

**FAITH & COMMUNITY**

# Holidays at home

## DON'T PUT FAITH ON HOLIDAY

**BY THE REV. PAUL EDWARDS**  
ST. KATHARINE DREXEL  
CATHOLIC CHURCH

On the corner of Coral Way and Southwest 107th Avenue in the southwest section of Miami-Dade County, adjacent to Florida International University, is a huge tract of land with quite a few buildings and ample parking space. Throughout the year, this parcel is quiet and unoccupied. For a few weeks every spring, it comes to life with the Miami-Dade County Youth Fair.

Thousands of people show up, ride the rides, eat carnival food, check out the agricultural projects and make some purchases. Perhaps you have enjoyed this event and its entertainment. It's all over in short order, and while the fairgoers have enjoyed themselves, the experience seldom has any ongoing or life-changing effects.

Thousands of people who have a similar experience once or twice a year as they practice "holiday faith." People who practice "holiday faith" are often the aggravation of regular worshippers, who lose their accustomed seats to the holiday worshippers. They are also a source of frustration to pastors, who hope to see them more often.

Why do lots of folks show up only at Christmas? There are lots of reasons — tradition, the desire to experience the sights and sounds of the seasons, pressure from family, a spiritual search. In a few days the "holiday faith" is folded away like the other Christmas decorations for another year, or perhaps until Easter. And like the annual Youth Fair, the exercise of "holiday faith" seldom makes a difference or



**Edwards**

The true and authentic meaning of Christmas is found in the verse of John's Gospel, "To all who receive him, he gave the power to become children of God." A child of God, an ongoing relationship with the God who loved me into being and who gave the gift of his son to the human race — that's what faith brings me to. It is a relationship that I can depend on and where I can find meaning for my life day in and day out, through every circumstance and season of life.

Should you go to church services this Christmas holiday? Sure! But be sure to open your heart and soul to the relationship with God that the birth of Jesus made possible. Then after the holiday, don't pack away the worship experience. Make it a normal part of everyday life. Let loose of "holiday faith" and pick up daily faith, daily trust in and dependence on God.

A blessed Christmas to you!

*Father Paul E. Edwards is pastor of St. Katharine Drexel Catholic Church in Weston. To contribute a clergy column or story idea, call Religion Editor Bob French at 954-385-7917 or e-mail [bfrench@sun-sentinel.com](mailto:bfrench@sun-sentinel.com).*

leaves a lasting impact of the practitioner. To use a phrase from the epistle of James: "Such a faith has no power to save one, has it?"