

Christmas Treasures

So Loved

My best Christmas to date occurred two years ago in a city of strangers during a time of tribulation.

My wife and I were staying with my daughter and her family at the Ronald McDonald House in Baltimore while we waited for her son, Ben, to recover from a bone marrow transplant to combat his leukemia. His twin brother, Jeremiah, was also recovering; He had been his brother's donor.

Christmas Eve, a party at the House was hosted by a Jewish doctor dressed as Santa Claus. Christmas Day, a family of local volunteers served breakfast to all of us. We attended Mass at the hospital amidst a congregation of petitioners praying for their loved ones. Ben's mother, Margaret, was joined by her sisters and their families who had given up Christmas at home to be with her.

Jubilant, the day after Ben's operation, I could not contain my exuberance within the confines of the hospital. I decided to walk down to the renovated harbor section of the city.



Greg Francis/Staff Photographer

The morning was cold but sunny and I found both the briskness and the sunshine refreshing.

Totally wrapped up in the enjoyment of the moment,

I was taken aback when I reached into my pocket for random coins for a beggar, and he said, "I don't want your change. What I'd really like is some breakfast, a cup of coffee, some of those Harbor Fries."

As I hurried on, he added, "I haven't eaten since noon yesterday."

"The nerve of some people," I grumbled as I left the chilly outdoors for the food fragrant warmth of the mall, and then, I was surprised by a sudden change of heart.

"If he wants breakfast, he'll get breakfast!"

Minutes later I was marching back to my bold beggar with a steaming cup of coffee in one hand and a huge cup of fries in the other. He didn't see me return until I had knelt beside him and put down the two cups.


"There you go sir," I said.

His eyes teared over as he gazed upon the breakfast he had asked for but didn't expect to get.

"Jesus, man," he blurted, "thank you so much," unconsciously echoing my sentiments that morning.

Throughout the ordeal of Ben's illness and operation, our family's burden had been eased by the spontaneous kindness of strangers. Surrounded by God's love, to know it is there, we need only be aware.

-Joseph DeRoller, Rochester



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MIDNIGHT MASS

SAINT ANNE CHURCH
1600 Mt. Hope Avenue
Rochester, New York

11:30 Choir & Organ Carols
12:00 AM Solemn Mass at Midnight

Choral Music of Hassler: *Missa Secunda* (Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei); Gregorian Chant *Credo III*; Victoria, *O Magnum Mysterium*; Kreckel: *Under the Stars*; Holst: *In the Bleak Midwinter*; Chant: *A Child is Born in Bethelhem, Of the Father's Love Begotten*; Adam: *O Holy Night*; and more.

Organ Music of D'Aquin: *2 Noels*; Bach: *Rejoice Ye Beloved Christians, In Dulci Jubilo*; Demessieux: *Adeste Fideles*.

Brink Bush, Organist/Choir Director

Colleen Liggett, Cantor