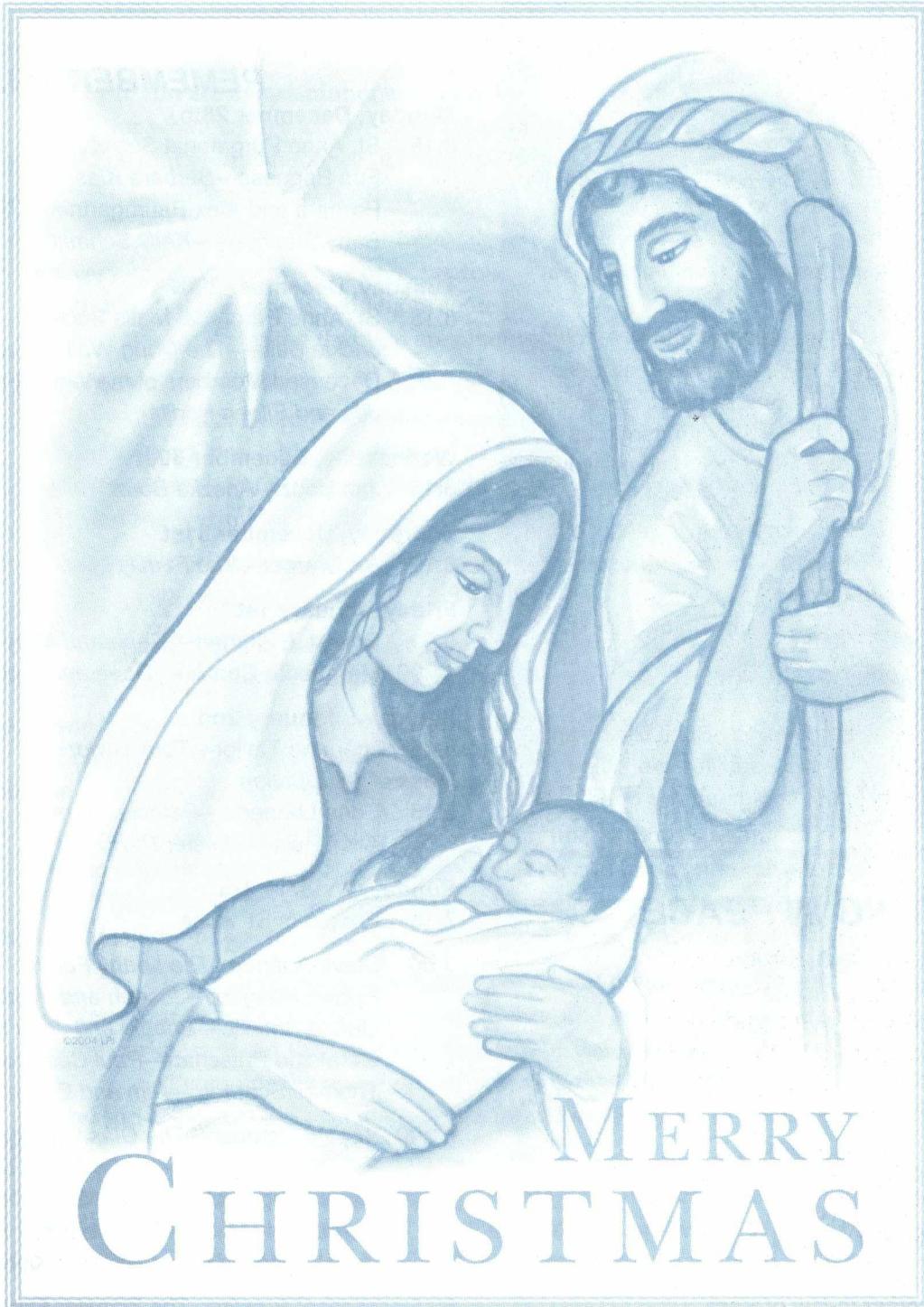




Clarion

A WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ST. ANNE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY



Christmas 2009

Volume 6, No. 5 ~ This People is the House of God ~ December 25, 26, 27, 2009



St Anne

Catholic Community

OUR MISSION

We, a Catholic Christian people rooted by Baptism, take as our challenge the mission of Jesus: to build the Kingdom of God, standing in solidarity with the poor. We are committed to:

Welcoming

- Welcoming all people and providing a sense of belonging to people at every stage of life

Creating

- Creating a place of enjoyment, excitement and fun for people of all ages

Healing

- Healing, reconciling and reaching out in caring service to others

Reaching Out

- Serving those in need, especially the broken, through generous gifts of time, talent and treasure

Serving

- Gathering at Eucharist and celebrating the Sacraments of the Church and the sacramental moments of our lives

Gathering

- Telling and sharing the Living Story of Jesus

Sharing

So challenged, we pray that the Holy Spirit fills us and empowers us so that we may become the Living Presence of Jesus in our contemporary world.

RESTING IN PEACE

Laurette A. Bishop,
sister of Mary Reinhart;

Edward M. Duran,
husband of Kathleen, father of Karen Warner
and uncle of Mary Barry, Michele Idstein
and Colleen Kipferl;

Pearl Levitzke,
aunt of John Lenz;

Neil Tufano,
friend of Clem Aseron,

Ann White,
mother-in-law of Vera

CELEBRATING SACRAMENTS

WEDDINGS

II Megan Struebing and Michael Waldron

BAPTISMS

Brynn Sophia Pfannenstiel (Maggie and Michael)
Madisyn Paige Wits (Nicole and Aaron)

REMEMBERING...

Monday, December 28th

8:15 St. Anne Purgatorial Society
Fon Boggess—Barbara Klass
Barbara and Alex Baumgartner—The Family
Baby Summers—Kelly Schmitt

Tuesday, December 29th

8:15 St. Anne Perpetual Mass Society
Jackie Balla—The Doug Walker Family
Deceased Members of the Wolfe Family—
Jim and Eileen Perille

Wednesday, December 30th

8:15 Jan Bouz—Anezka Bouz

Thursday, December 31st

8:15 Art Cramer—The Family

Friday, January 1st

9:00 Robert J. Zimmer—Gene and Mary Podrazik
11:00 Marguerite Conklin—Doug and Juli Walker

Saturday, January 2nd

8:15 Charlene Taylor—Tom Taylor
Mass of Anticipation
5:15 Edna Laenertz—Patricia Cramer
Alice Pulit—Chester Pulit

Sunday, January 3rd

7:15 People of St. Anne
9:00 Steve Adams—The Leahy Family
Robert Rodgers—Joseph and Vickie Seliga
Gerald Bataille—Bobbie and John O'Brien
Geraldine Pritschau—Paul Cusumano
Thomas Scarnato—Jim and Eileen Perille
11:00 Sophia Comber—The Glass Family
Patricia McCafferty—Dolores and Dave Savage
Eileen Ziegenfus—Celeste Scheffler
Dorothy Sherman—The Wedinger Family
Jim Hollister—Harold and Rita Klein
5:15 Michael Breslin—The Trzaska Family

FROM THE FRIENDLY CONFINES

Dear People and Friends of Saint Anne,

Welcome to the beginning of the Christmas feast and season here at Saint Anne.

We are delighted that you have chosen to join us for Eucharist today.

If you are a visitor to our faith community, please make yourself comfortable and at home.

If you are a parishioner and have been away from us for awhile,

for whatever reason, we are so glad that you have joined us today.

Our hope would be that your experience of worship with us this day will touch your heart once again with a renewed sense of welcome, acceptance and gladness to become an active part of your faith community once again.

In a very special way, we welcome our college age students and our young adults, both married and single, who have come home to Saint Anne for the holidays.

We are delighted that you are among us during this holy season.

Last, but hardly least, and yet most important of all, I offer my Christmas prayer and gratitude for you,

the faithful and faith-filled people of God here at Saint Anne,

who by your incredible commitment of time and talent, service and treasure, enable us to make Saint Anne a place where the Reign of God, the Light of Christ and the warmth of God's presence is so clear and real for God's people.

Know that I truly appreciate your welcome, affirmation and encouragement over the last five months as I am becoming your new pastor.

The Christmas season is a feast and a celebration of divine friendship.

Yet God calls us not only to friendship but makes us daughters and sons, brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

The Christmas season makes us so aware that God came among us in a way that we could grasp and understand.

God became flesh and became one of us. God appeared to us with the face of a child.

In doing so, God revealed the divine self in our own human innocence, frailty and vulnerability.

So on this Christmas feast and in this glorious season,
do away with all sadness; share your elation and hope with one another.

Bless the lives of others with the gifts of gladness and contentment.

For yes, a child is born to us; the prince of peace is given to us. Once again, God draws near to us.

If we let the ever new coming of Christ dwell among us,

if we open our hearts to Christ's love, while choosing to live in his peace and light –
the darkness of our lives and the challenge of the world in which we live –
contains the possibility of knowing the renewed hope
and the justice of God's dream for humankind in the world in which we live.

**On behalf of our wonderful parish staff, our dedicated parish priests,
our emerging parish council and myself, during my first Christmas among you,**
I pray that you and your family will know the real light and warmth of the blessings
of the Christmas season in your hearts and the promise of hope in the new year to come.

A Blessed Christmas and a Wonderful New Year,

Father Bernie Pietrzak

Office of the Pastor

STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

Weekly Offering for December 20th, 2009

Parishioners attending Sunday Liturgy: 2,401	
Sunday Offering Envelopes used: 531	\$36,913.00
Direct Debit/Credit Card Offerings: 232	\$7,300.00
Grand Total for the Week	\$44,213.00
Budget for Operating Expenses	\$42,000.00
Difference	+\$2,213.00

Year to Date Collection vs. Budget

Year to Date Sunday Collection	*\$1,084,218.00
*Includes the Fall Catch-up Collection	
Year to Date Budget	\$1,050,000.00
Difference	+\$34,218.00

Year to Date Extraordinary Collections

Sharing Parishes	\$32,888.00
Archdiocesan Required Collections	\$31,661.00
Complete the Journey/Debt Reduction	\$166,015.00

FALL CATCH-UP COLLECTION **\$75,441.00**

Finance Notes

Our Sunday/Holy Day contributions exceed budget for another week. This is such wonderful news, and if this continues, it will go a long way in helping us to pay off the operating loan from last year, which our Sunday contributions do not cover.

We continue to analyze our expenses, and are looking at making more cuts in the month to come, in order to stay on top of this situation. We need to reduce the budgeted Sunday figure after the first of the year so that the excess can help us with that operating loan.

Thank you for your generosity.

*Fr. Bernie and
Margaret Buckstaff*

A CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

We shall become Christians on that day
when sunshine means more to us than a further acquisition.

We shall become Christians on that day
when the children of the world excite us at least as much as its rulers.

We shall become Christians on that day
when we use our hearts to measure the worth of a human being.

We shall become Christians on that day
when love leads us into friendships, not greed or pride.

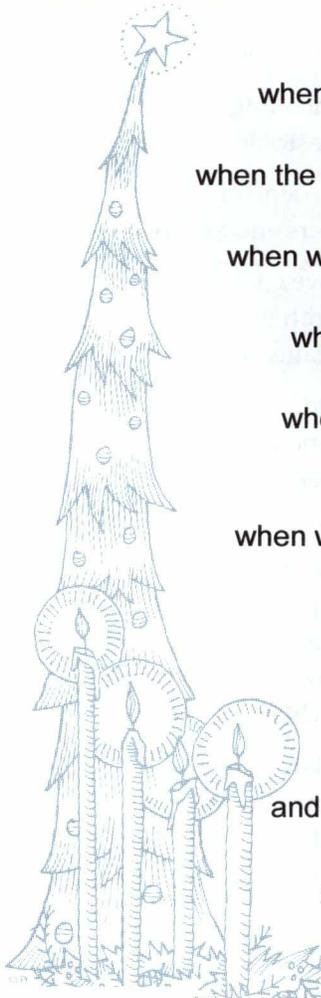
We shall become Christians on that day
when we are joyful because so many people are in love,
rather than because so many people are affluent.

We shall become Christians
when we learn to make love and peace, to make Jesus human,
and to make ourselves as human as he was.

We shall become Christians
when we allow Jesus to speak to us by his values
as well as by his words.

We shall become Christians on that morning
when we laugh and sing for all the right reasons
and when we weep, not because we have lost something,
but because we were given so much.

*May the joy, the peace and the light of this season
fill you and your families
with the hope of the Christmas season.*



Generations of Faith

A CHRISTMAS CREED

I believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.

I believe in the one whose spirit glorified a little town,
and whose spirit still brings music to persons all over the world,
in towns both large and small.

I believe in the one for whom the crowded inn could find no room,
and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life today.

I believe in the one whom the rulers of the earth ignored
and the proud could never understand, whose life was among common people,
whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts.

I believe in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible.

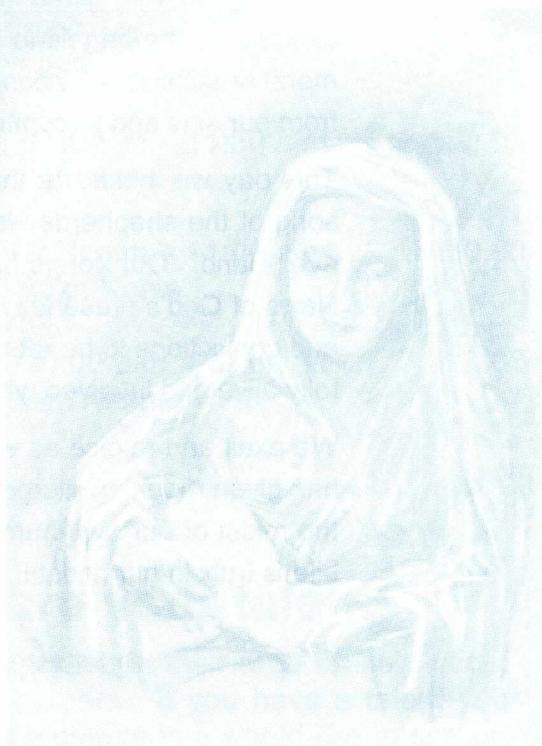
I believe in the one whose cradle was a mother's arms,
whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth,
who looked at persons and made them see what God's love saw in them,
who by love brought sinners back to purity,
and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.

I confess my ever-lasting need of God:

The need of forgiveness for our selfishness and greed,
the need of new life for empty souls,
the need of love for hearts grown cold.

I believe in God who gives us the best of himself.

I believe in Jesus, the son of the living God,
born in Bethlehem this night,
for me and for the world.



© PastoralPlanning.com, 2009. Portions of these prayers were adapted from resources available on this web site: <http://www.christmas-day.org/christmas-prayers.html>. Art work by Mark Hakomaki, © 2006. Used with permission.

BY SUSAN STENGREN, DIRECTOR OF GENERATIONS OF FAITH

Adult Formation

THIS DAY IS DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER DAYS!

This day we celebrated the birth of the Prince of Peace,
Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Jesus our Lord.

This day salvation was ours for the asking.

This day our hearts were light.

This day our souls, spirits, and minds were unburdened of earthly desires.

This day we prayed that the heavens, the earth, the seas,
and the mountains will echo our song of joy.

This day we were at peace because God's favor rests upon us.

This day we were consoled by the knowledge and faith that God's love for us
knows no bounds and can overcome all obstacles and barriers.

This day was special for each of us. Whatever pains or sorrow each of us were experiencing, this was a time of peace. We believed in the impossible, that the Lord of all creation became a creature out of love for us. We celebrated that we are a people of good will, gifted with the favor of faith and participants in that peace proclaimed by the angels to the shepherds on that holy night. Whatever our personal, moral or spiritual situation, we rejoiced because the Lord was born to deliver all of us from our sins and to comfort us in our weakness.

This day we looked to the past and experienced it erupting into the present. The song of the shepherds was echoed throughout the world on every continent and in every land. Our songs blended with the voices of the globe proclaiming the Good News of God's presence in a universal song. We could allow our own religious faith and convictions to be reborn, not to escape the problems of life, but to become more fully alive and involved with the human struggle that lies before us.

We exalt and rejoice as we commemorate the beginning of that one human life who has given meaning, purpose and direction to human life itself. We praise the Lord in the midst of our own human situations, as diverse as they are, because the Lord of Life is truly in our midst!!!

BY SISTER LAURETTA LEIPZIG, ASSOCIATE/DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Adult Formation



LaFarge Lifelong Learning

Inspiration Through Continuing Education

Presented by the St. Anne Catholic Community

Adults 50 years and better are urged to discover new skills in the New Year with St. Anne's LaFarge Lifelong Learning Program. Courses meet once per week for six weeks and are held in the St. Anne Senior Center. Instruction is paced to the individual needs of each participant to ensure an enjoyable and rewarding learning experience for all.

Registration will be held **Monday, January 4th**
through **Wednesday, January 6th**,
from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
in the Parish Center.

Classes start the week of January 11th.

For more information, please contact the LaFarge office at **847.381.5799**.

Winter 2010 LaFarge Course Offerings

Class	Day/Dates	Time/Instructor	Fee
Beginner Computer Skills 6 classes	Mondays 1/11 – 2/15	9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Mike Konie	\$30.00
Digital Photography 6 classes	Mondays 1/11 – 2/15	6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Doug Jones	\$20.00
Woodcarving 6 classes	Wednesdays 1/13 – 2/17	9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Jim Hoffman	\$20.00
Microsoft Outlook Email 6 classes	Wednesdays 1/13 – 2/17	9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Mike Konie	\$30.00
Beginner and Advanced Watercolor Painting 6 classes	Thursdays 1/14 – 2/18	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Jim Kennedy	\$25.00

Suggest a course or share your talent!

LaFarge classes are taught by volunteers with expertise in their area of instruction, either as hobbyists or through their professional careers. If you have a talent you would like to share with others or a suggestion for a course you would like to see offered, please call us at **847.381.5799**.

Faith and Justice



ST. ANNE SHARING TREE

On behalf of the St. Anne's Sharing Board, we would like to thank everyone who participated in this year's Sharing Tree program. Through your generosity, many families and individuals will have a brighter Christmas season.

Recipients of this year's Sharing Tree gifts include the St. Martin de Porres Shelter for Women and Children, the St. Columbanus Food Pantry, our sharing parish, St. Frances of Rome in Cicero, and Project Hope.

A very special thank you to everyone who helped sort the gifts on collection day as well.

In these difficult economic times, our Parish truly brought the spirit of Christmas to many in need.

May God bless you with a healthy and safe New Year,
St. Anne Sharing Board



A New Year Full of HOPE



Many caring hands have joined together over the last year to help local families in crisis through St. Anne's Project Hope. Large gestures and small, made with compassion ... easing a burden, nurturing change and restoring hope for a new year and a new beginning. Thank you for your continued support and may your new year be filled with happiness, health and hope!

*The Project Hope office will reopen **Monday, January 4th, at 9:00 a.m.**
For service inquiries, referrals or to make a donation, please call **847.381.5721.***

House of Hope Resale Holiday Hours

Wednesday, December 30th—10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 31st—10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

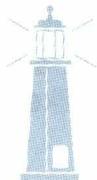
Closed New Year's Day

Saturday, January 2nd—10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Donations gladly accepted during operating hours!

75% off all holiday items

50% off selected furniture and other featured items



House of Hope Resale Shop

Heirlooms & Treasures

200 N. Hough Street • Downtown Barrington
Wed.-Sat. 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. • 847.756.4673

Youth Formation

ST. ANNE SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

December 14, 2009

The students of SAS were enthused as they entered the church on Monday, anticipating their younger classmates' arrival for the Christmas pageant. The first through fourth grade students had been practicing for weeks to get ready for their presentation of the birth of Jesus Christ.



The show began with the first graders singing songs that described the feelings of Christmas time. When the first graders finished their portion of the show, out came the animals that sat in front of the manger where Jesus was born. The children looked so cute and enthused in their animal costumes. It was such

a surprise was when the animals came out; they began to talk to one another! They described what was happening; it was time for the birth of our Savior. Shortly after the animals arrived, out came Mary, Joseph and the three wise kings. Throughout the show there were narrators who shared the story of the Nativity.



Thank you, music teacher, **Mrs. Darlene Rayner**, for working hard with the students to get this wonderful Christmas presentation together. The students did a beautiful job and should all be proud of their efforts.

DIVIDENDS FOR LIFE...THE GIVING HEART!

During the fall, the students of St. Anne School have been busy practicing their ***dividends for life*** on many fronts. Of particular interest lately is the way they have shared their ***giving hearts*** with so many in need. Last week you read in the *Clarion* of the enormous support of the Operation Warm and Fuzzy program which started the Advent season off with a bang! The entire school rallied around this valuable program, keeping many infants warm and happy with their generosity. This program is just one example of what our students do with their ***giving hearts***.

Dividends for life begin in the preschool level with the Annual Toy Drive for Barrington Giving Day and grow into the elementary grades with the letters the 1st and 7th graders wrote to our nation's armed service personnel. Adopting a family, like many of the classes did, and collecting money for Bikes for Africa, like the middle school grades did, are all examples of the power of "living our faith" and teaching our students the value of this vital lesson. The fifth grade participated in the Feed My Starving Children program and assembled meals for 29 people for an entire year! This program also included a social studies project which highlighted how and where the food was going and how it affected improvised countries. The blend of education and faith - powerful crossroads!

All of these are wonderful reminders that while our students pay attention to their academics, they also grow in "living their faith," which again leads to lifelong ***dividends for life***.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!
St. Anne Home and School Advisory Board

Parish Life

FIRST SATURDAY DEVOTION

We have been entrusted with another New Year. We enter this New Year with the truth that God is love. This truth must go beyond telling. This fact must be lived by each and every one of us. The woes as well as the joys of living are all around us. Let us pray for the strength to live Jesus Christ's message of love.

As we gather together to pray the Rosary, may we ask for our Blessed Mother's intercession to seek this gift from our loving Father. The Rosary follows the 8:15 a.m. Mass on **Saturday, January 2nd.**

DAY OF RECOLLECTION

The St. Anne Women's Club is hosting a Day of Recollection, "Faith in Today's Ever Changing World," on **Tuesday, February 9th, 2010.** All are welcome to attend the presentation by Traci Matheu, author of "A Survivor from the Lost Generation of Catholics" who will speak on the virtues of strong Catholic beliefs and family values. The event will take place at St. Anne's, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and will include continental breakfast, presentations, Mass and a luncheon. For more information, call **Liz** at **847.381.8695.**

LADIES' LUNCHEON

The St. Anne Women's Club is pleased to announce its upcoming event, a **Ladies' Luncheon** on **Tuesday, January 12th.** The luncheon will take place at **Chessie's/111 Grille** located in the Ice House Mall, Barrington. The afternoon will feature lunch and a special noon-time activity. Babysitting will also be available. Look for more information in future *Clarions* and in the Women's Club newsletter.

SHARING PARISH NEED

St. Frances of Rome needs a four-wheel drive vehicle in order to continue to plow its own enormous parking lots this winter. Doing it themselves saves a minimum of \$300.00 per snowfall. The 1987 Chevrolet Silverado they have been using for the last eight winters has given up the ghost. If anyone at St. Anne is downsizing to a smaller vehicle, they would be happy to take the old one off your hands - along with a tax letter. Their contact number is on the back page of the *Clarion*.



*Mark your
calendars!*

*Exciting Social Events —
in the works!*

Spring Gala - May 22nd, 2010

Fall Golf Classic - September 2010

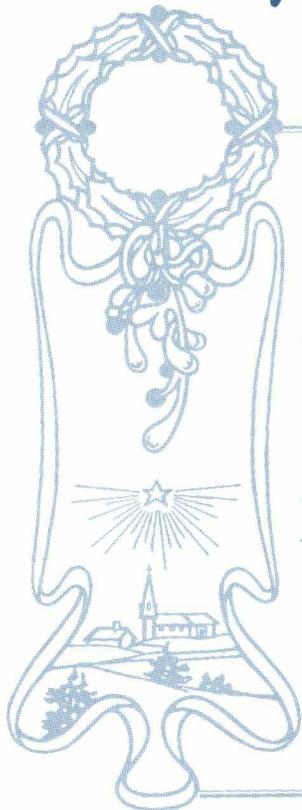
CONTACT INFORMATION:

Spring Gala—contact Courtney Murtaugh
via email at murtaughs@ameritech.net.

Fall Golf Classic—contact Colleen Stevanovich
via email at cstevanovich@yahoo.com.

Stay tuned for more details!

Parish Life



We Wish You All

A glad and peaceful
Christmastide
With all its memories sweet;
May hope and love and
joy be yours
With kindly friends to greet;
The echo of the angel's song,
The star's clear guiding light,
The Christ child in your
heart and home,
To make this
Christmas bright.

CARMEL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAM

The Entrance Exam for the Carmel High School Class of 2014 will take place on **Saturday, January 9th**, at 8:00 a.m. The fee is \$25.00 (checks payable to Carmel Catholic High School). In addition to the fee, eighth graders should also bring several #2 pencils. It is not necessary to pre-register for the test. Free bus transportation is available from area parishes and schools. Families are encouraged to visit the website, www.carmelhs.org, for additional information, including the bus schedule. Once on the website, click on the Admissions tab. For more information, call **Brian Stith** at **847.388.3320** or email bstith@carmelhs.org.

ST. VIATOR HIGH SCHOOL TUITION ASSISTANCE SEMINAR

A tuition assistance seminar will be held on **Wednesday, January 6th**, at 7:00 p.m. to review the application process for tuition assistance with prospective parents. All perspective families are invited to attend this seminar in the Jeuck Auditorium. The seminar will be conducted by Fr. Mick Egan, President, and Mrs. Nora Boka, Controller. This year over \$1 million of tuition assistance was awarded to 26% of our students.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Monday: 1 John 1:5-2:2/Matthew 2:13-18
Tuesday: 1 John 2:3-11/Luke 2:22-35
Wednesday: 1 John 2:12-17/Luke 2:36-40
Thursday: 1 John 2:18-21/John 1:1-18
Friday: Numbers 6:22-27/Galatians 4:4-7/
Luke 2:16-21
Saturday: 1 John 2:22-28/John 1:19-28
Sunday: Isaiah 60:1-6/Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6/
Matthew 2:1-12

FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

St. Francis, Lake Zurich, offers *The Forever in Our Hearts* group, a non-denominational self-help support group for grieving parents who have lost children during pregnancy, infancy, childhood or adulthood. The group meets the third Wednesday of each month in the Church Gathering Space at 7:30 p.m. Members have the opportunity, if they wish, to express feelings of grief, learn about the process of grieving and, in time, grow to move on with living again. For more information, call **Linda Engle**, Director of Care Ministries, at **847.726.4783**.

LOYOLA ACADEMY ENTRANCE EXAM

The Entrance Exam for Loyola Academy will take place on **Saturday, January 9th**, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Students should bring two #2 pencils and a \$25.00 testing fee. No registration is necessary. Students who wish to attend Loyola Academy must take the entrance exam at Loyola Academy. Parents are invited to come to Loyola on the morning of the exam for a presentation on the academic program and placement for the year starting at 8:30 a.m. in the East Gym.

ST. VIATOR HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAM

The entrance exam will be given on **Saturday, January 9th**, at 8:00 a.m. Interested students should arrive by 7:45 a.m. at the North entrance of the school and bring two #2 pencils along with a \$25.00 check (payable to SVHS). The test will conclude between 11:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Saint Viator is located at 1213 E. Oakton Street, Arlington Heights.

Sharing the Living Story

CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT, 2009 (14ABC)

Isaiah 9:1-6

- ¹ The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone.
- ² You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing,
as they rejoice before you as at the harvest, as men make merry when dividing spoils.
- ³ For the yoke that burdened them, the pole on their shoulder,
and the rod of their taskmaster you have smashed, as on the day of Midian.
- ⁴ For every boot that tramped in battle, every cloak rolled in blood,
will be burned as fuel for flames.
- ⁵ For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests.
They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.
- ⁶ His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, from David's throne, and over his kingdom,
which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!

Ps. 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13.

Today is born our Savior, Christ the LORD.

Luke 2:1-14

- ¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus
that the whole world should be enrolled.
- ² This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria.
- ³ So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town.
- ⁴ And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea,
to the city of David that is called Bethlehem,
because he was of the house and family of David,
- ⁵ to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.
- ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to have her child,
⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn son.
She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger,
because there was no room for them in the inn.
- ⁸ Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields
and keeping the night watch over their flock.
- ⁹ The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them,
and they were struck with great fear.
- ¹⁰ The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid;
for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.
- ¹¹ For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.
- ¹² And this will be a sign for you:
you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."
- ¹³ And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel,
praising God and saying:
- ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

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Mass* may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

BY CLEM ASERON, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF LITURGY AND COORDINATOR OF SCRIPTURAL MINISTRIES

It is difficult to escape the years of over-laying our own fond images of Christmas onto Luke's version of the birth of Jesus. We highly esteem this story so it is important to put it in perspective. Luke and Matthew are the only books of the 27 comprising the Christian scriptures to significantly mention the birth, but their purpose is not historical. The two are at variance in several key ways!

Recall that Luke addresses Greek-Roman Christian readers in the 80s. Like the other evangelists, his purpose is not to outline history in any scientific sense, but to provide assurance that God's promises to Israel have been fulfilled in Jesus and that this salvation extends beyond the Chosen to the gentiles, the pagans. Luke writes theology, not history.

Recall also that **honor and shame** are core values in Mediterranean society and that everything, even survival, is dependent on maintaining that honor. Honor is the social position that one claims in the community, along with the accompanying public acknowledgement of that claim by the community. So honor makes possible appropriate, even prescribed, interaction among equals, as well as between superiors and inferiors. (Think, for example, of the rigidly defined status of lepers in the gospel stories.) **Ascribed** honor derives from being born into a certain family: being born into an honorable family confers honorable status. The converse, being born into a family of shepherds, is a dishonorable social position. **Acquired** honor comes from winning at the ever-present game of **challenge/riposte**. A challenge must always be answered; a gift requires reciprocation. The challenge of an insult requires an equal or better riposte (response) with the risk of irreparable loss of status in the event of failure.

These are no small considerations; it is social life and death (recall the story of the Prodigal); in extreme ostracism, physical death could result. The honor status of the family rigidly determines with whom members can associate, which functions they can attend (not all are welcome at all tables), where they can live, with whom they can do business, who can be marriage partners. So family honor must be maintained at all costs or it will slip down the scale; loss of honor by one member diminishes the whole.

What does this have to do with Christmas?

Appreciation of the mindset of Luke's audience can sharpen our vision to see beyond our modern Western images and into the power of the passage that Luke intended for his readers.

Luke is the gospel writer who highlights that Jesus offers salvation to *all* peoples; the whole world is invited! In vv. 1-3, he plays a bit with history (there is no secular corroboration of a census of the whole world) in order to set Jesus' birth clearly within a framework larger than the concerns of Judeans (Jews). How fitting that Luke mentions Augustus Caesar, the one responsible for the peace Rome imposed throughout the Roman world (Pax Romana)? His Prince of Peace brings peace to those *beyond* the house of Israel. At v.4, the birth in Bethlehem, Joseph's paternal "hometown," Luke further identifies Jesus as having **honor** as he is part of the lineage of David, the revered Judean king. Note that in Matthew (1:24), honor is given to Jesus because Joseph finally accepts Jesus as his own son; this gives Jesus status!

There is much at v.7 that needs a cultural lens. There probably was no inn! Bethlehem was a town of around 100 families; a commercial inn would be more likely found in Jerusalem, two hours away. Joseph goes to Bethlehem to register

for land tax purposes. Presumably, in his ancestral hometown, there would be family with whom he would be obligated to stay for the sake of his own honor and that of the extended family. It is not likely that there was no family, but he would still be acknowledged as belonging to that village and in fulfillment of honor, would be accommodated in some family's abode. The Greek word normally translated as "inn" refers, in a peasant home, to the space in which guests were placed. The family occupied the raised (stepped) end of a large room and their animals the lower end; in between was the manger, or feeding area, where any birthing, animal or human, occurred. That *there was no room for them* might indicate that there was already a guest(s) present.

We customarily think of shepherds (v.8.) in rustic, even romantic terms, but they were members of a low social class. They were lumped with ass drivers and camel drivers, tanners, and butchers, and other despised occupations. They were considered without honor as they could not protect their wives and sisters because they were away from home at night; in addition, they had low honor since they grazed wherever there was grass often with little regard for property ownership. And they stank. Moreover, they were always up to their elbows in birthing and death among their flocks; touching blood and dead animals made them ritually unclean; tending flocks was 24/7; they never got to Temple! That they were the low end of class structure further underscores that Jesus was universal, for all; it was to these despised ones that the great proclamation of vv.10 and 11 is made: *good news of great joy that will be for all the people*. Since a claim to honor must be publicly validated, Luke carefully records the proclamation (made privately to the shepherds) and accordingly records their own acclamation at 17, 18 and 20 (not included today). Note that Luke includes the other end of the spectrum in citing a claim to honor for the child: it is an angel, by tradition, God's own messenger, who makes the proclamation ... *behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David, a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord*. Can there be a greater claim to honor?

At v.11, Luke insists that it is in the line of David that there is born a savior ... *who is Messiah and Lord*. In David's city is born the Savior, the Anointed One, which we Christians put onto the words of Isaiah in today's first reading (see above). This One will bring a joy that surpasses the joy of a good harvest or the dividing of spoils at a great victory (v.2); this One will bring salvation surpassing the liberation experienced at Midian when God lifted the yoke of oppression of the pagan Midianites (v.3). The titles of the child born to us (v.5) combine the best of human attributes with the characteristics of a heaven appointed king. The human attributes are: he will be – **Counselor** (have sharp political insight with sound ability to judge justly); he will be **Hero** (possess military might); he will be **Father** (have great solicitude for his people); he will be **Prince** (a leader with a tie to the King). Paired with these four are gifts that can come only from heaven: **Wonder, God, Forever, Peace**; these God-gifts are the essence of God's reign described v.6: *dominion is vast ... forever peaceful ... judgment and justice ... both now and forever*.

Luke upholds the claim to high honor made for Jesus and clearly extends the meaning of Jesus as Savior beyond the expectation of Israel to include *all* peoples, that is, gentiles as well as the Chosen People.

All these cultural insights: **So What??**

Given these insights made through the Mediterranean cultural lens, what other meanings might we give to our celebrations today that could form a connection between the Christmas story and, let's say, with Good Friday, or Easter Sunday – or for that matter, with any other day?

The Weekly Article from Ronald Rolheiser

REASONS TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

For many people, the thought of Christmas brings fatigue. It's not the religious aspect that causes the tiredness, but the overdrawn rituals that surround it: the overly decorated shops, the constrictive shopping, the lights, the Santas, the Christmas trees, and the carols that begin to echo through our malls already in early November.

And so it is asked: What has all of this, or any of it, got to do with the birth of Jesus? Hasn't Advent, which is supposed to be a time of preparation for the feast, become an exhausting ordeal that brings us to Christmas day already saturated with what we were supposed to be building up to? Wouldn't we honor Jesus more if we spend the money we lavish on Christmas on the poor instead? Don't our Christmas celebrations serve to obliterate our awareness of Jesus' birth more than highlight it? Valid questions.

Our Christmas celebrations, admittedly, do start too early, are too commercially driven, do focus too little on anything religious, and do not take the poor sufficiently into account. Too often, too, they serve to obliterate religious awareness rather than highlight it. And so it is easy to be cynical about Christmas. It contains too many excesses.

However, with that being conceded, we need to be careful not to throw out the baby with the bath water – and that is more than a pun in this case. Because something is done badly does not mean it should be cancelled. What is called for, I believe, is not the cancellation of the tinsel, the lights, the socials, the food, and the drink that surround Christmas, but a better use of them. There are good reasons to cancel the rituals with which we surround Christmas, but there are even better reasons for keeping them.

What are those reasons? Why continue so many of these rituals when, almost invariably, they degenerate into excess and fatigue?

Because we have a congenital need to celebrate, pure and simple. As human beings we have a healthy, God-given, genetically-encoded need to sometimes make festival, to have carnival, to celebrate an elaborate Sabbath, to park our prudence for a few hours, and to live life as if there wasn't any reason to pinch our pennies or to be cold to our neighbors. Christmas is Sabbath, the supreme Sabbath.

There are seasons in life, and these should be on a regular cycle, that are meant precisely for enjoyment, for family, for friends, for color, for tinsel, and for good

food and good drink. There is even the occasional time for some prudent excess. Jesus gave voice to this when his disciples were scandalized by a woman's excess in anointing his feet with perfume and kisses.

All cultures, not least those who are economically poor, have times of festival where, explicitly or implicitly, they take seriously the words: *The poor you will always have with you, but today it is time to celebrate.* Christmas is such a time, meant for festival.

John Shea, in his now-classic book on Christmas, *"Starlight,"* tells the story of a family who decided one year to celebrate an alternative Christmas. They did not put up a tree, did not string up any lights, played no carols, and did not exchange gifts. They met for a simple, quiet meal on Christmas day. Asked by friends how it all went over, one family member replied that it "was pleasant." Another member, perhaps speaking more honestly, stated that it was "an existential abyss."

There is a God-given pressure inside of us that pushes us to celebrate and instills in us an irrepressible sense that we are not meant for poverty, gloom, and carefully measured-out relationships, but that we are meant ultimately for the feast, the dance, the place of lights and music, and the place where we don't measure out our pennies and our hearts on the basis of having to survive and pay mortgages. The celebration of festival and carnival, even with their excesses, helps teach us that.

Christmas is such a festival. In the end, its celebration is a lesson in faith and hope, even when it isn't as strong a lesson in prudence.

To make a festival of Christmas, to surround Jesus' birthday with all the joy, light, music, gift-giving, energy, and warmth we can muster is, strange as this may sound, a prophetic act. It is, or at least it can be, an expression of faith and hope. It's not the person who says: "It's rotten; let's cancel it!" who radiates hope. That can easily be despair masquerading as faith. No. It is the man or woman who, despite the world's misuse and abuse of these, still strings up the Christmas lights, trims the tree and the turkey, turns up the carols, passes gifts to loved ones, sits down at table with family and friends, and flashes a grin to the world, who is radiating faith, who is saying that we are meant for more than gloom, who is celebrating Jesus' birth.

Ronald Rolheiser, a Roman Catholic priest and member of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. His weekly column is carried by more than sixty newspapers worldwide. He can be contacted through his website, www.ronrolheiser.com.

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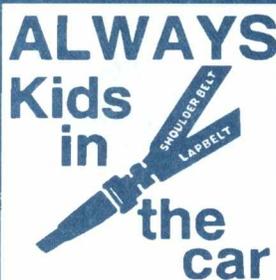


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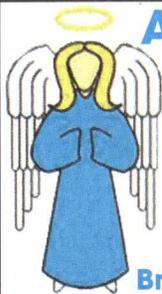
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St. Anne Website: www.stannebarrington.org

Parish Office

847.382.5300

847.382.5363 parish fax

847.756.4051 youth ministry fax

Monday - Friday: 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Saturday: 9:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.

Sunday: 9:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

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Dean of Vicariate 1F

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Sr. Ann Busch, Principal

Sharing Parish

St. Frances of Rome, 1428 S. 59th Ct.,
Cicero, 60804, 708.652.2140

Fr. Mark Bartosic, Pastor

Liturgy Schedule

Monday-Friday: 8:15 a.m.

Saturday: First Saturday: 8:15 a.m.

Mass of Anticipation: 5:15 p.m.

Reconciliation: 9:15 a.m. until all are heard

Sunday: 7:15, 9:00*, 11:00* a.m., 5:15 p.m.

*Babysitting is available.

Assisted hearing devices are available.

Visitation of the Sick: If you or a family member are in a local hospital or are homebound, and would like a visit from a minister of care or a priest, please call Mary Hoffing at 847.382.2148.

We believe that the celebration of the sacraments ranks among the most important gifts that we have. We look forward to sharing these celebrations with those who, in some way, are part of our community. Therefore, please note the following:

Baptism: Our Baptismal ministry is pleased to help your family prepare for the special event of your child's entrance into our faith community. For those parents who are baptizing their first child, please allow 2 to 3 months in order to attend 2 required Baptism sessions *before* setting the Baptism date. For a subsequent child's baptism, an interview session must be scheduled prior to setting the date. All schedules are done in the parish office. Please call 847.382.5300.

Marriage: If you are planning to be married at St. Anne, your preparation process should begin seven months to one year prior to your wedding date. Please call the parish office to secure a date as soon as possible. Membership at St. Anne is *not* a requirement. We look forward to helping you during this time of engagement and preparation for the vocation of Christian marriage.

First Eucharist and First Reconciliation: These sacraments are celebrated in the second grade. Candidates must complete the required preparation program. Please call the REP office at 847.620.3068.

Confirmation: This sacrament is celebrated in high school. Candidates must be registered parishioners and complete the required preparation program. Please call 847.620.3072.

Reconciliation: Saturdays 9:15 a.m. until all are heard.

Registration: To enter into our faith community as a member of St. Anne parish, please call the parish office to schedule a meeting with one of our welcoming team members and update our parish records.

Gospel Champions Code: E2KG5FC4A