

# Baby Jesus returns

He once was lost but now is found.

The plastic baby Jesus figure that vandals ripped from the outdoor manger of a Timonium Nativity scene last January has been recovered and returned to Gil and Loretta Hoffman.

The married parishioners of the Immaculate Conception in Towson said they were delighted by the reemergence of the stolen baby Jesus, and they plan to put him back in his rightful place on their front lawn as the Christmas holiday nears.

“Praise the Lord!” said an ecstatic Mrs. Hoffman, who received the Jesus figure in September – exactly nine months after vandals took it and toppled plastic figures of St. Joseph, the Blessed Virgin Mary and animals.

“I’ve been praying for it to come back and this is a story of faith in prayer,” she said.

Baby Jesus was discovered lying in the muck of a creek in New Freedom, Pa. by a friend of Mrs. Hoffman. The friend, who does not want to be identified, took it home, cleaned it and put it aside for possible use at Christmas. Then when she attended a prolife luncheon that was also attended by Mrs. Hoffman, the friend remembered reading about the stolen figure in local newspapers including The Catholic Review.

“Neither of us had planned to go to the luncheon, so I think the Lord was at work here,” said Mrs. Hoffman.

While she’s not 100 percent sure the figure is the same one that was stolen, Mrs. Hoffman said it looks exactly the same and she suspects it most likely is her kidnapped infant.

“How it got to New Freedom, God only knows,” she said.

When she sets up her Nativity scene in a few weeks, Mrs. Hoffman said she plans to secure the figure with wires just as she did last year, but she may take some added security measures.

“He was wired in last year and he was still ripped away by whoever did the dastardly

deed," she said. Then, with a laugh, she added: "I was thinking of putting a GPS monitor on him."