

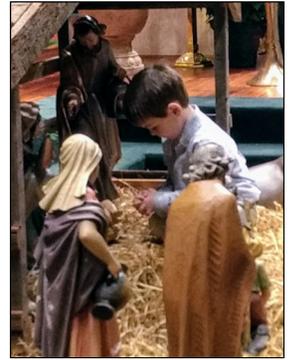
# A "Few" Words from Fr. Robert



January 6, 2019

## Beautiful Christmas

I have to say that the friars' first Christmas in Columbus was beautiful. The Masses were well attended and prayerful. The church decorations were very well done. The warmth and best wishes that the parish shared with us was very touching. After all was said and done, the friars all gathered together for a Christmas meal (cooked by Fr. Mark) and some peaceful time together, just like any family. On Wednesday, several of the friars went home to see their families and friends, and Fr. Mark and I held down the fort. It was so relaxing and peaceful. I was touched by how many people gave us Christmas treats. At one point our whole kitchen counter was filled with them! There were also a fair number of bottles under our Christmas tree. I tried to keep track of everything, but we received so much so fast that some of the cards fell off the gifts. If you don't receive a thank you note it certainly doesn't mean that we're not grateful. Things simply got confused with so many gifts appearing at once. Thank you, thank you, thank you for your kindness and such a warm and welcoming first Columbus Christmas.



## Fr. Mark

Before Christmas we learned that one of the Religion teachers in our high school decided to move on. Our Theology classes in the high school are a core part of the Catholic mission of our beautiful school. Ronie Collins and I put our heads together and decided to ask Fr. Mark if he would be willing to step in and teach some of those Religion classes. When he said yes, we received permission from Fr. James McCurry, our Provincial, to make this change to our commitment here at St. Anne's "ad experimentum." Some of you might not know this, but Fr. Mark has taught in one of our high schools for over 35 years. He is an expert teacher with loads of experience. I am so grateful to him for his willingness to serve our young people. I am also grateful to Fr. Manny who agreed to assume some of Fr. Mark's parish commitments with me so Fr. Mark can dedicate himself to his classes. Fr. Mark has spent much of this Christmas break preparing his lessons. Rest assured from day one Fr. Mark's students will be immersed in both the teachings of the Church and the study of scriptures. They will be very fortunate, indeed.

## Our Brother Postulants Visiting

Our postulants, young men who have just joined our community, will be visiting the parish this week. Many of the friars in our province are anxious to hear about what's going on here at our three parishes in Columbus. They will be visiting from the 9th to the 12th of January. During that time they will visit our school, give some time in the Outreach Center, visit both St. Benedict the Moor and Our Lady of Lourdes, and get to know all three of our ministries in Columbus. They will also share community meals and prayers with us. The friars always say "Ecce quam bonum...." Oh, how good and pleasant it is, when brothers live together in unity! If you see our younger brothers, I know you will make them feel welcome.

## Our Little Ones

Just a reminder that the Nursery will only be available during our Sunday 10:30 a.m. Mass from now on. It became clear after studying the sign-in sheets that the Nursery was simply not used or needed during the other Sunday Masses. Thanks for your understanding and please plan accordingly.

## I Apologize

A couple of you remarked to me that the church, especially between the pews, had not been cleaned for a while and you were right. Sadly, the Jan Pro franchise which used to clean both our school and church had to be terminated. The new franchise was not notified that they had to clean the church when school was out of session. Hence, we had a very dirty church. I will continue to monitor the new cleaning crew and see how they do. If you notice anything that is not being cleaned, please bring it to my attention. I am so very grateful to the people who stepped up on their own and cleaned the church before weekend Masses last week. I know you spent almost the entire morning cleaning up that straw. Your reward will be great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Dear St. Anne's Parish Family,

My introductions have been both warm and welcoming. I'd like to begin by saying thanks to those of you whom I have already met. You have already made me feel at home and I am most grateful. Sr. Faith and I have traded places between Savannah and Columbus. She is dearly missed by those of you who grew to know and love her. I can't even begin to fill her shoes or walk in her footsteps. I, however, am looking forward to walking beside you in ministry and parish life in the days ahead.

Friar Robert asked for a brief biography so here it is. I entered the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas at the age of 48 while working on my second master's degree in Social Work at the University of Southern Mississippi and working full time as a foster care social worker. Prior to studying Social Work, I earned a masters in theology at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, Maryland and served side-by-side as a lay associate with the Sisters of Mercy in Atlanta for 17 years as a parish youth minister. After a wonderful journey of working with teenagers in both religious education and youth ministry and then finding new roads in social work, I made my first vows of entrance into the Mercy community in 2001. This deepening relationship with the Lord and a broader understanding of the life of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy led me to make final vows in 2006. It was during this time that I became a licensed clinical social worker and was able to be of service in the healthcare ministries of the Sisters of Mercy. In addition, I had the opportunity to work with our sisters in Jamaica and with the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Administration. My most recent ministry was in mission services with our Mercy hospital in Savannah, St. Joseph's/Candler. Also, I am still healing from a recent left knee replacement because my knee cap shattered while I was doing physical therapy. So, you might catch me continuing my physical therapy by slowly working the back steps at church on my way to the chapel or on a machine at Planet Fitness!



Looking back, my walk in Mercy began as a child in Connecticut where my three older brothers and I attended St. Mary's elementary school, which was run by the Sisters of Mercy. My three brothers now live with their families in Virginia and California. Friar Robert struck a cord during one of his homilies when he said he only knew that his German ancestors crossed a river from Canada to Buffalo, New York. We think our family is of Austrian decent. They too came across water and entered through Ellis Island.

In conclusion, I hope to begin to get to know the parish and the community of Columbus by helping in Outreach. I am simply here to be of service. There is no doubt that in time God will direct the special path where I can be of most service. Sr. Pat and Sr. Margaret are amazing role models and guides in Mercy. I would be most grateful for your prayers as I venture forth with you in ministry. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide and inspire us in the days ahead as we continue to grow together in loving service as a parish family.

Peace and in mercy,  
Sister Mary-Anne Plaskon, RSM