By Pat Haggerty

I love the Christmas season, and it is hard for me to say good-bye to it. Something that marks the end of the season for me is our family Epiphany party or Petit Noël. This year I even made an Epiphany cake! Tradition has it that if you put a token in the cake, the person getting the cake slice with the token will have a blessed year. I inserted a little image of Jesus in the cake, and I couldn't wait to see who would get the special cake slice. We crowned my niece after she got the special piece.

After yesterday's liturgical celebration, I knelt at the manger saying my final good-byes. The words of the homilist resonate with me today. Father said that we have to "find a sign of God in our lives. Like the Magi; we need to keep looking for the signature of God in our day-to-day living."

So, yes, the spirit of Christmas does---and should---live on. We need to recall the yes of Mary; the persistence of the Magi; and the devotion of the shepherds. We need to constantly shout out the alleluias of the angels that resonated throughout the countryside. We need this to sustain us as we move through Ordinary Time to the season of Lent.

As we move through the "bleak midwinter" of our lives, we can meditate on the words of that beautiful hymn set to the poetry of Christina Rossetti. The song questions what we can give the Child Jesus. The shepherd might bring a lamb and the wise man would do "his part." As for us, well, we can "give our heart."

Let this be a reminder that we must keep the Child Jesus in our hearts. Let us journey through the upcoming weeks of Ordinary Time trying to do God's will.

At this point, I am still putting away ornaments, sweeping up pine needles and finding hidden ribbon under the couch. I am getting my final dose of holiday movies, I must confess. I am moving forward, though, with Jesus in my heart and looking for signs of His love in every aspect of my life.