

*THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
DECEMBER 25, 2012*

CHURCH OF Saint Bartholomew

15 PALMER ROAD
YONKERS, NY 10701

Parish Website: www.saintbartsparish.org

Our Mission Statement: *We, the members of St. Bartholomew's Parish, will strive to work for a vibrant and loving Eucharistic community. In the spirit of Christ, we commit ourselves to the service of humanity – in our parish, neighborhood, archdiocese and the universal Church. We will strive to enrich our community spiritually, pastorally and socially, and to be a family of worship and prayer for all.*



REJOICE AND BE GLAD, CHRIST IS BORN FOR US!

LET US REJOICE!

(Is. 62:1-5; Ps. 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25) (Matt. 1:1-25; Is. 9:1-6; Ps. 96:1-3, 11-13; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14) [Is. 52:7-10; Ps. 98: 1-6; Heb. 1:1-6; John 1:1-18]

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad tidings, announcing peace, bearings good news...” A Savior is born to us! Surely, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone.” Indeed, a light has come to shine upon us who have been hit hard by the tough economic times. His light has come to shine upon those who mourn and are in pain because of the loss of their loved one. “For the Lord comforts His people, He redeems Jerusalem!” He redeems you and me from our slavery to sin. He redeems you and me from fear and anxiety. He lets His light shine upon us and lightens our burden.

At Christmas, God becomes man so that as man He may understand our pains and feel with us. Therefore, come let us adore Him! Let us on this Christmas day celebrate with joy the Word of God, which has taken human flesh and lives among us. Let us celebrate Christ Who is born so that we might have life, and have it in its fullness. The Lord knows how much we need Him in this desperate and tough time. He is aware of our yearnings. He comes to identify with us. “In times past, He spoke to our ancestors through prophets but in our days, He speaks to us through His only Son,” Who has come to live amongst us! In other words, God, in His Son, Jesus Christ, has taken human flesh and lived amongst us so that He might recreate us. God, at Christmas comes to live within and around us. Come let us adore Him!

Come let us adore Him, Jesus Christ, Who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God, but rather emptied Himself and took on human form (Phil. 2:6-7). Jesus humbled himself so that we may have light. Thus, at Christmas, the Mother Church proclaims the words of Isaiah: “The people who walked in darkness, have seen a great light.” The Incarnation of God has turned the night of our darkness, our incomprehensible night, into Christmas. The terrible night of our anxiety and helplessness is now “a holy night.” Christmas has brought abundant joy and great rejoicing to us all. Christmas has smashed the yoke that weigh us down. In our gloom and doom, a light has shone. God has returned! Let us rejoice!

At Christmas, the Word made flesh teaches us humility. He teaches you and me, “With God nothing is impossible.” He teaches us that, like Mary, we should have faith and depend solely on God’s love. He will never disappoint those who put their trust in Him. Like Mary, His demands to you may seem outrageous. The long wait for its fulfillment might be frustrating. But, like her, you have to trust and say “Yes” always to God’s will. He will never let you down!

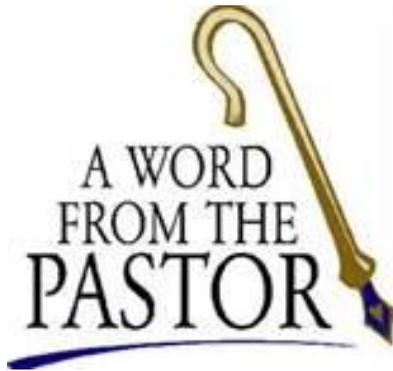
Surely, times are tough, things are hard, but the Lord exhorts you: “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy...” Rejoice, because you have Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior. Rejoice, for He has come to set you free. Rejoice, because He, the Lord has pitched His tent in you. Rejoice! Jesus, our Christmas is here! Emmanuel, God is indeed with us!

May the birth of Christ this Christmas day replace our nights of anxiety with days of comfort!

Fr. Anthony Ita Bassey, MSP

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FATHER ANTHONY'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE



A LETTER TO MY BELOVED PARISHIONERS

My dear brothers and sisters:

Merry Christmas to you and your loved ones! Since Christmas fell on Sunday last year, I missed writing my annual "Love Letter" to you my beloved parishioners. The year has gone so fast and we are celebrating another Christmas.

As a parish community we have come to the end of yet another exciting year. We are in the second year since the closure of our parish elementary school, and so far things are looking good. Although we miss the presence of a school within the parish - we miss the school children and families, it has not been as bad as the pundits predicted. It's different - it's not the same, but the Lord has been very good in keeping us together. We are good at moving on with our life especially in the midst of challenges and that's what we are doing now.

As I celebrate my 8th Christmas with you, my beloved parishioners, I reserve special thanks to God Almighty Who spares our lives and gives us the grace to celebrate another Christmas as a parish family. I am most thankful to Him for the grace of Ordination and for the special privilege He has granted me to serve as your pastor in the past seven years. I am

grateful to God for the many good things He has done for me personally and for our parish. I thank Him for the gift of all of you to this parish and to our community. You are all in my thoughts everyday that I pray to Him Who created and cares for us. You have been a wonderful family to me and to one another, and I am very proud of you. I boast about you to my brother priests and to my biological family whenever I have the opportunity to do so. Sincerely speaking, I am very proud to be your brother, friend and pastor.

As we come the end of another year, although I count the blessings the Lord has bestowed on us as a parish, it broke my heart when I had to say good bye to some of the parishioners who moved away from the parish for one reason or the other. My heart reaches out to some of our parish children who have had to suffer the pain of separation due to the divorce of their parents. I pray for those parents that God's love will continue to spur them to unity for the well being of their children, and for the mutual love for one another. I also think of those families who have been hit hard because of the bad economy. My heart goes out to those members who in the past year were diagnosed or have reoccurrence of cancer or other ailments. I pray for God's healing upon them and upon all the sick members of our parish family. I continue to bring them and their intentions to the Lord's Table whenever the Holy Mass is offered.

My heart goes out to all of you who may have lost a loved one in recent past. I pray God to strengthen your faith to know that your loved ones are in eternity with God, their Creator. As you all struggle with your losses, I pray for God's consolation and fortitude. I want you all to never forget that our God is a God of love and mercy. Like Mary and Joseph, even when we are faced with overwhelming challenges, may we never flag in faith nor fail to trust in His will and say "yes" to Him in our many and varied trials. As we think of the dead, I remember in a special way those twenty innocent children and six adults who were killed in Sandy Hook Elementary School, Newtown, Connecticut on Friday, December 14, 2012. I pray God to grant them eternal rest in His Kingdom, and to give enduring comfort and solace to their families and friends.

As we come to the end of the year, it is fitting that I offer special thanks to groups and individuals who have helped me in my pastoral and

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administrative work here in the parish. I am grateful to Cheryl Duda for the marvelous work she is doing as the Coordinator of our Parish Religious Education Program. Her selfless service and dedication to duty has borne fruits, as the annual enrollment has been on the increase in the past five years. Her commitment and love for the parish is very much admired and appreciated. In addition, my heartfelt gratitude goes to all our dedicated catechists, aides and volunteers. I pray God to bless and reward you for your dedication and devotion to your beloved parish.

I am thankful for the members of the Parish Pastoral Council and its active Committees (Liturgy, Social, Youth and Vocation); the Finance / Management Committee; and the Parish Trustees who contributed their time and energy to making my job as a pastor much easier throughout the year. My heartfelt gratitude goes to Bill Mascetta who helped in repairing the cracks in our parking lot. I say “thank you” to members of the Rosary Altar and Holy Name Societies for the positive contribution you make to the material and spiritual growth of our parish. Your presence has always been a testimony to our witness to the Gospel of Christ. May God bless you in all the good works you are doing. As you all know, for the most part of this year, I have been the only priest serving the parish, thus, I am grateful to Father Michael Connolly, OFM Cap, who had been a very willing helper at most of the Sunday Masses.

Thank you to all those who are serving the parish in various ministries – Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Lectors, Altar Servers, Ushers, Folk Group, Adult Choir, Teen/Young Adult Choir and Children’s Choir. I am proud to have the privilege of working with all of you. I sincerely thank you for your sacrifices and commitment to our parish. Thank you also to our music director, Erika Podoprigora. I am grateful to Gerry Monahan for volunteering to cantor at the 5 p.m. Saturday Mass. I reserve my special thanks to Nadine Greco, Bernadette Bauer and Richard Novak for their selfless services to singing the 8:30 a.m. Mass. My gratitude also goes to Andy Maniglia for his commitment and availability whenever needed to play the Masses.

Thank you to our very own Deacon Bob Clemens over the years, for always willingly helped in arranging and preparing for most of the important liturgies. I am grateful for all that you do for the parish. I use this opportunity to welcome Karen McKenna who teamed up with Loreen Ryan as administrative staff after the retirement of Carrie D'Angelo at the end of last year. My gratitude also goes to our devoted housekeeper, Emily. I reserve a special gratitude to our volunteer counting ladies, and to our dedicated food pantry coordinator, Richard Scardino. Thank you for the services you continue to render in the name of the parish. I also like to use this opportunity to welcome John McKenna and thank him for the janitorial work he is doing for the parish. Thank you to Carrie for continuing to donate her time on Friday mornings.

Whenever I reflect on what we have achieved thus far, I cannot help, but thank God for your faith and love for your beloved parish of St. Bartholomew. I am very thankful to those generous parishioners, who, during the year, have responded positively, and have donated, generously toward my "**Wish Lists**" and bought liturgical items for use in our church. I truly admire you and I am very proud of you as individuals and as a group. I LOVE YOU ALL! I thank you for the trust you place in me. Thank you also for your tolerance, patience, understanding, goodwill and prayers. Your receptiveness and graciousness have been a great source of encouragement and strength for me. Thank you for your benevolence and cooperation – your words of comfort and compliments; and for your constructive criticisms and useful advices. Your strong faith, your smiles and laughter have always lifted my spirit when I am down. Your support and cooperation have always been a source of strength to help build our parish into a family of love and unity.

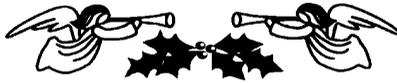
In conclusion, I thank you very much for the monetary and material gifts many of you have donated to me especially during this Christmas season. I will be ever grateful to all of you.

I heartily wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas, and a blessed, happy, peaceful and healthy New Year in 2013.

Sincerely Yours in Christ and Mary,

Rev. Anthony Ita Bassey, MSP

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**May the Newborn King, Jesus Christ
Bless You and Your Loved Ones
During This Christmas Season
And Throughout the Coming Year!**

- Best wishes from the Pastor and Staff

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SUNDAY MASSES (December 30th)

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

- Saturday, Dec. 29 5 p.m. (Anticipated Mass)
- Sunday, Dec. 30 8:30 a.m., 10 a.m., 11:30 p.m. & 5 p.m.

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NEW YEAR'S DAY Masses

January 1st - Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

What a wonderful way for you and your family to begin the New Year!

- Monday, Dec. 31 5 p.m. (Vigil Mass)
- Tuesday, Jan. 1 8:30 a.m., 10:00 a.m. and 11:30 p.m.



*If you look for me at Christmas
You won't need a special star –
I am no longer just in Bethlehem,
I am right there where you are.
You may not be aware of Me
Amidst celebrations –
You'll have to look beyond stars,
And the stores,
And all the decorations.
If you take a moment
From the list of things to do
And listen to your heart, you'll find,
I'm waiting there for you.
You're the one I want to be with,
You're the reason that I came,
And you'll find Me in the stillness
As I am whispering your name.*

*Love,
Jesus*

