



THE WEARY WORLD

rejoices

FOR YONDER BREAKS

A *new* AND *glorious*
MORN

MAY THIS CHRISTMAS BRING YOU
BLESSINGS BEYOND MEASURE.

*May the Lord bless you abundantly
in 2023.*

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Jr. Boh



CHRISTMAS 2022

"There is a better thing than the observance of Christmas day, that is keeping Christmas. Are you willing to close your book of complaints against the management of the universe and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness? Are you willing to make a grave for your ugly thoughts and a garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open? Are you willing to do these things for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

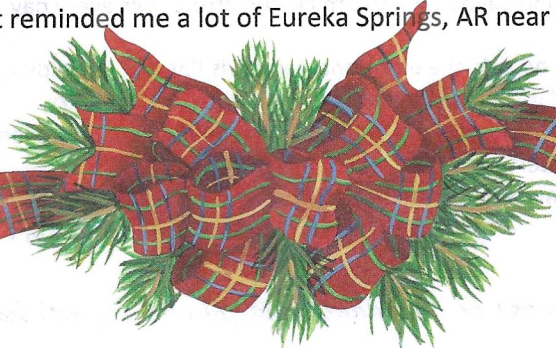
"Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world – stronger than evil, stronger than death – and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love? Then you can keep Christmas. And if you keep it for a day, why not always?"

Henry van Dyke (1852 – 1933) American author, educator, diplomat, and clergyman.

Another year has passed, and all of us have spent much of this year readjusting after the previous two years of Covid. For my part, I am still trying to adjust to the idea of being retired. I have put my administrative responsibilities behind me, but I continue to be busy celebrating Masses and hearing confessions. I have served in St. Michael's (Aurora), St. James, Blessed Sacrament, Presentation of Our Lady, St. Francis of Assisi (Longmont), Pax Christi (Highlands Ranch), St. Thomas More (Centennial), St. Vincent de Paul, Christ the King (Denver), Queen of Peace (Aurora), St. John's (Johnstown), St. Augustine's (Brighton) and Machebeuf High School. I'm sure I have missed a few parishes, and I have truly appreciated the opportunity to share my ministry with thousands of people all over the diocese. But I also need to be aware that I don't have the same energy I did 25 years ago, so I have made a decision to limit my outside activity this next year. That way I can be more available to visit with people, do spiritual direction (I do this in person and by zoom), and, who knows, maybe even sleep in some day. And I still need to get to my painting, book reading and book writing.

F.Y.I. MOMENT: I discovered some interesting facts about priests this year. Not all of them spent the majority of their time behind the altar and in the confessional, The following five Catholic priests did more than serve in parish ministry. Nicolaus Copernicus (1473 – 1543) was an astronomer. Dom Pérignon, 1638–1715 is commonly recognized for perfecting the process of making and bottling champagne. Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741) was the great Baroque composer. Gregor Mendel (1822 – 1884) was the discoverer of genetics. And Georges Lemaitre (1894 - 1966) is regarded as the father of the big bang theory. I'm sure that there are hundreds of priests who are notable in many different ways.

Covid-19 pretty much put a halt to my travels. The last major trip I took was in 2019 when I did a retreat in Jacksonville, FL. I retired in July 2020, and for the past two years, traveling and visiting have been pretty minimal. But things opened up this year. In July I went Stillwater, MN to celebrate a wedding. The groom and his family have been good friends of mine for many years. Stillwater sits on the St. Croix river, and across the river is the state of Wisconsin. It's a pretty little town with lots of hills and Victorian houses, and it reminded me a lot of Eureka Springs, AR near where my sister Mary had lived.



In October I traveled to Vacaville, CA to spend time with my son Darin and my grandchildren (Danielle (16) and Elijah (15)). The last time I saw them in person was five years ago, and at that time I was a head taller than Elijah. Now he's a head taller than me. Both are doing well in high school. After I was home for a week, I flew to Phoenix to do the final funeral rites for my uncle Gene Puetz. I stayed with my niece and her family, and the service brought me together with many of my cousins whom I hadn't seen in over 50 years. Funny enough, we still looked a bit like we did 50 years ago.

I was in Phoenix for six days. I was home for a week and then went on a week-long priests' retreat in Sedalia, CO. After the retreat, I was home for a week and then was off to Arlington, VA to spend Thanksgiving with my son Steven and my granddaughter Evelyn who is now five years old. She is in kindergarten at St. Anthony of Padua school. The day after I arrived, I went to grandparents' day at the school which started with Mass at 8:30. To my surprise, Evelyn was singing the Mass responses well - in English, Greek and Latin. Evelyn was on Thanksgiving break for several days while I was there which gave me a lot of special time with her. But as importantly, I had the time to simply relax with quiet time for myself.

F.Y.I. MOMENT If you ever get bored, you might consider taking up the Rubic's Cube again. The cube can be twisted and turned into 43,252,003,274,489,856,000 (forty three quintillion) configurations in the attempt to line up one solid color on all sides.

This year has been marked with the deaths of several close friends, and I realize I am still doing some grieving. After almost 53 years of doing funerals and assuring people of the eternal glory which will be ours as we walk with the Lord, I am very much aware of the human side of grieving. Perhaps this has helped me to be a better wounded healer. I am reminded of my need to remain very positive in living and proclaiming my faith. As someone said to me once: "There are two kinds of Christians: those who complain because God put thorns on the roses, and those who praise Him for putting roses among the thorns."

My health is pretty good. I have some balance problems for which I occasionally use a cane or staff. I am fully vaccinated including the flu. My sister Mary, who lives about seven minutes away from me, is doing well. She, too, keeps busy with activities and involvements at University Park Brookside apartments. We get together most Sundays and sometimes during the week. I love to get together with people for lunch or dinner (**CELL: 720-891-5968**), (**E-MAIL: frbobamundsen@msn.com**). My address is on the envelope.

I'd like to end with a poem which I have come to appreciate.

The great affair, the love affair with life,
is to live as variously as possible,
to groom one's curiosity like a high-spirited thoroughbred,
climb aboard, and gallop over the thick, sun-struck hills every day.

Where there is no risk, the emotional terrain is flat and unyielding,
and, despite all its dimensions, valleys, pinnacles, and detours,
life will seem to have none of its magnificent geography, only a length.
It began in mystery, and it will end in mystery,
but what a savage and beautiful country lies in between.

—Diane Ackerman, *A Natural History of the Senses*

May God's blessings be yours in abundance and fill each day with beauty and wonderful surprises.