

# SAID ED January 19, 2014

## Thanks and Remember All are Welcome

Now that Christmas Season has come to a close I want to say **THANK YOU** for the generous gifts from so many parishioners during the Advent and Christmas seasons. Some examples of this generosity:

• Your donations of food and gifts for the 483 families and 791 individuals we assisted to make their Christmas brighter are a splendid example of willingness to share your giftedness.

• The hours of extra rehearsals for all our choirs allowing us to sing our praises as a faith community to our Emmanuel, our God among us.

• The time and talent of those who lovingly prepare our worship space for the Advent and Christmas season. Believe it or not, the Christmas trees and decorations do not just drop out of the sky and the light bulbs are not magically affixed to the trees by angels.

- The many gloves, mittens and socks that our School of Religion kids brought into class to keep the fingers and toes of other children warm and dry.
- For the gathered community, the congregation's willingness to pray together and support each other during this time of joy, even when it may not be joyful for everyone.
- For the donors to the Christmas collection (**\$62,932**) which helps us whittle away at our operating budget deficit and keep us in good financial condition.

So, **THANK YOU**, for all you do to make our parish the exciting and fully alive parish it is known to be in our diocese. As a recent letter to the editor in the D & C remarked "our parish is a welcoming and caring community" (Thank you Beta!)

One parish bulletin said it well:

We extend a special welcome to those who are single, married, divorced, gay, filthy rich, dirt poor, yo no hablo inglés. We extend a special welcome to those who are crying newborns, skinny as a rail or could afford to lose a few pounds. We welcome you if you can sing like Andrea Bocelli or can't carry a note in a bucket. You're welcome here if you're "just browsing," just woke up or just got out of jail. We don't care if you're more Catholic than the Pope, or haven't been in church since little Joey's Baptism. We extend a special welcome to those who are over 60 but not grown up yet, and to teenagers who are growing up too fast. We welcome soccer moms, NASCAR dads, starving artists, tree-huggers, latte-sippers, vegans, vegetarians, junk-food eaters. We welcome those who are in recovery or still addicted. We welcome you if you're having problems or you're down in the dumps or if you don't like "organized religion," we've been there too. If you blew all your offering money at the race track or lottery, work too hard, don't work, can't spell, or because grandma is in town and wanted to go to church. We welcome those who are inked, pierced or both. We offer a special welcome to those who could use a prayer now, had religion shoved down your throat as a kid or just got lost in traffic and wound up here by mistake. We welcome tourists, seekers and doubters, bleeding hearts...**and you!**

Have a great week!

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