

Fr. Dave's Den: "MARANATHA" - This one word prayer passed on throughout the centuries translates, "Come Lord Jesus." It is the essential prayer of Advent which begins today. For the next five weeks we as a Church will pray for the coming of Jesus at Christmas and at the end of time.

Advent, then is a season of great expectation and anticipation. This sense of waiting, however isn't always easy to endure. How many of us find waiting difficult? Waiting can produce within us anxiety and stress. Given the proliferation of "instant products" in our society the waiting of Advent seemingly becomes more of a struggle each year.

Waiting however can offer so many graces and blessings. For example, how many of us have waited for a bus and at the same time met a new friend? Or how many of us have waited to see the doctor and at the same time read an excellent article in a magazine? Or how many of us have waited for the burgers to sizzle on the grill and at the same time savored the succulent charcoal aroma? Waiting can be fun, exciting and grace filled. There can be no Christmas without Advent. Enjoy the wait. And let us humbly pray, "May the Lord protect us from anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ."

In this beautiful season of hopeful waiting I call your attention to two ways to wait and pray for the coming of Jesus. First, there is Holy Hour every Wednesday night from 7:00 to 8:00 PM. This time calls us to wait and listen to the Lord Jesus who speaks to our heart. Please keep in mind, however, that there is no Holy Hour on Wednesday, December 8th as there will be 7:00 PM Mass instead for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The second way to prepare for the coming of Jesus is through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Reconciliation takes place every Saturday from 11:00 AM till Noon or by appointment. During the week of December 13th there will be Communal Penance Services with multiple priests at 7:00 PM: Monday – St. Gerald Majella, Tuesday – St. Bart's – Wednesday – St. Susanna's. The last day

for Confession will be Saturday, December 18, 2004 at 11:00 AM.

Once again we are making available to everyone in the parish *The Word Among Us* meditation book. There is a reflection for the daily readings as well as some interesting articles. Be sure to take one of these booklets that are available in the vestibule of the Church.

This week Sister Dorothy Pawlus, CSFN officially becomes a full time employee. You may recall the search committee recommended that Sister Dorothy's position become a full-time one. It has been a delight working with Sister Dorothy. In just a short time Sister has immersed herself into the ups and downs of the Parish. In addition to her social service responsibilities, Sister will direct the monthly Baptismal preparation class and begin the work on forming a Women's Guild that reaches out to women of all ages. Be sure to introduce yourself to Sister Dorothy and give her a warm St. Bartholomew welcome.

While this is the Advent season, today people use this time to do Christmas shopping. Remember we can take the stress out of your shopping with our new scrip program. The world just got even smaller. You can purchase certificates for an array of establishments without even leaving Penn Hills. Some of those establishments include Bath and Body Works, Best Buy, Blockbuster, J C Penney, Kohl's, Toys-R-Us/Kids-R-Us and Babies-R-Us. Restaurants include: Applebee's, Bob Evans, Max and Erma's, Outback Steakhouse and Panera Bread. You can also obtain gas cards. Come shop with us. We not only have scrip but we also have St. Bartholomew sweatshirts, t-shirts and hats.

Don't forget to order our Christmas CD *Let There Be Light!* Cost is \$16.00. This CD includes songs sung by our children's choir, adult choir, Stephanie Hon, Will Smith and myself. For more info, call the rectory.

Finally, thanks to everyone who helped make the 50th Anniversary celebration of our school such a huge success. We are now starting to plan for the 100th Anniversary!

School News with Mrs. Fleet

All of us at St. Bartholomew School are praying that all of you are having a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving holiday.

School resumes for us on Tuesday, November 30. On this day, we will begin to celebrate Advent as a school family with our weekly Advent wreath service.

Our preschoolers will receive free vision screening on Wednesday, December 1.

All of you are invited to celebrate liturgy with us on Friday, December 3. Mrs. Pricer and our eighth graders are helping to plan our Mass.

A special thank you to everyone who played any part in helping to make last weekend's fiftieth anniversary celebrate such an outstanding success. With the help of so many people, I am sure that the good feelings and warm memories will linger always. Here is to another fifty years of excellent education at St. Bartholomew School! May the good Lord continue to shower our special corner of the world with only life's best.

I am well aware of the many sacrifices that have been made throughout the years and continues to be made by the parish family for the continued enrichment of our school children. My heartfelt gratitude is extended to each and every one of you for your continued support.

BINGO

St. Bart's Monday Night Bingo is held every Monday in Helzlsouer Hall, starting at 7:00 PM.

A Respect Life Meditation

(Humanae Vitae - Doctrinal Principle: Respect for the Nature of the Marriage Act #11 - Pope Paul VI, 1968)
 "... the Church, calling men back to the observance of the norms of the natural law, as interpreted by its constant doctrine, teaches that each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life."

We pray that all faithful Catholics will heed the U.S. Bishops to "unite with the Holy Father and receive with sincerity what he has taught, to study it carefully, and to form their consciences in its light.

Life Teen - Leading Teens Closer to Christ

Pizza and cookie dough is now on sale. See any Life Teen member. We will be taking orders for the Joe Corbi's pizza and cookie dough after all Masses next weekend. Also, Life Teen returns on Saturday, December 4. Join us for Mass at 5:00 PM!

Religious Education News with Arlene Golden

Jesus tells us: "Stay awake! Always be ready! You do not know when your Lord is coming" (Matthew 24:22).

Religious Education Classes: Classes resume next Sunday. Children in grades kindergarten through eighth meet Sunday morning from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM, in the school. Parents/guardians are reminded to call the catechetical office if their son or daughter will be absent.

Class Cancellation: In the event of inclement weather or other emergencies, parents/guardians are reminded to tune to KDKA, WPXI-TV, or WTAE-TV for class cancellation.

Baptisms: Parents wishing to have their child baptized are to attend a class prior to scheduling the baptism. The next class is Tuesday, December 14, in room 206 of the school. Remember, godparents need to be practicing Catholics and if a member of another parish must have a letter of verification from their pastor.

Christmas Needs

Do you know someone or a family in need of a Christmas gift? If you know a person, family, child, or infant that needs a gift for Christmas, please call Sr. Dorothy at 412-242-7357. Give the name, address, phone number, and age of each person in need. **All information is confidential.**

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S WOMEN'S GUILD

The St. Bart's Women's Guild will have a Christmas party on December 7, 2004. The Guild invites all women of the parish to join the festivities. Chef Beck will cater and reservations may be made by calling Katherine at 412-798-9819.

Give a Gift at Christmas

During Advent, you may share the spirit of Jesus' birth by giving a gift to a needy person through St. Bartholomew's Giving Tree. Pick a tag from the Giving Tree and buy a special gift for the person described. Wrap the gift and place the tag from the tree on the outside of the package, then place the gift under the Giving Tree by December 12, 2004. The Ladies of Charity will deliver your gift to the special person you selected. Thank you for your giving spirit!



Getting Ready

Today marks the beginning of another liturgical year. The tone of today's readings casts us in the role of students learning solemn lessons. The reading from Isaiah sets the stage, calling us up a mountain to receive the Lord's instruction. In this passage we study peace.

Then Paul steps forth with sober admonitions. We have to wake up; the day is almost here. Live honorably in the light. Paul reminds us that we really do know the time in which we are living.

Finally, Matthew presents Jesus the storyteller. Just imagine, Jesus tells us, what it was like in Noah's time. He paints a vivid picture of ordinary people living ordinary lives and ignoring the warnings that Noah heeded. Totally unconcerned, they were destroyed. How will it be any different for us? No one knows when the Lord will come. But we have been warned.

Perhaps we find such sobering scriptures unappealing and threatening. But within them there is promise. We are to live in the light with nothing to hide. We are to be ready.

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Treasures from our Tradition

"People in love make signs of love," wrote our bishops in a document guiding the renewal of liturgical music. They were not merely urging us to sing at Mass, but suggesting that the song itself is a sign of the love of Christ. Love never expressed dies, as we know from experience. Flowers for no special reason, a caress, a hug, a turn around the dance floor, a note on the pillow or in the lunchbox, the aroma of fresh bread in the kitchen, all are signs of love's vitality.

A significant treasure in our Catholic tradition is the place of the sacraments as signs of Christ's love. We can trace the sacraments back to scriptural sources, through centuries of history. They are woven through family tradition and our own life story. Sacraments are the way Christ makes signs of love for the Church. For twenty centuries, God has spoken to us in the arena of the sacraments, and we have responded. For the next year of "Treasure" essays, we will explore the story of sacraments: their sources, their signs and rituals, and the way Christ nurtures and sustains us as we encounter him, the companion on our journey who loves us and faithfully makes signs of that love.

Mass Intentions



MON., November 29 - Advent Weekday

10:00 A.M. Deceased Ciccotelli Family (Family)

TUES., November 30 - St. Andrew

10:00 A.M. Dianne Zacchia (Widman & Zacchia Families)

WED., December 1 - Advent Weekday

7:00 P.M. Holy Hour

THURS., December 2 - Advent Weekday

10:00 A.M. Anthony, Edith, & Margaret D'Andrea (Margaret D'Andrea)

FRI., December 3 - St. Francis Xavier

10:00 A.M. Thomas & Richard Neal (Family)

SAT., December 4 - St. John Damascus

10:00 A.M. Albert Wheeler (Wife & Daughter)

11:00 A.M. Confessions heard until 12:00 noon

5:00 P.M. Gloria Cicero DeJeet (Mother & Family)

SUN., December 5 - Second Sunday of Advent

8:00 A.M. Sister Margaret Mary Mattro (Gino & Mary Jean DeLuliis)

10:30 A.M. People of the Parish

Please remember in your prayers the sick, shut-ins, and hospitalized members of the Parish.

Prayers are also requested for the faithful departed:

Yolanda Troiano and Louisa Varish

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, all collection information will be posted in next weekend's bulletin.

The Harvest Sweepstakes winners will be announced in Church.

Volunteers are Needed!

Please help a family be home for Christmas. Consider giving a very special gift this Christmas - the gift of your time and labor. Over 100 families in Etna are still not able to return to their homes because of the flood of September 17. Volunteer one day of your time and labor to help repair homes under the direction of professional builders. Organizations and church groups are especially welcome. Work crews are available seven days a week. Other volunteer opportunities are also available. To volunteer, call ETNA (Etna Team for Neighborhood Assistance) at 412-252-2412 or 412-252-2338, Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Saturday from 12:00 noon to 5:00 PM.