

The high temperature on January 1<sup>st</sup> was a comfortable 75 degrees. Since that time we have come nowhere close to 70 degrees and according to the long range forecast, we will not do so until this coming Tuesday at best. In my 12+ years in Naples, I cannot remember a continual stretch of cool weather that lasted as long. As a matter of fact, according to my crude research, such a stretch has not occurred for several decades. As I sit in my office composing my column with chilled fingers, I can only imagine what those further north must be experiencing. Many of our winter residents usually don't arrive until the middle of January, however at Mass this past weekend it looks as though the weather may have brought them down sooner. Although we had a very mild December and everyone became spoiled with temperatures in the 80's this is a nice reminder that we can experience our own version of winter in Southwest Florida. My constant references to Naples as Paradise may seem a far cry from reality as many are complaining that we are in a "Paradise Lost." Let us enjoy this extended cold spell and pray that those in the agriculture industry don't suffer any substantial damage.

I have been raving about the appearance of the church this Advent and Christmas season. In addition, I have had countless comments on the beauty of the new Nativity. As I mentioned last week, The St. John Knights of Columbus purchased the new Fontanini Nativity set and another family purchased the angel. What I failed to mention was that the manger was custom made by one of our incredibly talented parishioners. Marty Gauthier (member of the Arts and Liturgical Environment Team) hand made the manger as well as many of the other appointments you see on the altar. Do you remember when we replaced the old wooden tongue and groove ceiling in the back wings of the church this summer? Marty used the wood that was removed to construct the manger. Yes this is correct! For those of you that are big fans of the "green movement", please congratulate Marty on his clever use of this recycled wood.

The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Super Bowl party will take place on Sunday, February 7<sup>th</sup> in the ballroom of the Parish Life Center. Please see the full page flyer in this bulletin for further details. Ticket sales are limited to the first 250 and if there happens to be a Midwest team (or two) in the big game, we will sell out!

We have created a new volunteer position and have appointed Peter Heaney as the Director of Community Life. A large function of Peter's new position will be to coordinate all of the parish ministries and events. We are going to hold a meeting on Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm in the PLC ballroom which will be open to the lead representative from each of our parish ministries. If your ministry wishes to be recognized as a ministry of St. John the Evangelist, we expect representation at this meeting. We will publish some form of this announcement for the next five weeks in advance of the meeting to ensure that every ministry has the opportunity to appoint a representative to attend.

The 2009 Catholic Faith Appeal has officially ended. Although I initially indicated our deadline was the 12<sup>th</sup> of January, it turns out that all contributions had to be received by this past Friday. As of this past Wednesday, we were at approximately \$500,000.00 or \$13,000.00 shy of our goal of \$513,000.00. Am I disappointed? Absolutely not! We made an incredible effort in the face of countless obstacles. This past year was full of adversity and change and in the midst of it all, we nearly met what seemed an insurmountable goal. Although we will have to recognize the \$13,000.00 shortfall out of our operating budget, this is a much more manageable amount than what it could have been. Thank you once again to every parishioner that contributed to our success in the 2009 Catholic Faith Appeal. I promise not to mention the CFA for the next several weeks but since I am writing about it now, the opportunity arises to remind you once again. If you are a seasonal resident or visitor, please make you check payable to the Catholic Faith Appeal with St. John the Evangelist in the memo line. Your contributions will be credited to the 2010 appeal. Thank you once again for your continued generosity.

This weekend we will have a second collection to support the 19 seminarians of the Diocese of Venice. Please be as generous as possible in helping to meet the costs of educating our future priests. The expense of supporting a seminarian can easily reach \$50,000 or more per year. The Diocese has the responsibility of not only their education, but insurance, housing, food and summer internships, etc. As you know, part of the CFA is dedicated to covering these costs, but with the recent growth of our seminarian class from 7 two years ago to 19 today, it just isn't enough. You can make a gift in honor of a priest who may have been influential in your personal life and the Bishop will dedicate a special Mass for those intentions. Write the name of the priest on the corner of the envelope provided to you today at Mass.

In His work together,

Scott Schlossberg, MBA  
General Manager