

Fr. Dan's Den: In the Sacristy of one particular church I remember seeing a plaque hanging on the wall which read: "CELEBRATE THIS MASS AS IF IT WERE YOUR FIRST MASS, YOUR LAST MASS, YOUR ONLY MASS." The point of this saying is clear—we need to embrace the moment for it is all we have.

What if! What if this weekend Mass were our last Mass, would we be ready for death? Would God find us in a state of grace? In the Gospel for today, Jesus calls us to a sense of preparedness. He says, "Therefore stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

What if we were to be called home by God, would all of our affairs be in order? In this month of November as we near the end of the Church year, the Church invites us to think about the end of life and death. Often there are important decisions to be made in the sunset of life. Some of these decisions center on medical care and treatment. For example, do I want to donate my organs? What if I am relegated to a ventilator? And if I cannot make decisions, who will decide for me? Some of these questions are procedural. What funeral home? What about the funeral liturgy? Do I want to be cremated? Where will I be laid to rest? And some of these questions are financial. Who will execute my estate? How are my assets to be divided?

Indeed, there are many decisions to be made in life and death. Dying and death decisions are compounded by the vulnerability of that time. These are hard decisions to make, but they are even more difficult when we wait until the last minute. And if someone else has to make them without any inkling from us, they can be excruciating.

As we pray for our beloved dead and inscribe their names in the Book of Remembrance in this month of November, it is important for us to realize that one day someone will be writing our name in that book. These same people will be reading our obituary in the newspaper. By no means is this meant to be morbid, it's just a fact of life. We know that it will happen, we just do not know

when. Remember that old saying, "There are only two certainties in life, taxes and death."

In order that we might consciously prepare for this inevitability, we have invited Sr. Mary Traupman, CDP to speak to our parish tomorrow evening at 7:00 PM in Church. As an attorney and a woman religious, Sister will speak on advanced directives for health care, ethics of decision making, the importance of designating financial decision making etc. Anyone who wishes to establish a living will or a last will and testament, this talk is for you. And as we make our wills, it is important that we remember the Church. With the average age for males being forty-five and fifty for women in our parish, the time is now to start thinking about death. I encourage you to come and be informed and be ready. And do not be afraid. This is a free service.

Thanks to Sister Dorothy, the Ladies of Charity, Mary Ellen Lang (the choir) and everyone who participated in the Memorial Mass for our beloved dead. From November 1, 2004 to November 1, 2005 we buried ninety-four people.

Tuesday, November 8, is Election Day. Be sure to exercise your right to vote. Remember vegetable/wedding soup will be available – eat in/take-out in the lobby of the gym from 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM. This soup is prepared by Chef George and Ginny Beck. All proceeds benefit the parish.

Speaking of Election Day – please be advised that the passing out of any political advertisements on church property is prohibited. If political flyers or pamphlets end up on your windshield while you are at Mass, they are not from the parish.

Recently we received word that the Sacrament of Confirmation will be conferred on Thursday, May 11, 2006 at 7:00 PM in St. Bartholomew Church by Bishop Paul Bradley. There will be a meeting for all parents and guardians of Confirmation candidates on Monday, November 14, 2005 at 7:00 PM in Church.

Have a blessed week!

School News with Mrs. Fleet

On Monday, November 7, 2005, we will have a dress-up day.

There is no school on Tuesday, November 8, due to Election Day.

Wednesday, November 9, finds us having parent/guardian/teachers conferences for students in grades 4 through 8. Students in grades preschool through 3 will have classes that day. Conferences for children in preschool through third grade will be held on Thursday, November 10. Classes will be held for pupils in grades 4 through 8 this day.

Santa's Shop will be open November 9, 10, and 11 for our school families during the school day and during scheduled conference times.

Please join us for Mass on Friday, November 11, at 10:00 AM. Ms. Valenti and our sixth graders will help to plan our liturgy.

Happy Veteran's Day to all of those who served in our military. Thank you for all that you did to protect our freedoms as Americans.

Registrations are still open for all students in grades three-year-old preschool through eight. We do offer half- and full-day kindergarten sessions. For more information please call the school office at 412-242-2511.

Please continue to save all Campbell product labels, Box Tops for Education, and Shop n' Save receipts. Thank you for all that you do for our school family.

Life Teen—Leading Teens Closer to Christ

Teens, all retreat forms and monies must be turned into Colleen by this Sunday, November 7. Watch for your information letter about retreat in the mail. Please keep our teens and the Core team in your prayers as we go on retreat next weekend, November 11 through 13.

Angel's Closet

Once again the Christ Child Society is offering winter coats for children 15 years of age and younger. If you or anyone you know is in need of a winter coat, please contact Sister Dorothy at 412-242-7357.

Respect Life Meditation

(Intelligent Design or Mindless Evolution?
Bishop Donald Wuerl, Pgh Catholic, 9-16-05)
"The intuition of human experience that there is intelligent design in the universe is so overwhelming that only ideology would deny it a hearing alongside any other theories about the origin of life."

We pray that God's dominion over all life and creation will be recognized as the beginning of genuine peace and harmony among all His children.

THANK YOU!

The Central Blood Bank wishes to thank the parishioners of St. Bartholomew Parish for their participation in the semi-annual blood drive. They collected 29 units of blood.

Thanksgiving Food Drive

The weekend of November 19 and 20, 2005, St. Bartholomew Parish will be holding a Thanksgiving Food Drive to benefit the Penn Hills Service Association which services the majority of the needy citizens of Penn Hills. Donations of non-perishable items and/or money will be accepted at all the Masses that weekend (envelopes for monetary donations will be available in the vestibule). Please be as generous as you are able. Thank you!



Mass Intentions



MON., November 7 - Weekday

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

TUES., November 8 - Weekday

10:00 A.M. Thomas Dougherty (Margaret Dougherty)

WED., November 9 - Dedication of Lateran Basilica

7:00 P.M. Holy Hour

THURS., November 10 - St. Leo the Great

10:00 A.M. Arthur Mulach (Marie & Family)

FRI., November 11 - St. Martin of Tours

10:00 A.M. Anna & Michael Fornicoia (Daughter Anna Marie)

SAT., November 12 - St. Josaphat

10:00 A.M. Peter Nuzzo (Josephine & Bill Carone)

5:00 P.M. 50th Anniversary: Henry & Wanda Weber

SUN., November 13 - 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:00 A.M. Giuseppe Fratangelo (Wife, Angelina)

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.

Advent

It seems so far away, although it really is not. There will be an Advent Retreat here at St. Bartholomew's on Saturday, December 3, 2005. Please mark your calendars. More information will be forthcoming.

Women's Group News

Ladies... mark your calendars! Plans are underway for the parish Women's Group Christmas Party, to be held on Tuesday, December 6, in Helzlsouer Hall, starting with hors d'oeuvres at 6:00 PM. A catered dinner will begin at 6:30 PM. There also will be raffles, Christmas carols, door prizes, a cookie exchange, and Christmas these grab bag (for those wanting to participate). Members are invited to bring a guest, and if your guest enrolls in our Women's Group, you both will be entered into a special prize drawing! The cost of this festive evening is \$10.00. Mark your calendars and make your reservations early by calling Katherine at 412-798-9819.

Wisdom

We consider wisdom today. The first reading from the book of Wisdom presents this precious gift as a feminine spirit, a very desirable virtue sought by many and graciously present to all who seek her. In today's Gospel, Jesus tells a parable to illustrate wisdom in a practical, measurable way. The wise will conserve their resources, use them prudently, and mark the passing of time. The foolish, on the other hand, not planning ahead, will be in the dark. Both of these readings tell us how accessible wisdom is to all who simply and honestly seek it.

Paul's words to the Thessalonians are not about wisdom, but describe one result of true wisdom: To the wise person of faith even death holds no terror. Our faith in Jesus' resurrection tells us we will all one day rise to new life in Christ. © Copyright, J. S. Paluch Co.

Treasures from our Tradition

For several weeks, we have considered penance as a sacrament of forgiveness, and yet there are two other sacraments in this category. The first, of course, is the Eucharist itself. The other is the sacrament of the sick, long associated with penance. The letter of James sets out the deep tradition for caring for the sick: sending for the priests, who will pray and lay their hands on the sick ones, anointing them with oil, and giving them forgiveness. Long before other rites of penance developed, the sacrament of the sick was therefore a profound experience of forgiveness. Jesus often healed the sick, nearly always as a visible sign of forgiveness of sin. The tradition didn't unfold smoothly, however, and within a few centuries the oil of the sick was taken home to be applied by caregivers as a salve, or even to be drunk as a medicine. As early as the second century, bishops were therefore urging that priests should be the ones to visit those separated by illness from the Sunday assembly. Thus the practice of consigning the Eucharist and the oil of the sick to the non-ordained faithful to bring home was relatively short-lived.

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