

Christmas FEATURE

Catholic Courier + Catholic Charities

Our Christmas Appeal series of
Advent reflections continues ...

Christmas Appeal



Week IV
**The Word
was made flesh**

The days of our Advent waiting are almost complete.

The Gospel account of Mary's visitation to her cousin, Elizabeth, is the announcement of God's new and gracious act of salvation soon to come (Luke 1:39-45).

In Elizabeth and Zechariah we see representatives of the old Israel, about to be transformed in the fulfilled Scriptures. Obedient to the Law, these are the faithful and patient people who have waited in prayerful trust for the salvation promised by God.

And now, fulfillment of that promise is close at hand.

The angel's announcement is filled with jubilation and reflects the religious joy in the experience of God's saving action.

Mary's role in our salvation is defined by her obedience, faith and cooperation with God's will. God will do amazing things in our lives, too, if, like Mary, we trust that His promise to us will be fulfilled.

What seemingly impossible things would we pray for God to transform in our lives and in our world? How does

**Diocesan
Catholic Charities
agencies promise
and deliver
life-support
services.**

God want to enter our world today through us? Are we as alert as Elizabeth to the presence of God among us?

Consider these words by Mother Teresa:

"If sometimes our poor people have had to die of starvation, it is not because God didn't care for them, but because you and I did not give, were not instruments of love in the hands of God, to give them that bread, to give them that clothing; because we did not recognize Christ, when once more Christ came in distressing disguise."

A family Advent activity:

Don't jam too much into Dec. 24-25. The Twelve Days of Christmas come after Christmas Day. (Actually, there are more days of Christmas time in January than in December.) So plan to invite guests throughout the season. A guest in the home is Christ in the home. Out of respect for His presence, consider unplugging the TV and other "electronic distractions."

Small donations enable hands of Christ

In a Pax Christi booklet titled "The Birthing of Justice: Advent 1988," theologian Dr. Doris K. Donnelly reflects: "... we celebrate the fruit of our 'yes' on Christmas, too. Every member of the Christian assembly has heard that, as surely as Mary experienced child-bearing, so we experience Christ-bearing. Christ forms in us mystically as he formed in Mary physically. Our hands become Christ's hands, our feet become Christ's feet, our actions become linked with the acts of Christ."

We have the opportunity to bring Christ into the world to others through charity and service. Sometimes bringing Christ's love to someone in difficult circumstances has a relatively small price tag.

For example:

♦ \$20 will put basic phone service in the apartment of a young mother with an at-risk infant.

♦ \$7 will cover the cost of copies of a birth certificate and other documents needed by a job applicant.

♦ \$10 can put shoes on a child whose feet are growing so fast that the grandmother raising him can't keep up on her fixed income.

♦ \$40 can keep the electricity on in a low-income household that is coping with the death of its only wage earner.

♦ \$21 will cover the co-payment on prescriptions needed by a rural widow.

♦ \$15 will buy thrift-store shades for an elderly woman whose downtown apartment windows are without any curtains or drapes.

♦ \$5 will allow an abandoned woman to purchase feminine products not covered by food stamps.

♦ \$25 brings a musical teddy bear and a smile to a frail 5-year-old child dying from AIDS.

♦ \$45 can help a young man who is willing to work but needs a driver's license to travel to a job not located on any bus routes.

♦ \$10 will pay for an antibiotic to treat an uninsured child's ear infection.

♦ \$75 helps an impoverished family avoid eviction.

♦ \$100 leverages \$1,500 more in a roof-repair grant for a disabled man's home.

♦ \$2 worth of postage allows a young father enrolled in a drug-treatment program to send his family a handmade Christmas present.

What is the Christmas Appeal?

It is a cooperative effort of the *Catholic Courier* and diocesan Catholic Charities to raise funds that will help people in desperate financial crises.

For 24 years, the appeal has enabled the Catholic community to help thousands of people in 12 counties to meet life's basic needs. Christmas Appeal funds have been there for them when no other sources of aid were available.

Who benefits from it?

Funding from the Christmas Appeal helps individuals and families in short-term financial crises. These are people

who have no financial resources and are either awaiting or ineligible for assistance through other sources.

How does it work?

The appeal consists of a series of articles in the *Catholic Courier* and a direct-mail solicitation of past and potential donors. Appeal proceeds are allocated to the emergency funds of the following diocesan agencies: Catholic Family Center, Finger Lakes Social Ministry, Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier, Catholic Charities Livingston County outreach, Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation, and diocesan Urban Services.

Please use my donation to help a neighbor in need.

This gift is in honor/memory of (circle one):

Name: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mail check (payable to "Christmas Appeal") and this coupon to: **Christmas Appeal, c/o Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, New York 14624**

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