By Pat Haggerty

I still have some vestiges of Christmas lingering in my office. It's not that I am too lazy to put them away. I just want them visible for a little while longer---like the Tomie dePaola ornament of an angel in true dePaola style. He is wearing a straw hat, has purple wings and green pants, and is holding a cat. So Tomie! There is the beautiful Millenium figurine of the Holy Family that Sister Helen, a dear friend, gave me. It is all white and just lovely in its simplicity! Finally, I have a plaque with "BELIEVE!" on my wall. I think it's a reminder that we are supposed to believe in the beauty and miracle of Christmas.

I may just keep that plaque up all year. I am feeling like we need to believe right now. We need to believe in the constancy of God's love and of his ever-present care for us. We have all been shaken by the recent happenings in the world. We will never be the same after the horrific incident in Newtown, Connecticut. That tragedy struck us all and left us reeling in its magnitude and devastation. How could something like that have happened to a school community and to so many beautiful little children, now God's angels? We can't question; we just need to move forward to make this world a safer place for our children. That's what the parents of these children are trying to do. They have to take action in order to survive.

We all have our own personal tragedies to deal with as well. I just received news that the forty year old son of a dear friend has just passed away. My heart goes out to my friends. What can I do that will offer any solace to them?

Another friend, who has been suffering with cancer for many years is now in hospice care and "just waiting." We are all "just waiting" with her. Her husband is being brave, supportive, and so caring. We receive almost daily emails about her condition.

So, you can understand, how right now, I just have to believe. I have been asking for the grace to believe and I have been asking for strength for those I have just mentioned. I have been looking for a ray of light to help me. I think I found one in the Communion antiphon for the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time. It is from 1John 4:16: "We have come to know and to believe in the love that God has for us." If one reads on in John's letter, the words are even more affirming. John continues with the following: "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. In this is love perfected with us, that we may have

confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." (1John 4:17-18)

So, I will continue to believe and I will continue to trust that my fears will be eradicated through love.