Liturgical Appointments for Epiphany of the Lord
January 2/3, 2010

MINISTERS

(Follow this schedule only)

	Ministers of the Word	Ministers of Holy Communion
3:30 p.m.	Pat Hays	Teresa Allison
		Dan Allison
12:00 p.m.	John Baal	Paula Miller
		Bob Corwin
2:00 p.m.	Hispanic Mass	

MASS SCHEDULE

Sunday, December 27
12:00 noon Bernie Zoldak (Fr. Mike Paraniuk)
Monday, December 28
8:00 a.m. Jack Weinrick
(Ron & Ann Marie Gunderman)
Tuesday, December 29
8:00 a.m. Communion Service
Wednesday, December 30
12:00 p.m. Deceased Members of Spangler Family
(Spangler Family)
Thursday, December 31
8:00 a.m. Communion Service
Friday, January 1
10:30 a.m. NEW YEAR'S DAY MASS
for Charles Uhl (Don & Jane Hindes)
Saturday, January 2
3:30 p.m. Helene Klamet (Jim Klamet)
Sunday, January 3
12:00 noon John and Sissy Shayne (Shayne Family)

STEWARDSHIP NEWS

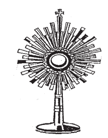
Weekly Need .... $ 2,100.00

Collection Week of December 13th
Envelopes & Loose.. $ 5,652.86
(What a big love offering!)
Variance.. +$ 3,552.86
(35☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺)

Flowers: $70.00 … Religious Retirement: $10.00 … St. Vincent de Paul: $25.00

YTD NEED .... $ 52,500.00
YTD OFFERINGS (starting 7/5/09...................... $ 52,560.95
VARIANCE.. +$ 60.95
(ONE ☺) Thank you so much for expressing your confidence in St. Benignus Church by this wonderful collection. In one weekend, we went from 35 unhappy faces to *1 smiley face*. FLOREAMUS! (May we flourish!)

Collection Counters for today:
Jerry Uhl/Bill & Jackie Soards
Collection Counters for next week: Jim & Margaret Block



BENEDICTION every Wednesday morning at 11:30 a.m.

Happy Birthday!

December 27...................... Patrick Rudisill
December 31...................... Mary Shackelford
January 3........................... JoAnne Fitchpatrick

IN OUR PARISH December 27.......... 6:45 p.m. ROSARY
January 2, 2010...... 9:00 a.m. ROSARY

Reaching out to those in need

St. Vincent de Paul Society is open for business at these times:
1st Thursday, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
3rd Thursday, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
If an emergency, call Fr. Mike at 937-403-2510.

Dates To Remember

1. **SVdP Meetings: Second Sundays, 1:00 p.m.**
2. **Parish Council Meetings: Second Tuesdays, 7:00 p.m.**
3. **St. Benignus K of C Meets at First Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.**
4. **January 6, 2010, K of C Meeting, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.**
5. **January 10, 2010, SVdP Meeting, Sunday, 1:00 p.m.**
6. **January 12, 2010, Parish Council Meeting, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.**
7. **January 19, 2010, Ladies Auxiliary Meeting, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.**

THE CHRISTMAS GIFT

The woman who slouched down in the front seat of the bus distressed me. Her hair was matted, her face dirty, and though it was a cold night outside, she was wearing only a flimsy cotton dress and a blanket through which she had torn holes for her arms.

What should I do? I wondered. She was obviously in need. And at Christmastime, too. Wasn't there some shelter I could direct her to, some place where she would get all the attention she required? No, I finally reasoned her problems were too much for me.

As I pondered – and rejected – possible solutions to the woman's plight, the bus came to a stop. A young man, poorly dressed but neat, rose to leave. He had got out and the bus started up again before I really noticed what he had done. He had slipped off his black knit gloves…and laid them on her lap.

FR. MIKE'S SERMON FOR DECEMBER 20TH

So many things are available to kids today. There are computers, iPods, cell phones, Bluetooths, CDs, DVDs, HDTVs, MP3 players, TiVo, Satellite TV, Gameboys, Play Station 3s, Xbox 360s, lap tops, the hard-to-find Wiis, remote controlled helicopters and even teenagers with their own cars (with automatic transmission). In my youth, many of these things weren't even thought of yet. Our TV was a black and white Sylvania "Halo tube" with a 17-inch screen that could pick up three whole stations. We had an old black bakelite GE table radio that could only tune to AM stations and it sat on top of the fridge. Our computer was a piece of 8 x 11 yellow paper with blue lines and a #2 lead pencil. The only satellite we knew was called "Sputnik" from Russia that sent the U.S. into a panic. Our "Play Station" was a baseball field. As a kid, I grew up in a government subsidized housing project called "Anthony Wayne Terrace." Anthony Wayne was the Cedar Woods of Hillsboro. As I look back at my childhood years, my family was dirt poor, but we kids didn't know it. Mom made all types of tasty food from the "gubment cheese" that came in green boxes and it looked like Velveeta. Now I know why mom was standing in line out on the sidewalk. I thought she was just talking to the neighbors. They sure seemed to have fun while waiting for their handout. Mom kept our small two-bedroom apartment spotlessly clean. The Fuller Brush man and sweeper salesmen always loved to visit mom. (It seemed so big as a child, but when I went to visit apartment #20 about 20 years ago, I was amazed that four people could live in such a small place). Mom sewed most of the clothing for me and my brother Danny. Dad worked hard as a draftsman, making $2.00 dollars an hour. With overtime, he brought home about $100.00 a week. He drew everything by hand, using straight rulers and compasses. What took him days to draw, a computer can now do the same work in minutes. Dad drove an old 1951 Pontiac "Chieftain," with the face of Indian Chief Pontiac sculptured in plastic and placed right on the car hood where it glowed when the head lights were on. Can you believe this car was painted orange? Fun on a Friday night was to pack the whole family into that car and visit my Uncle John. Hey, it was free! My brother and I always looked forward to Sunday afternoon after church when dad would bring home our treat for the week – one gallon of vanilla ice cream with Planters peanuts and Hershey's chocolate. It was a poor man's "Sundae," because we couldn't afford the whipped cream. The family would sit around the TV and watch "The Original Amateur Hour" with Ted Mack. We lived a simple life, owning little and not able to do much, but we were happy together.

Christmas was a hard time on my parents, because we had just enough money to live hand to mouth. Dad really had to work his butt off in overtime to help Santa get us the toys we wanted. When mom asked what I wanted for Christmas, I would pull out the Sears Roebuck catalogue and show her – page by page! She would hug me and say, "well, let's see what Santa can bring," but her heart must of sank with the reality that dad could help Santa only very little. I will never forget Christmas 1956 when I was just five. The country was going through a recession under President Eisenhower. All I can remember is my dad telling mom he wouldn't be working much. As a five-year-old I didn't understand why that was a bad thing. Daddy would be home more and that made me happy. The reality of it came crashing down when dad sat Danny and I down to talk about Christmas that year. He explained that Santa had only a few toys to give away. He had to get the best toys to the sick children first and, after that, the rest of the children in the world would get their toys. He said it was important that we sacrifice some of our gifts for the sick children around the world. (Even then, the seed was planted in me of the special dignity of sick children that culminated in my work at Children's Hospital 28 years later.) Dad explained the situation so well that I remember not feeling sad because I could help a child in need somewhere in the world. This became my first lesson in "giving" and "thinking about others instead of just me."

Christmas morning that year was just as magical and exciting as ever. I ran down the steps and first checked out the table set up for Santa with cookies and milk. Yep, he drank the whole glass and ate every cookie! It didn't take very long to open presents because there weren't many. Yet, I felt OK because I was helping another child who needed presents more than me. Then Dad started to play Christmas records on a small portable record player as we ate breakfast. All I can remember is eating a lot of instant Royal (in the red box) butterscotch pudding that mom put in glass cups. It was my favorite flavor.

What happened next has been seared in my mind forever – an act of love and kindness that I will never forget. I believe it was early afternoon when there was a knock on the door. Sam Shimrack entered. He was a friend of my father who worked at the local Pennsylvania Railroad Yard. His appearance hasn't changed at all over the years – bald, short, stout and an Old Italian stogy hanging out of one side of his mouth. I remember Sam saying that Danny and I have been good kids this year and Santa had some "extra toys" left over just for us. My eyes opened wide in amazement as he brought in box after box that when piled high stood taller than me. I remember my brother getting a real "pro" leather basketball instead of a fake one. I got a toy that only the rich kids could afford – a remote controlled motorized car! (Well, the car and remote were attached by an electric cord but I didn't care.) I played with that car the entire Christmas Day. I remember, before leaving, Sam told us to be good to mom and dad all the time. We nodded our heads in approval. Sam hugged my father and left. My dad was rubbing his eyes. When I asked him why, he just said they were itchy. Sam never told my father where or how he obtained all those gifts that cost a fortune. Years later I jokingly asked Sam, who was a boxcar inspector for the Pennsylvania Railroad, where he got all those wonderful gifts for me and Danny when we were kids. He grinned this Cheshire cat-like smile, puffed on his stogy, and said, "You'll just have to ask Santa." I wisely never pursued the matter again.

Christmas 1956 taught me a valuable lesson. The satisfaction that comes from sacrifice and the joy that comes from making others happy. Christmas joy is founded on the belief that our God loves us. He loves us so much that He chose to become one of us by giving us the best Gift He has to offer – JESUS. Lewis Redner and Phillip Brooks understood well Christmas joy. They gave us the Christmas song, *"O Little Town of Bethlehem,"* inspired by Brooks as he journeyed by horseback from Jerusalem to Bethlehem where he assisted with the midnight service on Christmas Eve, 1865. Redner was Brooks' organist at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. He wrote the score on Christmas Eve. Verse four and five sum up the Christmas Joy of a believer:

Where children pure and happy pray to the blessed Child,
Where misery cries out to Thee, Son of the mother mild;
Where charity stands watching and faith holds wide the door,
The dark night wakes, the glory breaks,
and Christmas comes once more.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

Merry Christmas to all and to all a good life! Blessings…Fr. Mike