

July 2009

My Dear People,

July 25, affectionately known as Christmas in July, is coming. The secular world reminds us we have five shopping months until Christmas. The Church reminds us we have five months to prepare for the celebration of the rebirth of our Savior.

I ponder angels.

Without angels, the first Christmas would have been a very puzzling series of events.

Without an angel, Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, would have become pregnant but maybe with no explanation and no information as to the name and special mission of her special child.

Without an angel, our Blessed Mother Mary may never have known how she was pregnant. The angel told her that her son was the Son of God.

Without an angel, Joseph might never have married Mary. He may have, as we hear in the Bible, “divorced her quietly.”

It was in the message of an angel that our Blessed Mother knew the name of her child. What if she named Him Shealtiel or Mathat? Whoever heard of a Savior named Shealtiel? And without an angel Mary might not have known her Son was to be the Savior.

Without angels, even if Mary had gone to Bethlehem, there may have been no shepherds visiting the Christ Child. No one may have known that the Infant was also “Christ the Lord.” We might have had no “Joy,” no “Peace,” no “Good News!” These words, after all, were given by the mouths of angels.

And Mary and Joseph may have stayed in Egypt; without an angel, who would have told them to go back to the land of Israel?

Without angels Christmas may never have happened.

Our patron, St. Raphael, is an Archangel. This pastor is so grateful. We need an Archangel.

We need many angels, archangels, too!

Fr. Bill Finch had a dream for St. Raphael's. Fr. Bill envisioned a building where 225 children receive an outstanding Catholic education and their faith is strengthened. He saw a building available to the groups at St. Raphael's to support their work in our lives and the life of the Church including ministering to those in material and spiritual need in our community. He saw the building as an opportunity to share Christ's message of love and hope with others.

To keep Fr. Bill Finch's dream alive and build the school by August 2010 we need \$5,000,000. And the Archdiocese of Washington has promised to help us by granting us a loan for \$2.5 million. And, if by September 1, 2009 we raise \$500,000 cash, the Archdiocese will loan us another \$500,000 and give us permission to begin construction. Only if we raise \$500,000 by September 1, 2009 can we break ground and begin construction.

In summary, and to the point, I am asking at least 2,000 contributors to donate \$2,500 as soon as possible to help us realize the dream of Fr. Bill Finch and complete the plan on time. The Archdiocese can only give us permission for Whiting Turner Construction to begin during August and September this year if we have raised \$500,000 new dollars.

Please, be an angel. Help us at this moment in salvation history.

I so believe in the quality of this endeavor that, thanks to the generosity of my former parishioners, \$2,500 from their generosity to me as I left Our Lady of Lourdes will "kick off" this Angel Campaign.

Please be an angel, and make your check payable to St. Raphael Church with Angel Fund on the notation line. Our wonderful principal, Teri Dwyer, and I, and our school children, and their families are extremely grateful to you. We will keep you updated.

God bless you and yours,

Fr. James P. Meyers
Pastor