for the Home

Loving God, as we gather at Christmas around the manger, which reminds us of the birth of your Son, we ask you to dwell in our hearts and our home.

Bless every member of our family, and strengthen the bond of love among us.

May we joyfully praise you like the angel choir that announced the birth of your Son to the shepherds watching over their flocks.

May we show your love to others with the same brightness of the star that guided the Wise Men to offer gifts to the newborn King.

Make our family holy, just like Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, so that we may always live in peace and love. Amen.

...Family Corner

(Continued from page 2)

was considered fashionable, and soon her subjects had Christmas trees in their Victorian living rooms. When a London newspaper published a picture of the Royal Family around their decorated Christmas tree in 1846, its readers immediately made the tradition popular. From the same German heritage, the Pennsylvania Dutch carved and painted small wooden horses for their tree branches, and they also strung cherries and red berries around them. Other Americans sewed together popped corn kernels to represent golden chains wrapped around the evergreens.

Too much of a good thing is never good, and eventually the items on the tree began to get too heavy for the branches! Glassblowers designed lightweight balls instead. At first these balls were colored in bright dyes, but with new techniques and media, artists painted scenes on them or decorated them with beads and other bric-a-brac.

Here are a few other facts about early Christmas trees:

- ✠ The first mention of a decorated tree, a "Paradise Tree," comes from the Alsace region in 1521.
- ✠ The Germans were the first people to decorate their trees with tinsel, according to a report from 1610.
- ✠ Community Christmas trees, like the one on the Franklin town common, were first established by the Pennsylvania Dutch in 1747.
- ✠ Electric lights to illuminate the Christmas tree, replacing candles, were patented in the United States in 1882
- ✠ The first tree farm exclusively growing Christmas trees opened in 1901.

Your family's tree probably has a history of its own. Share with your children the stories of favorite ornaments that hang annually on your

tree - paper ones made by the children themselves are often the most adored! Before you admire your work, be sure to include the children in the traditional, Catholic Christmas tree blessing so they appreciate the true reason for the festivity.:

Dear God, two thousand years ago, you brought your son, Jesus, into this world to teach us the power of love and sacrifice. As we decorate this tree, we remember his birth and the meaning of his life for us. Bless this tree as a symbol of our celebration of Jesus' birth and our gratitude for his sacrifice. May the joy this tree brings and the gifts we place under it remind us of the many gifts you have given us. We ask your blessings upon our loved ones, this day and always.
Amen.



by Joan McGuire

The St Mary's Book Club hosted a book signing by Jennie Coughlin on November 22nd in the Sacred Heart Parish Hall. The book, "Thrown Out: Stories from Exeter," is a collection of short stories about the people in a small fictional town in the Blackstone Valley. It is available from Amazon. The daughter of Paula and Alan Coughlin, Jennie is a native born Franklinite and a graduate of the Franklin School system. She is remembered by many as a reporter for the Milford Daily News and a reporter and columnist for the Country Gazette.

Good News!

On October 9th Kimberley Perry the daughter of Rod and Claire Perry (St Mary's business manager) was married to David Santelices, son of Carin and Mary Ellen Santelices (a St. Mary's Pastoral Visitor) in Sturbridge, Mass.



Parish Council News: At the last meeting the painting and refurbishing of the Church was discussed. Father Brian Manning stated that the Church, the House of God, should be the most beautiful house in town.

A committee was formed to study new ways to welcome our new parishioners. Any ideas would be welcomed by the committee. Send your suggestions to the rectory directed to the Parish Council - Welcoming Committee.

Don't Forget

**Caring Tree presents
are due back
by
December
11th.**

The Weave

St. Mary Parish Family
One Church Square
Franklin MA 02038

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