

# ST. GERTRUDE THE GREAT NEWSLETTER

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## FROM BISHOP DOLAN

My dear Friends,

The mystical forty days of our Christmas have come and gone, duly prepared for during a devout Advent, and fully celebrated as is our way at St. Gertrude the Great. From Matins of the Holy Night, even to the last candle of Candlemas, all was fully and reverently carried out. The sacred liturgy is our first love and last word here, anticipating as it does the eternal worship of heaven, whilst forming us for the Christian life here on earth. Some of the photos in this newsletter will share with you a bit of the glorious spirit of Our Lord's Nativity, and all of its feasts.

But as I write this little newsletter, already we are concerned with preparing for yet another forty, the holy forty day fast of Lent, which prepares us in turn for Easter, as well as eternity. Our Lent this year will be dedicated to Our Lady, for 2017 is the centennial of Our Lady's apparitions at Fatima. Some of its prophecies seem, indeed, to be fulfilled, but its promise of peace pulls us towards this missionary word from Mary, reminding us of her Rosary above all. How could we ever exhaust the Fatima message, since it is one of the Gospel itself? Pray with us this Lent, be devoted as Jesus asks, to Mary's Immaculate Heart. What treasures are there!

I should have written to you in January, for I know that not all of you have Internet access with which to follow our news, and that everybody still enjoys a good old-fashioned newsletter, with plenty of pictures. But I think I was distracted by my preparations for the annual retreat at Most Holy Trinity Seminary. This year's theme was the young Jean Marie Vianney, and his very difficult road to the priesthood. I enjoyed meeting our seminarians from many lands. Do keep them in your prayers.

Our priests continue their regular visits to many states, as well as their duties closer to home. Father McKenna was away at the missions for his fifth anniver-



*Christmas, with its rich liturgical observances, opens in earnest with a high Mass on the Vigil. Vespers follow in the afternoon and Matins just prior to the much anticipated carols and Midnight Mass. (Above) Bishop Dolan, accompanied by servers and clergy, solemnly processes through the aisles of St. Gertrude the Great Church with the Infant Jesus prior to the celebration of the First Mass of Christmas.*

sary on Our Lady of Lourdes, but we celebrated it nicely with a solemn high Mass a week later. Father reports that his mission at Grand Forks, North Dakota will be offering its first public Sunday Mass this month. Under St. Theresa's patronage they have outgrown the home chapel setting, and are ever eager to draw more souls to Christ.

Meanwhile on the home front Father Cekada has made a remarkable recovery, thanks to your many prayers and Masses. He surprises us all with his energy and enthusiasm. Prayers for the sick are a staple here, especially at our annual Lenten Sorrowful Mother Novena, with its blessing of the sick. Please feel free to send in the names of those for whom you wish us to pray as well.

May Our Lady grant you energy and enthusiasm as

you begin the great fast of Lent. Ask her help, and it will surely go as quickly and as well as our Christmas. I send a blessing,

In the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

– Most Rev. Daniel L. Dolan



*From December 24 through February 2, various feasts were solemnly observed liturgically in church, as well in socially in our parish hall, by both the clergy the lay faithful. (From the top left) Father McGuire blessed wine and other potables on the Feast of St. John the Evangelist. On Holy Innocent's Day Bishop Dolan blessed the children of our church and the customary party was held-including the giving of small gifts and stories being read by His Excellency. Epiphany was observed this year with a visit from recently ordained Father Philip Eldracher of Most Holy Trinity Seminary. (Top right) The annual Epiphany party capped off the evening as a thank-you to all of our the parishioners of St. Gertrude the Great. Pictured are both Father Cekada and Bishop Dolan enjoying the buffet. Candlemas and the Feast of Our Lady's Purification, with its blessing of candles, procession, solemn Mass, and annual Soup Supper, provided a fitting close to the Christmas season.*