

Christmas 2005

*Milestones. What a good way to sum up our year. There were milestones for each of us in our family...a good number of which accumulated lots of airline miles. Dad's already planning on how to cash them in. J*

*Michael continues with his ministry at Western Washington University as the Catholic Campus Minister. He purchased his first home in Bellingham in March, and we're all amazed by how much work he's done on it...new floors, a new deck, landscaping...but it should be noted that one of the very first projects was re-painting his pink bedroom to blue. Priorities!*

*I traveled back to Washington DC with Mike and a group of his pro-life students from WWU. Braving the snow and near-zero temperatures, we marched with a hundred thousand people in the March For Life to the steps of the Supreme Court. As we are both adopted, it held a special place in both of our hearts. At the end of the school year, Mike and his students traveled to India to volunteer with Mother Teresa's order, the Missionaries of Charity. They spent several weeks there, serving the poor and dying. It was an amazing experience for everyone involved – each person came home with a renewed appreciation for all that we are blessed with.*

*As for me, I finished chairing the Relay For Life of Tacoma in May of this year - during my two-year term, our event raised over \$1.6 million to fund the cure for cancer. So many blessings came from my time with the American Cancer Society, from new friendships to amazing experiences with people affected by cancer. You never know what great things you'll find at Relay...this year, we found our newest member of The Mauss Group! Kris Babbitt was one of our most dedicated volunteers at the Relay, and she's become a treasured part of our team at Merrill Lynch.*

*In August, our family made our first Clark Griswold-style vacation across the country in seven years, complete with the "family truckster". My grandparents on my mom's side celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, and we all headed back to be with them. Mom and Dad's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration soon followed, when Dad asked family and friends to help put together a special tribute scrapbook of their years together. If you haven't seen the book yet, you need to. It turned out beautifully and Mom loved it. Mike and I still believe that part of the reason they are still together is because of the great kids they have. But maybe we're biased.*

*As we head into the last months of the year, Mom and Dad are in the process of remodeling the kitchen. Anyone who knows Mom and Dad knows that their decision-making processes are quite different – Mom picks the first thing she sees, and Dad browses until the styles have gone out of style. We found a happy balance in designing the kitchen, and it should be finished in time for the holidays. You really should invite yourself over for dinner when it's all done. I know I will!*

*The year has passed quickly in the midst of all that's gone on. As we celebrate the birth of our Lord, know that we send our warmest Christmas wishes to you. May you find joy throughout the holidays and enjoy the happiest of New Years!*

With love from the Mauss Family...

*Tom*      *Karol*      *Jillie* ♥      *Michael*