

And here we are, the last newsletter of this year. I think most of us wonder, "Where did the year go?" When we are in the middle of a hot and muggy August day, we are not thinking about December 1, being right around the corner. But here we are and in the blink of an eye, we are in the thick of Christmas shopping, family gatherings and school Christmas plays.

Our two sons, Jon (J.D.) 22 and Samuel 18, have birthdays in December, exactly seven days apart. J.D. was supposed to be a Valentine's baby but God had a different plan and he arrived eight weeks early.

I have always overly obsessed with keeping Christmas out of their actual birthdays. I would protest if ANYONE plugged in the Christmas tree on December 8 or 15. I am even so bold as to make it known that birthday gifts that arrived in either red or green wrap will be given the stink eye from me. I have been determined that JD and Samuel's birthdays will FEEL like a birthday and NOT like a day squeezed into Christmas time.

If I know someone has a December birthday, I interview them and see if it ruined their childhood. I do this mainly, to relieve my guilt. Every year as we round Thanksgiving weekend, I begin to prepare for the battle in my head of birthday versus Christmas.

Fast forward to this past weekend.

It was so good to have Samuel home from college. I made sure to have plenty of good coffee on hand because he is my only coffee drinker at home. On Thursday morning I noticed he was sitting on the couch with a cup of coffee in hand. I did a double take, he was holding a Christmas mug full of piping hot coffee. I wish you all could have seen the slightly perplexed look on my face but I went about my business setting the table for Thanksgiving morning breakfast. Friday late morning, when he finally decided to get out of bed, I breezed through the living room and there he sat, looking at his phone, with another Christmas mug full of piping hot coffee. I think I raised one eyebrow. Saturday morning . . . You guessed it. Piping hot . . . Christmas mug. So on Sunday morning, I got up made my cup of coffee and pulled one of the Christmas mugs out of the dishwasher and put it beside the coffee pot.

As we shared a few minutes together while having a second cup of coffee, I confessed my obsession of keeping Christmas out of his birthday. He laughed and said, "Mom, I love Christmas and wish it could be all year long." He showed me the Christmas play list on his phone and apparently he listens to it through out the year!

As for JD, he told me he didn't care, because it means double the gifts!

Why is it, that all those years I worked so hard to control what was not mine to control. I'm pretty sure God just patiently waited for me to realize, HIS timing and season was perfectly planned for me, before I even knew there was a plan. I wasted so much time trying to plan it and control it instead of just enjoying HIS plan. I think this season of birthdays I need to remember to thank God for his perfect plan in my imperfect life.

By the way, guess who enjoyed putting the Christmas tree up Thanksgiving weekend listening to the Christmas playlist on his phone?

Local Administrators - Retrain in 2018

As a Diocese, we are committed every five years to retrain all employees and volunteers at parishes and schools. The program is one we have used in the past as a refresher course called Keeping the Promise Alive. In January's newsletter I will have more information about the on-line refresher course and how we will retrain.



What does it mean when someone's VIRTUS account says "pending?" I hear this often. What this means is the individual taking the online training started the training but has not completed the training. Some of these accounts can be many years old. Or perhaps they registered for a live session but never attended. As time permits, I have been trying to clean up the old accounts so they are not junking up your VIRTUS list. If you will take time to go through your list and let me know who shows a pending account, we can get those old records cleaned up; making your list more manageable.



If you run ICHATS and you receive a message that says something to the effect that you can not run any more backgrounds because you have reached your record limit, all you need to do is email: MSP-CRD-ICHATHELP@mich.gov and request more records. You may need to provide your parish or school name, agency code, how many more ICHATS you think you will run and why you need to run ICHATS.



Make sure you are being charge \$0.00 for your ICHAT accounts. If you are being charged anything, please contact MSP, using the email above to let them know we are non-profit. There should be no charges to you.

Parishes and Schools

If you hired a new employees and the timing was such that the individual could only take an online VIRTUS session and you had every intention of making sure they took a LIVE session but it has not worked out, please send me the number of individuals who still need the live session.

We will work on getting them trained soon. The live session for ALL employees is part of the commitment we make as a Diocese. We can get creative with a convenient time and place to make it work for all.

Child and Youth Protection Survey

During the spring the CYP office sent a 12 question survey to better understand areas that you may need help in. In several newsletters following the survey, I tried to choose one of the survey questions and give some deeper explanation to it. I would like to give an overall view and finish explaining the remaining questions on page 2.

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

Affirms our deep commitment to creating a safe environment within our parishes and schools for children and youth. During 2017, a brief summary each month of what the seventeen Articles in the Charter means for us as a community, will be highlighted in our newsletter.

To Ensure - Article 8

A committee was formed at first as an Ad Hoc Committee but then later became a standing committee on Sexual Abuse. It's membership is made up of representatives from all regions of the country. The committee advises the USCCB on comprehensive planning and recommendation related to protecting children and youth. The committee also oversees the plans, programs and budget. For a copy of the Charter go to http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/upload/2011-Charter-booklet.pdf

