

Christmas 2002

I think it's safe to say this has been quite a year!

Our family closed the book on 2001 with Mike's final football game in a Lutes uniform... we had a whirlwind trip for three weeks as the Lutes made the Division III National Playoffs. The first two games both went into overtime, and we were so lucky to be able to share Thanksgiving weekend in Iowa with our extended family. We had an ever-eventful trip on Casino Express Airlines with the team – though the ride home with 75 smelly guys in a little plane was a bit much...

Mike's football career came to an end in the thriving metropolis of Fargo, North Dakota against St. John's. It was a heart-breaking game for the Lutes (though it was a toss-up between whether it was harder for the families or the guys) as we realized that this was our last chance to share in this experience together.

But as always – you make the Big Time where you are – and somehow, Mike managed to receive a coaching offer for the team this fall! Go figure...he is one person who can stretch a college experience into six years. I think I should have taken some lessons from him! We believe God gave him a great opportunity to share one last season with the Lutes...in January, he's planning on enrolling at Mt. Angel Seminary to study for the priesthood. He's been very blessed to have some excellent spiritual mentors in choosing this path, and our family is so grateful.

As with so many people, our family's lives have been touched by the dramatic events in the stock market. This fall caps a one of the worst three-year periods in the history of investing – one that with our clients, we are looking to the future with hope. I think Mother Teresa sums it up well, "I know God won't give me anything I can't handle, I just wish He didn't trust me so much"! I suppose it's a great fit that Mom's role as a family therapist has really blossomed! She's been so rewarded by her work at Pearl Counseling – her listening ear and kind heart serves her well.

I made a fantastic pilgrimage this summer to Toronto, to join with 800,000 other young people to see Pope John Paul II. My best friend and I took a ten-day journey to Canada where we met people from around the world and camped overnight with half a million people (in the pouring rain, no less, with no cover...for someone who doesn't like dirt, it was a trial of endurance!). Our trip was highlighted by being as close as 8 feet to JP II at the Papal Mass- it was an experience of a lifetime!

As a family, we enjoy our time at St. Charles– Mom serves as a sacristan, Dad lectors at Mass, I volunteer with the youth group, Mike even substitute teaches there occasionally!

Dad's keeping himself busy with a newfound canary hobby (please, God, have him hire someone to clean the cages so Mom doesn't have to do it) and enjoying the house on the Puget Sound. He's redesigned much of the house, and from my view, it's beautiful. Now...if only he'll leave it to Mike and me down the road!

As we draw this year to a close and look forward to (a bullish!) 2003...know that our prayers and thoughts are with you during this Christmas season. May the Lord richly bless you and your family!

Tom, Karol, Shelley and Michael Mauss