



# The Father McKenna

## C E N T E R • I N C



## Slow Miracles . . . Making a Difference

December 2020 Issue

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[www.fathermckennacenter.org](http://www.fathermckennacenter.org)  
CFC Charity # 32524

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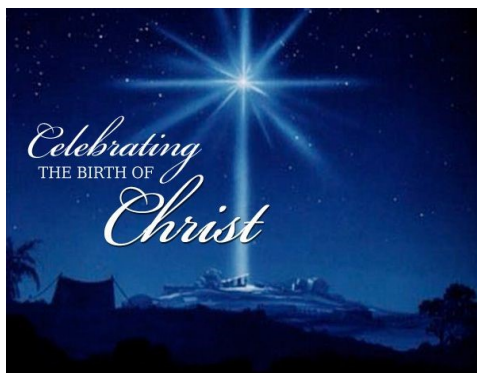


The Father McKenna  
C E N T E R • I N C

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## A Christmas Like No Other!



Christmas is a time of family traditions around Church services, special meals and time together.

But Christmas 2020 is not likely to be like any Christmas before, because of the challenges of coronavirus and the pandemic.

For our brothers and sisters who are homeless, Christmas is often just another day - a day without adequate

shelter, a day to scramble for a meal, a day when casual labor is not needed. For families living on the margins of society it is often a day that reminds them of what they do not have.

The Father McKenna Center will be open for the men in our Day Program for breakfast and Midday Meal - we want to offer a warm place to stay for the day, and a couple of delicious scratch-cooked meals!

This year it will likely be very different for all of us. Where do you usually spend Christmas? With whom? Will you be there this year? Will people be missing because of travel concerns?

In this very different of years we want to wish you a blessed and hopeful Christmas, even if you can't be with family and loved ones as you would hope.

And when we return to something more like it used to be, let's give thanks for the graces and blessings that got us through this time!

## An FMC Holiday Tradition

### Lessons & Carols

Monday, December 21, 2020

7:00 PM

On Facebook Live

[www.facebook.com/fathermckennacenter](http://www.facebook.com/fathermckennacenter)



Featuring men from The  
Father McKenna Center programs,  
accompanied by Rawn Harbor,  
under the direction of Rev. Philip Ganir, SJ

## Volunteer Spotlight

# Devin Hannon



"I was looking for a way to keep me engaged. I wanted to give back, and my family has been connected to The Father McKenna Center for many years." Devin Hannon, a regular volunteer, reflected on his experience at the Center.

Devin is a 2105 graduate of Gonzaga College High School and a 2019 graduate of Villanova University. He is applying to medical schools and is living at home. So he has some free time, and has chosen to offer 4-5 hours per day twice a week to the Center!

Devin's mother, Christine, has been a regular volunteer at the Center, assisting in the Food Pantry, for four years, so volunteering at the Center was a natural outlet for Devin. "My parents have taught me and my three siblings that it is important to give of yourself, and I came to the Center when I was at Gonzaga. I find that I am getting as much out of it as I give!"

Nayeli Garcia, the Center's Volunteer Coordinator, offered, "Devin is so easy to work with. He's willing to do anything we ask, and he does it really well!"

## Engaging and Empowering

# Getting out the Vote!

April Cooke, the Jesuit Volunteer working at the Center this year, has spearheaded the Center's effort to get the men to exercise their right to vote.

"I learned that many of the men believed that they could not vote, because they were homeless. I was saddened by this misconception," she reflected

April led an effort to register the men to vote. She assisted about 35-40 men to complete the registration, and she checked that they are all duly registered to vote.

Some voted by absentee ballot, others waited to exercise their right on November 3, but on Thursday, October 29 April led a group of 20 men (pictured below) to one of DC's early voting locations that was convenient to The Father McKenna Center so they could vote in-person.

"It's not just about voting - we want the men to know that they are empowered and have to exercise the right to vote as a sign of their participating in the life of the community," April remarked.



## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Walk4McKenna Report



More than 500 walkers in 23 states and in Afghanistan walked on September 19. We had folks share photos overlooking downtown Pittsburgh, lower Manhattan and all around the DMV.

The Center raised \$35,000 for programming here at the Center!

Thanks to Gonzaga for partnering with us!

## Father McKenna Center Wish List

The Father McKenna Center relies on the generous support of the community.

For more information, please visit our website:

[www.fathermckennacenter.org](http://www.fathermckennacenter.org)

### Food Items

- Canned Baked Beans (18 oz. or smaller)
- Maple Syrup (16 oz. or smaller)
- Canned Chicken or Tuna (12 oz or smaller)
- Jelly (in plastic containers)

To make a donation, please call FMC (202-842-1112) to alert us that you are coming. We will assist you to bring your contribution into the Center.

### Clothing

Our need is for men's casual clothing.

With cooler weather upon us, we need:

- Sweatshirts / Sweaters
- Winter Coats
- Socks (particularly white)

If you have suits and sports coats to donate, please call Strive DC at 202-484-1264



# Thanksgiving Turkey Basket Distribution: *A Sliver of 'Normal!'*



Each Thanksgiving The Father McKenna Center Food Pantry offers to the participants in the pantry a thanksgiving basket - a turkey and all the fixin's. For many years there have been about 240 families that have counted on us for a Thanksgiving meal.

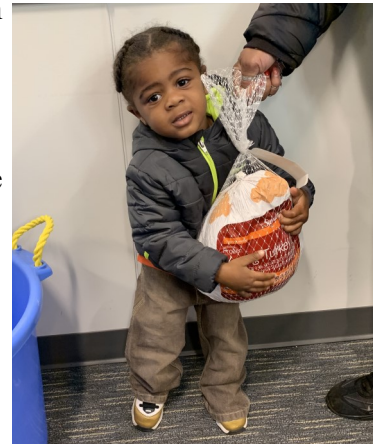
We have been blessed to have several key partners to help us collect the needed food. Holy Trinity Parish has provided 150 + bags of food and the turkeys to accompany them. In 2020 the parish set a new goal of 200 bags and turkeys, and they "delivered!" St. Bernadette School in Silver Spring collected 70 bags and 69 turkeys for us. The students enjoy helping load the food onto the Center's van each year! Connelly

School of the Holy Child in Potomac pitched in with 135 bags and arranged a donation of 50 turkeys.

On the Monday before Thanksgiving we distribute the turkeys beginning at 8:00 am. Thankfully, we have Board Members and other friends who come to the Center to help us give out the Thanksgiving Baskets.

The picture of the Meeting Room full of the bags and turkeys was from this year, and the adorable picture of a young boy proudly holding his turkey was captured last year!

The families are very appreciative, and we are very grateful to Holy Trinity, St. Bernadette and Holy Child for making this annual event happen, especially in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.



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## Winter Coat Distribution

With the coming of cooler weather we are all pulling out warmer coats. If you are like me, that means going to the front hall closet and dusting off last winter's coat. Or it may mean a trip to a clothing outlet (online or in person) to purchase a new coat because last year's has worn thin or is out of fashion.

For people who struggle with homelessness, it means trying to find out which organizations are distributing winter coats, because they have no front hall closet or the resources to purchase a new coat.

Through many caring donors The Father McKenna Center is able to share with the men we serve warm coats, hats, gloves, scarves, thermal underwear, and warm sweaters and sweatshirts.

Like all programs at the Center, we offer the men



the opportunity to select what they want from our stock of clothing. Each man is welcome to sign up for the coat distribution and each is called in turn to work with our volunteers and staff to choose a coat, hat, gloves and other items. The Center tries to delay the distribution day until the last warm days have passed, because the reality is that if it is too warm, the men will remove the warm clothing and because it is often too bulky to carry, they will leave it behind. And then need a 2nd coat, hat, and so forth

Throughout the colder weather we are always willing to accept a contribution of a gently worn coat that may be sitting in your closet. You can stop by 900 North Capitol Street Monday to Friday between 8:00 and 9:30 am or again from 1:00 to 2:00 pm to drop off a coat!



*From the desk of*

## ***Kimberly Cox, FMC President***

In so many ways, this year has turned us upside down. Nothing is as expected. So my thoughts turn to the first Christmas. For Mary and Joseph the birth of their son was a day like no other, nothing went as expected. They were celebrating the birth of their first child alone and away from family – not able to rely on the support and rituals surrounding a child's birth. No mother to calm her, no sister to hold her hand, no midwife to coach her. No, this was not what they expected.

Like many of us feeling separated from our loved ones in this pandemic, they were lonely and possibly afraid. And yet they found grace in the moment; they made it their own.

I learned something really important from my friend Rod when his beloved father passed away. Rod told me that his father's passing left a great hole in his life and yet he found grace. It left space for God's love to pour in.

It feels like there are many holes in our lives right now. Perhaps this is an opportunity to let more of God's love pour in. Instead of rushing to parties or preparing for guests, we can prepare our hearts for the birth of the son of God. Instead of rushing off to stores to get more stuff, perhaps we can appreciate and treasure what we have.

Yes, this is a Christmas like no other. And like the first Christmas, which had so many unexpected moments, let us find joy, new life and share in the gift offered by the Archangels, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace to those on whom his favor rests." (Lk 2:14)

I would like to close by sharing the prayer that we offer at the beginning of our celebration of Lessons & Carols each year.

If, as with Herod,  
we fill our lives with things,  
and again with things;  
if we consider ourselves so important  
that we must fill every  
moment of our lives with action,  
when will we have the time to make the long,  
slow journey across the burning desert as did the Magi?  
Or sit and watch the stars as did the shepherds?  
Or brood over the coming of the child as did Mary?

For each of us  
there is a desert to travel,  
a star to discover  
and a being within ourselves to bring to life.

*Author Unknown*

Wishing you all the Blessings and Joys of Christmas!

## **God's Goodness Pouring Out**

*Christmas celebrates  
God's choice to pour out  
God's self into a human be-  
ing.*

*Christmas 2020 is a time  
to celebrate God's pouring  
out goodness into our world.*

*In the midst of the Pan-  
demic and political division  
in our nation, we are all  
called to wonder where  
God's goodness is pouring  
out.*



*Here at The Father McKenna Center we see  
God's visit to us in the men and families we  
serve. We see God's goodness pouring out in the  
volunteers who come to serve with us. We see  
God's goodness in the hundreds of donors who  
have stepped up to help us navigate this unique  
time.*

*It is our prayer for you that you may find  
God's goodness in your life every day!*

*At Christmas, may you be consoled by God's  
outpouring of grace and peace!*

***The Father McKenna Center Team***