



### **Christmas Visits to Homebound Parishioners**

*St. Gregory Parish, Upper St. Clair, PA*

Somewhere in between the shopping, the baking, putting up the decorations, gift wrapping, party-planning, party-going, Christmas card writing, attending Advent moleben services, going to work, and maintaining the status quo on the home front.....we make some time to visit those in our parish who are homebound and cannot do any of the things we do to prepare for Christmas. Wouldn't you miss some of the hustle and bustle? Being with family and friends? Praying with your parish family in your beautiful church?



In a small way, in Bethany Ministry we bring the church to our friends. Even with only nine homebound parishioners, these gift baskets and visits take advance planning and a lot of cooperation by Bethany Ministry members. But it is so worth it.

Our baskets of Christmas cheer contain a collection of little things: a Christmas card, 2014 church calendar, pocket calendar from the GCU, pen and note pad, small bag of hard candy, a few chocolates, some cookies, a Nativity icon prayer card, a small hand-crafted three-bar cross, candy canes, a small poinsettia, and for the ladies a pair of Christmas socks. A phone call to say, “Can I stop by to see you this afternoon.....I have a little something for you from all of us at church.....” is warmly and enthusiastically welcomed. Step up on the porch to find the front door open, and the cold air coming through the glass storm door doesn't seem to matter. Walk in with a little gift and you hear.....”For me? Isn't that nice!.....Oh my, I don't have anything for you.....look at all this!....this is so nice of everybody.....it's so nice to see a familiar face.....tell everybody I wish them a Merry Christmas and thank them for this.....put it over on that table where I can see it and I'll open the card and everything later.....maybe I can put the poinsettia out in the hallway like the other people on this floor do.....I'm going to have a cookie as soon as you leave!.....be careful driving home.....thanks again.....make sure you tell everyone Thank You!”



***“The quality of mercy is not strained, it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath; it is twice blessed; it blesseth him that gives and him that takes...We do pray for mercy, and that same prayer doth teach us all to render the deeds of Mercy.” William Shakespeare***

## Newest Bethany Ministry

- **St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in Weirton, WV** recently initiated a Bethany Ministry which is being coordinated by Barbara Fischer, RN.
- Barbara (on the far right) completed a four-day course “Foundations of Faith Community Nursing”, conducted by the Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program, Part of Pittsburgh Mercy Health System.
- Barbara is pictured with nurses from various denominations in the tri-state area following their commissioning service in the Mercy Hospital chapel on October 12, 2013.



Newly commissioned faith community nurses join ranks of 14,000 worldwide.

### St. Elias Parish in Munhall, PA – Bethany Ministry Workshop Series

**Dr. Becky Johnen** continues her health and wellness classes on the third Sunday of the month in the church social hall following the 9:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy. Everyone is welcome to attend.

January 19 – Eating Right in the New Year

February 16 – The Wit & Wisdom of St. Francis de Sales

March 16 – Exercise Your Sense of Humor

April 6 – Facing the Sunshine and Avoiding the Shadows: Strategies to Stay Sane and Positive Amidst Change

**Congratulations to Dr. Becky Johnen on her book, *Facing the Sunshine and Avoiding the Shadows*, recently published by Inspiring Voices, a service of Guideposts. The book provides a roadmap of 16 strategies for developing skills to cope with and respond to the changes and transitions in our lives. The book is available at [www.inspiringvoices.com](http://www.inspiringvoices.com) and [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).**

**Did you know.....** A candy cane is more meaningful than just a sweet at Christmas. It helps us to think about Jesus.



- Its shape is like a shepherd’s staff.
- Wide red stripes remind us of the blood of Jesus, who died for our sins.
- White stripes are for purity, for by his death and blood we were made pure.
- Peppermint flavor is similar to hyssop, used in Biblical times for purification (Ps. 51:7).

Turn a candy cane upside down – the letter “J” stands for Jesus.

Tie candy canes on your Christmas tree.....

some right side up and some upside down as a letter “J” for Jesus.





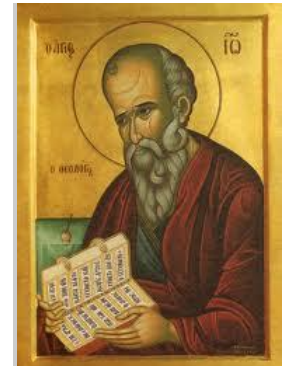
### The New Year's Resolution of Saint Gemma

On New Year's Eve, 1895-1896 Gemma writes:

*"During this new year I resolve to begin a new life. I do not know what will happen to me during this year. But I abandon myself entirely to you, my God. And my aspirations and all my affections will be for You. I feel so weak, dear Jesus, but with Your help I hope and resolve to live a different life, that is, a life closer to You."*

### St. John Chrysostom: A Homily for the New Year

"Whether you eat, whether you drink, whether you do some other thing, do all for the glory of God." [55] If we pray, if we fast, if we accuse, if we pardon, if we praise, if we censure, if we enter, if we exit, if we sell, if we buy, if we are silent, if we converse, if we do anything else whatsoever, let us do all for the glory of God, and if something be not for the glory of God, neither let it be done, nor be spoken by us; but in place of a great staff, in place of arms and safeguard, in place of unspeakable treasures, wherever we might be, let us carry around this word with us, having inscribed it upon our understanding, so that doing and speaking and trafficking all things for the glory of God, we shall obtain the glory that is from him both in this world and after the journey here [56]. "For those that glorified me", he says, "I will glorify" [57]. Not therefore with words, but also through deeds let us glorify him continually with Christ our God, because all glory befits him, honour and worship, now and always unto the ages of ages. Amen.



THOUGH NO ONE  
CAN GO BACK AND  
MAKE A BRAND NEW  
START  
ANYONE  
CAN START FROM NOW  
AND MAKE A BRAND NEW  
ENDING  
CARL BARD

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## To the Nurses in the Archeparchy

### Parish Nurse Course – Winter 2014 Session – “Foundations of Faith Community Nursing”

Conducted by Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program, Part of Pittsburgh Mercy Health System

**February 28 & March 1 and March 28 & 29**

16 modules include: history and philosophy of parish nursing; prayer; self care; healing and wholeness; ethics; documenting practice; legal aspects; communication and collaboration; family violence; suffering, grief, and loss; advocacy; care coordination; community resources; advocacy; assessment; and beginning a ministry. Course modules are taught by certified faith community nurse educators and subject matter experts in the respective fields of practice.

- ◆ Class size is limited to 20 participants
- ◆ Location: UPMC Mercy, Uptown
- ◆ Cost: \$395 for the four-day course
- ◆ 34 CEUs for RNs
- ◆ Limited partial scholarships available

For more information, <http://www.pmhs.org/parish-nurse-program/education-and-resources.aspx>

or contact Dorothy Mayernik at [dmayernik@pmhs.org](mailto:dmayernik@pmhs.org)

Visit our Bethany Ministry web page

<http://www.archpitt.org/ministries/bethan>

### Contact Us

#### **Dorothy Mayernik , RN, MSN**

Help with coordinating a parish Bethany Ministry  
Health care information, referrals, information about community resources  
[dorothymayernik@comcast.net](mailto:dorothymayernik@comcast.net) 412-310-0521



#### **Br. Tom Somerfeld, BHS**

Pastoral care and counseling  
[BrTom1@yahoo.com](mailto:BrTom1@yahoo.com) 724-208-6323



#### **Jennifer Kehm**

Cancer support for individuals and families  
Help with coordinating a parish Bethany Ministry  
[nkehm@aol.com](mailto:nkehm@aol.com) 412-389-0488



#### **Becky Johnen, Ed D, Educator**

Health and wellness presentations  
Help with coordinating a parish Bethany Ministry  
[palfys@verizon.net](mailto:palfys@verizon.net)



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Wishing you a Blessed Christmas

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!