



Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 23, 2007

Those whom the Lord has ransomed will return
and enter Zion singing, crowned with everlasting joy.

— Isaiah 35:10 a

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

There are no Religious Education classes on Sunday, December 23

Religion classes will resume on Sunday January 6, 2008.

May you and your families be blessed with all of the joy of
Christmas!

PASTOR'S NOTES

Welcoming Jesus

We need to know that we still belong to the people who share life with us. It's so easy to grow apart, to take others for granted, and never to express our love in words or gestures. At times the pace of life with all of its worries, problems and tasks, pushes us right by the ones we belong to. If this can happen so easily with those whom we can see, then the danger exists that we will eventually take for granted the one whom we can't see - Jesus, Our Savior. We need to extend our welcome daily to Our Lord.

Christmas is a time to gently ask ourselves if we are still extending our welcome to Jesus. Does he still have a place in all of our decisions, plans, and dreams? Or do we just invite him into our lives when it seems like the right occasion, like a wedding anniversary or a baptism, or some such occasion where we are in a good mood and ready to give thanks to God? We need to be more than a fair weather friend when it comes to our relationship with the Christ.

If we develop the practice of prayer each day, and many times through each day, we will be welcoming Jesus into our lives. When, through prayer, we open ourselves to having Christ touch our thoughts, our feelings, our decisions, we will know what it means to let another into the deepest part of our lives.

Sometimes we smile at a child who has been asked to say the grace before a meal. The little one asks God to take care of his pet cat or his little hamster, to keep the rain off of the picnic that's being planned, to give food to the poor people. Everything gets thrown into the prayer because the child knows that God cares about everything, not just about what we think are important items. Perhaps that is the way you and I should learn how to pray.

Msgr. Rebman, Fr. Connell, Msgr. Barres, Deacon Lynch and the entire staff wish all parishioners, families and friends both with us at Christmas or far away Christmas blessings that can be given by the Christ Child. We pray for the sick and suffering, the recently deceased and their bereaved, and for all your special intentions. Thanks for your support in 2007.

TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION

Many of our most treasured traditions link the liturgy of the church with the hearth of the home. The food on the table at certain feasts and fasts helps to extend the mystery into everyday life. Christmas eve many families of Italian heritage, especially those with links to the south of Italy, will settle down to the "Feast of the Seven Fishes," or La Vigilia. It is a command performance for the whole family, as the saying goes: Natale con I tuui, Pasqua conchi vuoi, or "Christmas with your family, Easter with whomever you wish." Seven different fish, some say one for each day of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, others say one for each sacrament, or one for each day of creation, are served. Eel and shrimp, lobster and crab, calamari, pasta with clam sauce, flounder and hake all abound, but most especially baccala, dried salted cod. Why? Many say that it is a way to pay homage to the beasts of the stable who witnessed the holy birth and relinquished their manger to make way for God. Tonight, if someone asks you to "pass the shrimp," you'll be able to shed a little light on a menu that is a delicious treasure in our tradition.

Heavenly Results!

Parishioners and guests from near and far packed the church for the Christmas Concert. Words of appreciation to Mary Ellen Schaubert, Director of Adult and Children's Choir, Michael Marinelli, Director of Liturgy & Music and the entire choir. Thank you to Virginia Kirkwood and all those who help to make this special!

... The Power of Team ...



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YULETIDE: Christmas Eve Church & Family Center

4 p.m., 5:30 p.m., Church only 7 p.m., & 10 p.m. with music at 9:30. At Christmas time we welcome everyone, but remember early Mass in Church/Family Center are overcrowded. 7 p.m. has room; 10 p.m. is comfortably filled. If you don't like crowds, wait until Christmas Day when there is always seating.



Christmas Day - December 25, 7:30 a.m., 9 a.m., & 10:30 a.m.
December 30th, Feast of Holy Family, normal weekend schedule
New Year's Eve - December 31, - Mass 5 p.m.
Feast of Mary Mother of God Jan. 1 Holy day
New Year's Day - January 1, 7:30 a.m., 9:00, & 10:30 a.m.

Christmas Novena of Masses

Envelopes can be found in your monthly envelope mailing as well as in the church. Place your request in the collection basket or drop box at the Rectory.

The offices will be closed December 24, December 25, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1. In case of an emergency, please call 658-7017.

ONE-STOP SHOPPING

Last minute shoppers can purchase a print from a painting by W. James McGlynn, noted Delaware and Maine artist of St. Joseph on the Brandywine. W. James McGlynn was commissioned by Parish Council June 1990 to commemorate the 150th anniversary 1841-1991 of the church. The original painting in memory of the Hagley Mills Workers, who constructed the church, is displayed on the church grounds. Artist signed and numbered prints total 500.

Catholic Literature - A literature rack with moderately priced periodicals is available in the back of the church. Feel free to subscribe to it instead of waiting for it to appear on the rack. Payment for the literature may be made in the special envelope provided.



Certificates of Eligibility (Godparents/Sponsors)

Need a letter to be a godparent for a baptism or sponsor? Please know that to provide such a certificate there must be some evidence the person has an affiliation with the parish. This means registration comes sometime before seeking the certificate. Membership in a parish consists of worshipping with the parish community and contributing, time, talent and treasure to the degree you are able.

YOUR CHRISTMAS CHECKLIST

- ✓Do you have us on your Christmas gift list?
- ✓All gifts made on or before December 31 are tax deductible for this tax year.
- ✓Gifts of securities (stocks, bonds, mutual funds) are some of the best gifts to make whether they have appreciated or depreciated in value.
- ✓A charitable contribution may just be the right decision to enable you to itemize your taxes, if you don't already.
- ✓Check with a broker about avoiding a last minute rush for year-end gifts of securities.
- ✓Know that our prayers and thoughts will be with you at Christmas and all year round. We are all given just a few short years to "Build up the Kingdom." Sharing your blessings through a generous gift at Christmas will make this world just a little better because you made a Catholic Gift of Faith.

Saturday (Dec. 22)

5:00 p.m. Living & deceased members of Laffey/McHugh families by Marie Louise McHugh

Sunday (Dec. 23)

7:30 a.m. Deceased members of Amenta family by the Pezel family
9:00 a.m. Parishioners
10:30 a.m. Dora Draper Brown by Isabel & Ralph Pearce

Monday (Dec. 24)

7:30 a.m. Novena
9:00 a.m. Novena
10:30 a.m. Novena
4:00 p.m. Novena (2) (Church & Hall)
5:30 p.m. Novena (2) (Church & Hall)
7:00 p.m. Novena
10:00 p.m. Novena

Tuesday (Dec. 25)

7:30 a.m. Novena
9:00 a.m. Novena
10:30 a.m. Parishioners

Wednesday (Dec. 26)

7:00 a.m. Novena
12:05 p.m. Carol Mical by Cathy & Gene Kelleher

Thursday (Dec. 27)

7:00 a.m. Intentions of Dobraniecki family
12:05 p.m. Elizabeth & Clement Lippincott by Dick Kaiser

Friday (Dec. 28)

7:00 a.m. Anthony Stefanowicz by Joe & Ann Marie Finch
12:05 p.m. Josephine Burszichelli by Ann Holland

Saturday (Dec. 29)

8:00 a.m. Robin DeMatteis by Napoletano family
5:00 p.m. Rachael Lucille Alisa by Henrietta Romanowski

You may or may not be aware of a law passed by congress in 2006. This law included what is called the Charitable IRA Rollover which is an incentive for an individual to donate a portion or all of his/her RMD, required minimum distribution from his/her IRA. At 70 1/2, the IRS requires you to take a distribution from your IRA. This becomes part of your income and will be taxed. Many parishioners need that income and taking the distribution will not affect their taxes significantly or penalize their social security. Other parishioners may realize substantial savings by directing a portion or all of your mandatory IRA withdrawal directly to our parish. You will not have to report that amount as income and you will avoid having to pay taxes on those funds. Before this year draws to a close, I wanted to make sure that you were aware of this opportunity and ask you to consider a gift from your IRA to our parish if this will benefit you.