



**Fr. J. Patrick Foley**

**Itinerant Papist Preacher**

**Retreat Ministry • Parish Missions**

"Come away by yourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile!..." Mark 6:31  
Are you ready to accept the invitation?

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## CHRISTMAS REFLECTION – 2009

Hope: that quiet virtue content to dwell in the shadows of its flashier fellows, Faith and Love, until the dark winters of our lives threaten to overcome us. Hope: not gritted-teeth determination, nor Pollyannaish optimism, but rather a quiet confidence – not in our ability, but in God's ability to birth forth Light out of every form of darkness. Our deep yearning for this hope is evidenced in the lights, candles and Yule logs that brighten our homes and hearths during these dark days. Our deeper belief in such hope is renewed and strengthened in this feast of Christ's birth.

In my travels through 2009 I have seen many signs and heard many stories of darkness – economic, familial, ecclesial, social, political – as I preached the Gospel in retreats and parish missions across the country. The need for that message of hope, and people's response to it, encourages me to keep going, even in these difficult times. I am also blessed by the support of friends I am able to visit in my travels, and by friends who welcome me when I return home.

This itinerant preaching has been my primary ministry since 1995, joined for the last three years by a ministry to the permanent deacons of the Diocese of Reno, Nevada; and although I remain open to other possibilities, the number of invitations I continue to receive for missions and retreats seems to be a sign (the best I know) that I am doing what God wants me to do. And with fifteen parish

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missions and retreats already on my calendar for the New Year (and seven more – so far – for 2011), apparently this is indeed what God wants me to keep doing.

So that I will do, strengthened by the signs of God's love and hope that are revealed by the people whom I am privileged to serve, scattered near and far. With deep gratitude for the gift you are to me, I pray that the hope born again in this Christmas time will bring a full measure of light, love and joy to you every day of 2010.

