

BULLETIN -- DECEMBER 20

Confession opportunities. Priests will be available for confessions here at SS. Peter & Paul at the following hours this week:

Tues., Dec. 22	3-5 p.m.
Wed., Dec. 23	7-9 p.m.
Thurs., Dec. 24	9-11 a.m.

Thank you to all who have given so generously to our Giving Tree during this Advent season. The children and their families who are benefiting from your kindness are thrilled that someone remembered them in their need. And a **thank you** to those who have provided eyeglasses and socks for our prisoners around the Diocese. They, too, often wonder if they are forgotten or if anyone cares. Blessings on you and yours!

The world summit on climate change has come to an end after eleven whole days and nights of deliberations. This solemn conference brought together in Paris an assembly of world leaders the likes of which has never met in one place before. The President of the U.S., the prime minister of the U.S.S.R. -- oops, I mean *Russia*, he only *wants* to restore the U.S.S.R. -- well, you get the picture. There they all were, having sent tons of new pollutants into the atmosphere by all flying to France from the far corners of the globe, in order to bash the U.S. and celebrate their new climate change religion. Did these people never hear of conferencing on the Internet? That would have been totally "green," and would at least have served as a testimony to their sincerity about keeping carbon emissions under control. But make no mistake about it, for many of the participants and their enthusiastic adherents, this conference has been the equivalent of an ecumenical council, replacing religion based on divine revelation with the new revelation that WE are the only ones responsible, the earth is OURS, and WE are the only ones who can fix it. And, of course, since they don't believe in divine creativity and grace and our call to exercise *stewardship* over creation at God's direction, this will all require new taxes. LOTS of new taxes. And we -- oops, excuse us -- YOU will have to pay them.

Apparently it was important to have all the world leaders physically present in order to have them try to outdo each other in bowing and scraping before their United Nations masters. In this new world order of global warming or climate change or whatever they have decided to call it this week, there can be no dissent. After all, the world leaders have had to vow to return to their homelands to bilk their subjects to pay for, well, more summits! It's almost humorous to think that most of the participants would no doubt ridicule the Vatican for being doctrinaire.

The Vatican, in the person of Pope Francis, is in fact dealing with some criticism for seemingly going along with this politically-driven agenda. However, as I wrote in this column some months ago when the Pope's encyclical *Laudato si* was published, I really have no argument with his teaching. *We are* in partnership with God our Creator, who has called us to be stewards of this good earth. Let's face it, in many ways we have acted irresponsibly. Some of those things you and I can control personally, others we have to attempt to influence through the power of our vote. The Church's moral teaching is usually presented in broad, general terms in order to provide guidance in as many

individual situations as possible. If the shoe fits, wear it. I feel like handing out copies of the encyclical whenever I have to go out into the streets around the parish property to pick up the fast-food packaging that thoughtless patrons toss out their car windows. It's easy to get angry and point fingers at strip miners and oil-rig barons; but it all starts with the mentality that "The world is my wastebasket," which allows us to trash our neighborhoods and countryside with our own self-generated refuse.

I choose not to go around angry at others, but to simply do what I can do in a positive manner to decrease my so-called carbon footprint. And I didn't need a climate change summit to tell me that. I do it because I love God the Creator and his magnificent creation, and I want to show that love by being careful with what he has shared with us.

Nuts and Volts. The 2011 Chevy Volt battery pack weighs 435 pounds and, when fully charged, will run the car an average of 50 miles. Because of new and improved chemistry, the 2016 Chevy Volt battery pack weighs only about 335 pounds, and will run the car 60 (yes, 6-0!!) miles. Considering that digital technology has made it possible to store the entire Library of Congress in less space than a cigar box, isn't it odd that no one has figured out a way to power a small car with a battery that weighs less than 335 pounds? At any rate, it would be interesting to have a coast-to-coast race from New York to Los Angeles, with a Chevy Volt and a horse and rider competing against each other. Regardless of who won, though, the Volt would no doubt be declared triumphant due to the smaller volume of emissions. However, it must be taken into consideration that the emissions of the horse might just be the equivalent of what brought the Chevy Volt into being in the first place.

Anyone interested in serving as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion must first be approved by the pastor and then receive training approved by the Diocese of Grand Rapids. Candidates must be confirmed Catholics living a life in accord with Christ's call to holiness. Practically speaking, that means (among other things) that a married candidate must be in a marriage recognized by the Church; and that an unmarried candidate must not be cohabiting as if married, or involved in an habitually unchaste relationship. Other qualities are left to the judgment and discretion of the pastor. Please call the pastor (454-6025) to arrange a brief interview; and once approved, call the Diocese of Grand Rapids (243-0491) to find out the schedule for training. We are in need of parishioners who can both assist in church and bring Communion to the homebound.

We can tell that you're being prudent about budgeting for your Christmas shopping. Our November CSA rebate was only \$948.00, a fraction of what the monthly rebates have generally been. But you are to be applauded for your faithfulness to your pledges. We have exceeded our target by nearly \$25,000, thanks to your generosity, and those funds have gone to help us with our parish expenses and apostolates. Keep up the good work, but watch those Christmas credit card charges! God bless you.

Fr. Den

Thought for the week: “Any one thinking of the Holy Child as born in December would mean by it exactly what we mean by it; that Christ is not merely a summer sun of the prosperous but a winter fire for the unfortunate” (Gilbert Keith Chesterton, 1879-1935, British Catholic author, in *The New Jerusalem*, chapter 5).