



## HAPPY NEW YEAR

January 1, 2012

Dear Sisters & Brothers in Christ,

As I look back on our 13 years as a parish, I marvel at how good God has been to us, and with his help, how much has been accomplished.

This year we baptized 67 children and 13 adults into the family of God and received 14 people into full Communion in the Catholic Faith. We celebrated 37 of our childrens' First Holy Communion and were proud to see 43 of our young parishioners receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. We joyfully celebrated the weddings of 17 couples and sadly, but lovingly, commended the souls of 12 beloved parishioners to our Heavenly Father.

In keeping with our tradition, we again held the blessing of the animals on the Sunday closest to the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. It was again a celebration befitting the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare, and yes, the pets that bring us so much joy all year round, were surprisingly well behaved and joined enthusiastically in the singing of "All Creatures of Our God and King". The response to the pet food appeal was tremendous and a truck load of food and pet items was given to the Coquitlam Animal Shelter along with a cheque for repairs. We even received a letter from Coquitlam Mayor Richard Stewart expressing gratitude for our support of the Shelter.

We have tried to keep fund raising events to a minimum so as not to overburden you. Our main fundraiser, Project Advance, again received tremendous support as pledges reached approximately \$200,000 from 45% of our parishioners. (Final numbers for 2011 are not yet available.) I am grateful for your spirit of generosity and commitment that will allow us to build St. Clare of Assisi Church in the near future.

As part of our overall plan for the new church we purchased a house on Delahaye Drive last year and just this week we successfully paid off that mortgage. The house, which is rented out, will eventually serve as a temporary rectory and office when construction begins on the church. The rents from this house and from the Good Shepherd Daycare that operates in our basement will be added to our Building Fund.

It is the spirit of stewardship that has existed since its beginning, and grown with each passing year that has enabled St. Clare's to prosper and build for the future. Your faithfulness and generosity to the weekly Sunday Collection has also enabled us to maintain the upkeep of our growing community.

St. Clare's Lavender, our own cottage industry, continues to prosper and sales this year were \$1,156. This is a project St. Clare would have loved since one of her favorite past times was tending the little flower and herb garden in the convent of San Damiano.

Your loving generosity has once again presented itself this Christmas Season. This year's Advent tree was truly a miracle of love. In total we received nearly 1.100 gifts plus food items. We were able to help the following groups from the Advent tree: Luke 15 House – Talitha Koum – CABA (Coquitlam Alternative Basic Education, which helps teen school dropouts get an education) -- TPP (Coquitlam Teen Parenting Program)– Dufferin Seniors Home, some Downtown Eastside families through Sacred Heart Parish and our own Poor Clares. We also helped women & children in need through 3 Women's Transition Centres (Mission, Bountiful and Eve's House), plus 10 local families who directly received gifts and food hampers. Also, six families were sponsored by individual families, groups and businesses. All of this in spite of a global economic crisis. I have been asked to pass on to you their deepest gratitude.

The continued efforts and the dedication of our Knights of Columbus is becoming more and more obvious. This year they hosted our 4th Annual Canada Day Barbecue, the golf tournament and our Lobster Feast, and they helped out in countless ways around the parish as their membership grew to 85 men.

Our CWL also continues to flourish. With 129 members, these women generously give of their time, talent and treasures to build up our parish community. A Strawberry Tea and providing refreshments for the Sacrament of the Sick, near Easter, are two examples of the good work they do throughout the year. Our ladies truly reflect the CWL motto, "For God and Country".

Of course we never forget our hidden parishioners tucked in a little valley in Mission, our Poor Clare Sisters. They have been active members of our parish through their prayers from the beginning. Their prayers and love are like sunshine that warms the soil of our parish.

Did you know that it takes the commitment to stewardship of more than 100 volunteers - lectors, sacristans, greeters, eucharistic ministers, musicians, flower arrangers, altar servers, collection counters, children's liturgy and ushers – to make our weekend masses the joyful celebrations that they are?

Visitors to St. Clare's parish often comment on the special spirit they find when they come here. I truly believe that what they experience is the spirit of Jesus and our patroness St. Clare in you, my dear parishioners. Many of you give so much of your time, talent and treasures; it would be impossible to thank you individually, so I will leave that up to God who can reward you from the infinite well of His kindness.

I would like to thank everyone who helped make our Christmas celebrations so beautiful and meaningful. And on a personal note I would like to thank you for your beautiful Christmas cards and generous gifts; I am truly blessed and humbled. -----  
THANK YOU!!!!

I wish you and yours a New Year filled with God's Love.  
Thank you for being St. Clare of Assisi Parish.



**Message from your Parish Secretary:** Thank you to Fr. Scott, St. Clare's organizations, committees and individual parishioners who all make my job both interesting and very rewarding. It is a real pleasure working with all of you. I very much appreciate the 'spirit' at St. Clare's where almost everything is possible because willing hands are always ready to help. Thanks again to everyone for your patience, your many kindnesses, and your support. May God bless each and every one of you  
....Heather McCristall