

# ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC PARISH

## SACRISTANS

*Serve as “Housekeepers for the Lord”*



*Parish sacristans (from left) Sean McGrath, Mary Walton and Janet Adams preparing for the liturgy.*

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5819 W. Pleasant Ridge Rd.  
Arlington, TX 76016  
(817) 478-8206  
www.svdpc.org

**H**ave you ever sat in the pew during Sunday Mass and wondered who ensures there are enough hosts and wine for each liturgical celebration? Who reads the altar for the liturgy, ensuring that every necessary item is prepared and in place? The truth is, most of us haven't given much thought to these small details that seem to happen almost by themselves. Yet, the reality is that each of these tasks has been quietly performed by one of our parish sacristans — the hidden housekeepers of our church.

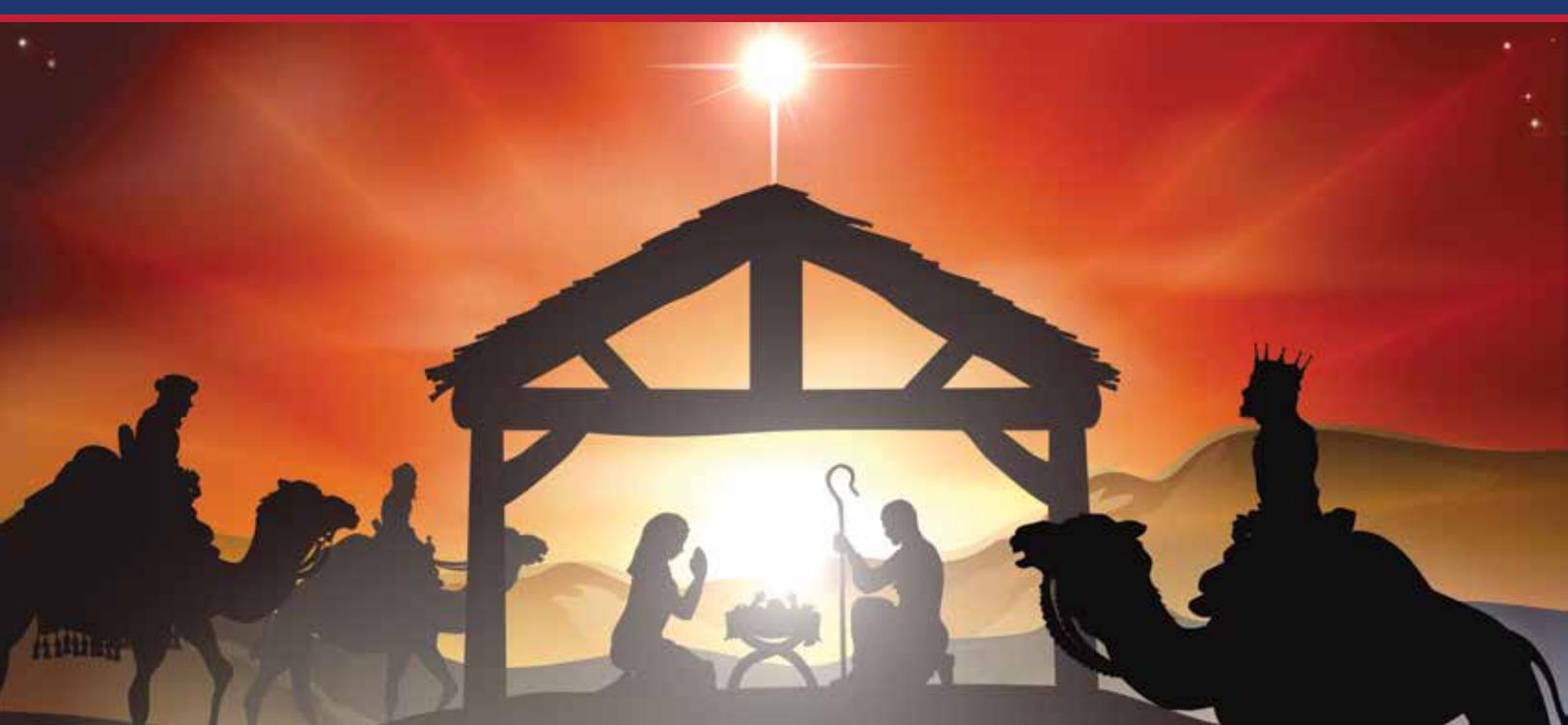
“Our purpose is to make sure that the Mass is able to run smoothly and

properly,” says Mary Walton, sacristan coordinator. “Everything we do is ‘behind the scenes’ — things like set up the altar, distribute unconsecrated hosts into the patens, and ready the altar servers’ candles.”

Giving of their time before, during and after each parish liturgy, these faithful men and women help ensure that each liturgical item is ready and in place for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This is done through several “small,” but important tasks — from setting up the altar and caring for the sacred vessels, to ordering the supplies needed for each Mass such as unconsecrated hosts, wine and incense.

*continued on back cover*

# ST. VINCENT DE PAUL



## LET US FIND THE MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE AND ENCOUNTER CHRIST THIS SEASON

**W**e all know classic stories of Christmas spirit instilling new life and bringing about a deeper sense of joy and gratitude — Dr. Seuss’ Grinch, whose heart grows three times its size; or Buddy the elf, who brings Christmas cheer by singing loud for all to hear; or even the cold and greedy Ebenezer Scrooge, who awoke on Christmas morning a changed man, sharing in joy and treating all with kindness. We enjoy certainly hearing these stories every year. But sometimes, even as Christians, it is so easy to forget the source of these lessons — the birth of Christ, the first Christmas itself. And there are so many characters from this ancient story that remind us how to embrace this season as Catholic stewards.

Let’s start with the innkeeper, the first character Mary and Joseph encounter before Jesus even enters the world. He does what he can — there is no room, just a stable. He has little, but what little he has he gives away freely. And unknowingly, the Christ Child enters into this world in the midst of one man’s humble offering. What a beautiful example of stewardship! Is there some small thing into which you could invite Jesus? Perhaps there is a new parishioner you could invite over for dinner, or a new mom for whom you could prepare a meal. In whatever way you might reach out, be sure to make a place at the table for your new guest and allow yourself to encounter Christ in them.

Next in this story, we meet the shepherds — the first people to meet Jesus, to see their Savior face to face. Even in their poverty, they simply bring Jesus their very selves, this gift of their presence and eagerness to encounter Him. Consider visiting a nursing home to be with those who might not have company during this Christmas season. Or have a neighbor over who you haven’t seen in a while. Sometimes, we forget that just taking time to be present to another person can be a gift of self.

And then there are the Wise Men. Though they are better off perhaps than the shepherds or the innkeeper with their offerings, they still chose to give their very best gifts, not out of excess or what was left over. Though such finery would not usually be seen in Bethlehem, the Wise Men went out from the comfort of their homes to encounter the newborn King. Consider starting a coat or sock drive in your parish to give to those in need in the community. Spend time serving in the local soup kitchen or homeless shelter. Go where the giving is not glamorous.

No one of these characters is better than the other — in fact, without even one, the story of the birth of Christ would not be the same at all. In turn, we all have something to offer, a way that we can allow the Lord to enter into our lives during this season, or to bring Him to others that we encounter. However we may choose to give this season, let us give with the same generous spirit as those who welcomed the Christ Child on that first Christmas.

## *A Letter From Our Pastor*

# Stewardship Possibilities are Endless at Christmas

Dear Parishioners,

**W**hen I think of December, the first thing that comes to mind is Christmas. While that may seem to be the obvious topic, there really are a number of other possibilities. I could think of *Advent*, a season of preparation. I could think of the *Immaculate Conception*, as we celebrate God's gift to the world in Mary. I could think of *Las Posadas*, whose popularity has spread far beyond the Hispanic community. Of course, December also holds the first day of *winter*. And because December marks the end of the civil year, I might be developing my resolutions for the New Year!

But instead, I think about Christmas. It is when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Babe in the manger in Bethlehem, who is the eternal Son of God made man.

The basic truth of Christmas — celebrating the birth of Jesus the Messiah, God Incarnate — is plenty of reason for us all to rejoice and worship. But we've piled such an additional load onto our Christmas observance that worship may be lost in the shuffle.

Think about what weight Christmas has to bear. We have to put up the decorations, or make travel plans to visit relatives. There is also the Christmas dinner to plan and cook. And then, we still have Christmas presents to buy. No wonder the Christ Mass becomes an afterthought!

Yet, we still have a wonderful opportunity this season — an opportunity to combine our Christmas activities with our stewardship commitments. Treasure, although challenging, is the simplest. Shouldn't the most expensive Christmas present we give be the one to Jesus, Whose birthday we're celebrating? Risen and glorified, He needs nothing we have. But His Body, the Church, continues Jesus' mission here on earth and always needs additional resources.

Time and Talent may be a little more complicated, but can't we spend a little more of our time in worship and prayer? Maybe you can attend Mass each day of the Christmas Octave. Have your family gather for prayers together in the morning or at dinner, in preparation for

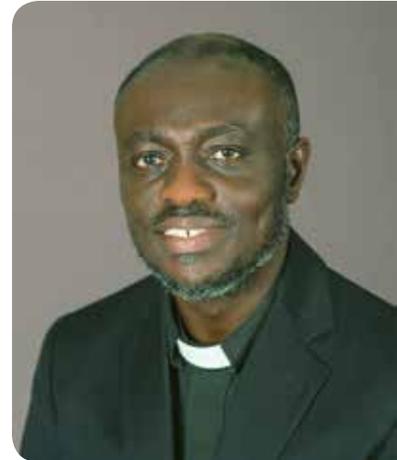
Christmas Day and through the Christmas season.

And there are so many opportunities to share our Talent! Sing in the choir for the Christmas Masses. Help decorate the Church. Cook or bake for someone who is shut-in. Invite someone who will be alone to share Christmas dinner with your family. Offer to work in a soup kitchen. The possibilities are endless.

With a little planning, we can make this hectic time one of real blessing both for ourselves and others. Pray for me that I can keep Christmas properly, and I'll pray for you. And by the way, have a merry Christmas!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Rev. Philip Brembah*  
Fr. Philip Brembah  
Pastor



## GROWING AND SERVING IN FAITH

Some people meet their spouse through friends. Some meet through work or at a social gathering. Others meet online. And then there are those who meet over a game of backyard ping-pong.

“My brother has an ego,” parishioner Joanne Hubartt says with a smile. “And because I could beat him in ping-pong, he thought I was super good!”

In fact, Joanne’s brother thought she was so good that he kept telling their new next-door neighbor — a fellow

named Mark — that she could easily beat him in a game of ping-pong.

“So I come home from work one day, and Mark’s in the backyard with the ping-pong table set up and ready to go,” she says, laughing. “Mark won!”

Today, with 45 years of marriage and three children, it would seem that game was a “win” for both of them.

Originally from Ohio, Joanne was born and raised Catholic.

“I have always been active in the Church from the time I was a very little girl,” she says. “We always went to church every Sunday and my parents scraped to put all seven of us through Catholic school.”

“When we would go to church on Sunday it was like a family reunion,” Joanne adds. “I’d see aunts and uncles and cousins and grandparents. They were all involved — readers, in the choir, on the parish council, on the school board. I always saw them serving with joy. I knew that this was not an obligation, but that these were people who truly loved the Lord and because of their love for the Lord, they served, gratefully and joyously. Without words, they showed me what it meant to be Catholic.”

Mark was quite the opposite, growing up in a family that didn’t practice any faith. However, as a child, he found himself drawn to church.

“We had a real small church in this small town I lived in and every Saturday, they’d get the kids to come to the church and have a little service and have hotdogs and Little Rascals movies,” Mark says. “From there, I started going to Sunday school.”

Mark’s family moved several times — but whatever town they went to, young Mark would always try to find a church and go to it as often as he could.

“When my parents moved to Ohio, I tried some different churches and didn’t find one I liked,” he says. “So after I met Joanne, I started going to church with her. And when my oldest son was getting ready for his First Communion, I thought, ‘It’s time for me to become Catholic.’ And I went through the RCIA program.”



*Joanne and Mark Hubartt have been active parishioners at St. Vincent de Paul for the past 40 years.*

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## H TOGETHER:

# *Meet Joanne and Mark Hubartt*

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Now, Mark serves as an acolyte at Mass.

“I’ve always wanted to do something for the Church and I chose what I could do,” Mark says. “I don’t have to get up in front of people and talk or anything.”

“I think my faith has grown since I’ve become an acolyte,” he adds. “Being an acolyte has definitely gotten me closer to God.”

Joanne has also served in a variety of ways over the 40 years that she and Mark have been parishioners at St. Vincent de Paul. From teaching faith formation, Baptism preparation classes and RCIA classes, to being involved in the Prayer Shawl Ministry, as well as serving as a lector; Joanne finds lots of ways to give back to the community.

the radio, and go to the classroom of silence. God whispers and the world is loud.”

“It’s conversation that builds intimacy, and intimacy is what builds desire,” she adds. “Prayer is our conversation with God.”

Mark and Joanne encourage other parishioners to consider finding ways to become involved in serving at the parish.

“When you serve, God reveals Himself,” Joanne says. “Get involved anywhere that you feel called or led. God never imposes His will on us. Look at the story of Moses. Before God parted the Red Sea, Moses had to get in the water. God

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*“I can tell you He’s real, and He’s there and He cares. You don’t have anything you have to prove or have anything you have to earn. You just have to let go and let Him love you. Don’t be afraid to let Someone love you. He won’t ever hurt you.”*

— Joanne Hubartt

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At the heart of the couple’s faith is an effort to continuously grow closer to God through prayer. They spend time each day, reading and reflecting on the daily Mass readings, and Joanne also participates in Bible studies at the parish.

“It has helped me grow,” Mark says. “Scripture is one of the ways God talks to me. I don’t know that my faith would be where it is if I didn’t read the daily Scripture and do daily prayer.”

“You’ve got to have a good prayer life,” Joanne says. “Take 20 minutes out of your day, turn off the TV and

asked Moses for a little thing, ‘Just get your feet wet,’ and then He parted the seas. Just put your feet in the water.”

At the end of the day, the couple hopes that their fellow parishioners come to know God’s love more fully in their lives.

“I can tell you He’s real, and He’s there and He cares,” Joanne says. “You don’t have anything you have to prove or have anything you have to earn. You just have to let go and let Him love you. Don’t be afraid to let Someone love you. He won’t ever hurt you.”



## Recognizing the Season of Advent, We Can Create Faithful and Loving Traditions

**A**s the season of Christmas approaches, it is all too easy to get swept up in the frantic commercialism that tells us that Christmas is already happening — from now up until the 25<sup>th</sup>, and not a day more. To combat this misguided understanding, and to embrace what this time of year truly means, we might consider how to enter into the sacred quiet and careful preparation of the Advent season with our families.

Starting new Advent-centered traditions within our homes is a simple way to differentiate between the two seasons and embrace the grace that comes with this season of preparation. While hanging up the stockings, consider hanging up a stocking for Jesus. Family members can place their “gifts” for Jesus there. These can be sacrifices like giving up desserts during the week or committing to doing one extra chore for another family member. Advent can be as much of a time for fasting and almsgiving as the season of Lent — after all, both seasons are preparing our hearts for a great feast of the Church.

A similar activity is to create a manger bed for Jesus. For every good deed that a family member does, have them place a little straw in a small manger in a prominent place in the house. By Christmas, there will be a fluffy bed in which the Christ Child can be placed.

If your parish has an angel tree or participates in a gift outreach, be sure that the whole family is included in the shopping by making it a family outing, or make a card for the child together. It’s easy to see those activities as a quick good deed, but anything that helps emphasize that there is another person on the receiving end helps to make the act much more meaningful.

While there are lots of activities that can help to prepare our hearts to celebrate Christmas, nothing centers us securely in this season of Advent quite like participating in the liturgy already prepared for us. As you are able, go to any penance services or live nativities, or take part in service opportunities on offer in our parish. Spend some time with your kids in the adoration chapel or in front of the Blessed Sacrament, reminding them that the Christ Who dwells there in the monstrance is the same Christ Who came to this world as a tiny baby — for it will be there in the presence of Christ that we can truly sing, with hearts ready to receive Him, “Oh come let us adore Him, oh come let us adore Him.”



# Office Angels Helping the Parish and Community in Need

**I**t may seem like a church's busiest day is Sunday, but step into the parish office and you'll quickly realize that keeping the church running smoothly is a full-time job. This is where church secretary Debbie Horn says the parish's Office Angels make all the difference.

"The Office Angels are a group of ladies and one gentleman who come in and serve in either two or three-hour shifts," Debbie says. "They answer the phone, do Mass cards, they greet and talk to people who come in. Without them, I would go nuts trying to do everything."

The parish currently has 11 ministers who assist Debbie in the daily operation of the parish office. Many times, if you call the parish, an Office Angel will answer the phone. In addition to the daily business of running the church, Debbie says they often field calls from people in need.

"We get a lot of phone calls from people who need help financially," she says. "We get calls because our church is St. Vincent de Paul and people confuse that with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, so we even get calls from out of state. We have a list of phone numbers in Ft. Worth where the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's boundaries are for them to get help. The Office Angels look the numbers up for those people and we try to steer them in the right direction."

Debbie says that's all part of the job.

"Anyone who calls or comes in the door, they're here to help," she says. "That's what the angels do."

The Angels work in three-hour shifts from 9 a.m. to noon, noon until 2 p.m. and then from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Each person covers the shifts that best fit their schedule and cover for each other during vacations or when someone needs time away.

Debbie says the Office Angels not only get the satisfaction of helping the church further its mission, but also get to be in a setting that continually encourages their faith and works of mercy.



*Parish staff and their Office Angels gathered over Thanksgiving to celebrate the season together. The Office Angels are a group of ministers who lend their time to fulfill the administrative needs of the parish office.*

*"This is doing something for God and the people who need Him. It's for the most part a very feel-good job because you are reaching out to people and helping them. It is amazing getting people the help they need."*

— Debbie Horn

"One of the ladies said she always wanted to be a secretary, and this feels like it," Debbie says. "She had always worked in childcare and said she loves to be behind the desk.

"This is doing something for God and the people who need Him," she adds. "It's for the most part a very feel-good job because you are reaching out to people and helping them. It is amazing getting people the help they need."

*Anyone who has the time and is interested in becoming an Office Angel may contact Debbie Horn at the office at [dhorn@svdpcc.org](mailto:dhorn@svdpcc.org) or 817-478-8206. "During the stewardship renewal, we advertise, but we're willing to take anyone's name and phone number and get them in to shadow and learn all about it at any time of the year," Debbie says. "I couldn't run the front office without them."*

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## MASSES

**Saturday Vigil:** 5:30 p.m.

**Sunday:** 9 a.m., 10:45 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

**Weekdays: (M/Th/Fr)** 8:45 a.m. in the chapel  
**(Wed)** 6:00 p.m. in the chapel

**Holy Days:** 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

**Tuesday Morning Prayer:** 8:45 p.m. in the chapel

**Confessions:** Saturday: 4-5 p.m. in the chapel

## Sacristans continued from front cover

Though the role of the sacristan is primarily one of hidden service, Mary has been surprised by the many blessings she has received in the process. She says that she finds tremendous joy in knowing that she is giving of her time and talent for the Lord, and in being able to serve so close to our Eucharistic Lord. Then, too, Mary has been able to form some very special friendships both with her fellow sacristans and other parishioners over the past year, making her feel even more connected to the faith community.

“It’s really a rewarding ministry,” Mary says. “It just makes you feel good inside to help other people. And this is a

really special way to serve, because you are helping prepare for the sacrifice of the Mass. I’ve also been able to meet a lot of people through this ministry, and it just makes you feel good when they recognize you and take the time to say ‘hello’ at the grocery store.”

Mary encourages parishioners to help with this important ministry.

“We would really like more people to help in this ministry,” she says. “It’s not hard at all. You just need to come and be trained, and it’s truly a very rewarding way to serve.”

*“It’s really a rewarding ministry. It just makes you feel good inside to help other people. And this is a really special way to serve, because you are helping prepare for the sacrifice of the Mass.”*

— Mary Walton

*Currently, there is a great need for additional sacristans. Sacristans must be trained Eucharistic Ministers and are scheduled at the Mass of their choice with a partner. For more information, please contact Mary Walton at 817-805-1674.*