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Dear Parishioners;

So, no Christmas and no New Years. I don't mind missing New Years. New Years is for amateur drinkers. My Papa used to like sleeping through New Years and so do I. People who usually know "when to say when" keep drinking till midnight and then it is a fight to keep them off you. But no Christmas, that is hard to take.

Last week I mentioned Guardian Angels so I thought I would tell you this story. A while back, something bad didn't happen to me and I was very, very grateful that my Guardian Angel was looking out for me. We all have an Angel assigned to us to watch out for us, as we hear Jesus say in Matthew 18:10 "Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven". But we mostly go through life unaware of their care and concern.

So after my near miss, I sat right down and I asked the Holy Spirit; "How can I thank my Guardian Angel?" This is why I say that we should engage the Holy Spirit and be very specific with our prayers and our questions so that when the Spirit answers us, we will be encouraged that little old us matters to the Holy Spirit.

The fact is, I really wasn't expecting a direct answer to my question and certainly not as quick as the one that came to me. Clear as a bell, I heard this answer; "Help another person's Guardian Angel." Meaning, when we are faced with an opportunity to help someone, we should assume that their Guardian Angel has brought them to us on purpose, and so we should do what we can to not disappoint the Angels that watch out for us.

Well, that is what this Pandemic is all about. And sure, everything that we are being asked to do benefits us, but at the very same time what sacrifices we make; to wear a mask, to keep our distance and to forgo our High Holy Days, is a positive act that we undertake for someone else's good and safety.

My heart goes out to Dr. Bonnie. This is not the news that she wanted to give to us. But we need to keep in mind that the Pandemic has been a grievous disruption to every major religion. And so we should be careful not to be so self-centred that we cry for ourselves when it really is just our turn to make a significant sacrifice in the service of the Common Good.

My suggestion is that we focus on the Vaccine and count our blessings because we all can look just a short ways down the road and make plans for a new normal. For instance, families can plan to celebrate a Christmas in July, and that is a miracle worthy of our deep gratitude, that as hard as the Pandemic has been for a lot of us, there is light on the horizon. And that light can be our Star of Bethlehem if we keep the safety of others, and especially our seniors, as the focus of our Christmas preparations.

Now, we are told that we can still visit the church if we do so within our bubbles and keep to the Ministry of Health guidelines. Well, some real good news for the parish is that the new Stained Glass window of St. Theresa has been installed and it is beautiful, so this is what we are going to do.

Kate and I will decorate the church for Christmas, we will place the Blessed Sacrament in the Monstrance on the altar, we will put out the Creche and we will gently play Christmas carols through the sound system, and we will put a schedule together so that bubbles can book a thirty minute visit to the church so that you can make a special Advent/Christmas visit to the Manger. More information will be provided as we progress.

Now I know that this isn't the same as Christmas mass, but if you don't think that the Holy Family will bless you for your efforts to connect with your faith, then you're as nutty as a Christmas cake. And if you like, you can write a note to God saying how you would like God to use the blessing you will receive, and on Christmas I will shred and then burn the notes as a sign of our prayers rising to God.

The following is a prayer asking for our Guardian Angel's help;

*Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here, ever this day and ever this night be at my side, to light, to guard, to rule and guide. Amen.*

May God be gracious to us and bless us, now and forever.

Pat Monette/Pastor