

*St. Paul's Den:* What is a story without characters?

The Advent story contains a host of characters who each have a significant role. Today's Gospel puts the spotlight on three of them. First, there is the angel Gabriel who is sent by God to deliver a special message. Second, there is a virgin named Mary who is the recipient of this message. Mary is told that she is full of grace and that she will bear a child who will be called holy, the Son of God. And third, there is the Holy Spirit who will enable Mary to conceive. The angel introduces Mary to this special character; "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."

Imagine the shock and surprise of Mary. On the one hand she is greeted by an angel. And on the other hand, she is told that the Holy Spirit will work in concert with her to bring the Son of God into the world. Wow! How would you respond? Mary responds with open trust and faith. She says, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

On this fourth Sunday of Advent the story continues to unfold with a particular emphasis on the person of Mary who said "yes" to God. In our own lives, we are not only called to embrace Mary's example of faith with our own "yes" but also we possess a special role in the beautiful story. Our role is to tell this story in our words and deeds. What's a story without a good story teller?

Of course, more of this story will develop next week-end with the celebration of Christmas, a Holy Day of Obligation. Masses for Christmas will be Saturday evening at 5:00 PM and 10:00 PM and Sunday at 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM. Please note that there will be a second collection at all of these Masses for Christmas Charities. The proceeds of this collection will be forwarded to the Diocese.

Speaking of collections, do not forget the St. Bart's Stocking Fund. We have until the end of this 2005 to collect for this campaign. Remember, this campaign is exempt from parish share. Some people at this time of year often give something extra to the Church. If you plan to do so, do not forget the Stocking Fund.

There will be no Mass or Confessions on Saturday, December 24, and no Confessions Saturday, December 31. Everyone is invited to assist us with the decorating of the Church on Thursday, December 22 at 6:00 PM. If

you cannot get there by 6:00 PM – come when you can. Do not forget to join us for a St. Bart's New Year's Eve Celebration on Saturday, December 31, 2005, at 8:00 PM to 1:00 AM in Helzlsouer Hall. There will be dancing, prizes, and a buffet dinner (beginning at 9:00 PM). The cost is \$15.00 per person, and wine, beer, and pop will be provided. We will have a special champagne toast at midnight. Please note that this event is for adults only. Hope to see you there!

Speaking of the New Year, I want to on behalf of our entire parish thank the following three Funeral Homes for underwriting the expense of our parish calendars which are available today - (Gross Funeral Home, Wylie Funeral Home and Trenz Funeral Home). This is a huge expense. If you should see John Rosella (Gross), Bill Wylie (Wylie), or Theresa or Chuck Trenz (Trenz) be sure to thank them. Not only are they long-time supporters of our parish but they are all professionals who serve this community so well.

As you continue your home decorating for Christmas, I invite you to pray with your families the following prayers of blessing found inside this bulletin – Blessing of a Manger or Nativity Scene – Blessing of a Christmas Tree – Blessing of Home.

Have a blessed week!

### Congratulations to the Lucky 12 Winners

Marie Mulach—\$2000.00  
 Anthony Fanzo—\$800.00  
 M. McMahan—\$300.00  
 Marianne Pavolic—\$200.00  
 Bella Stellitano—\$100.00  
 P. Howard—\$100.00  
 Stephen Rocco—\$100.00  
 Jenn Haas—\$100.00  
 T. Klocko—\$75.00  
 Joe Demeo—\$75.00  
 Patricia Brannagan—\$75.00  
 Mary H. Larkin—\$75.00



School News with Mrs. Fleet

**Please keep** our sixth, seventh, and eighth graders and their teachers and chaperones in your prayers. They are traveling to downtown Pittsburgh on Monday, December 19, to present a donation to Children's Hospital. These students held a walk-a-thon in October to raise money for this cause. Thank you to Mr. Heid for arranging these events.

**All are invited** to our all school Christmas sing-along on Tuesday, December 20, from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM in Church. It will also be our holiday dress-up day. Appreciation is given to Mrs. Lewis, our music teacher, for this great program that we hope you will attend.

**Ms. Manzo and our first graders** invite you to our Advent prayer service. It will be held on Wednesday, December 21, at 9:00 AM in Church. Please plan on joining us for this paralyturgy.

**There is an 11:15 AM dismissal** on Wednesday, December 21. Extended Care will be available for both the AM and PM sessions.

**School will not be in session** from Thursday, December 22, 2005, to Monday, January 2, 2006. Classes are scheduled to resume on Tuesday, January 3, 2006.

**We wish** all of you a most blessed Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year! May God bless you always!

Respect Life Meditation

(Excerpts from the Leaflet Missal Co. "Litany for Life" - 1989) "Deliver us from evil." (Mt 6:13) "The Eucharist is not ordered to the forgiveness of mortal sins. That is proper to the Sacrament of Reconciliation." (1395) "Confession to a priest is an essential part of the Sacrament of Reconciliation." (1456) "Anyone who is aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion without having first received the Sacrament of Reconciliation." (1457)

**We pray** that all sins that diminish the dignity of human life will be forgiven through a sincere and humble confession to a priest.

Religious Education News

**CCD Christmas Break:** The final class for this "year" will be December 18, classes will resume on Sunday January 8. Please make a note of it.

Winter Assistance

As we all brace for rising utility costs this winter, we ask you to remember that help is available for those needing financial assistance through a number of statewide programs and local organizations. If you or someone you know could benefit from one of the utility grants programs this winter, please call the parish office or one of the diocesan organizations listed below. **PLEASE NOTE:** It is critical that anyone needing assistance contact Sr. Dorothy Pawlus, Pastoral Associate, at 412-242-7357, *before* service is terminated.

**BINGO**

Christmas gifts will be distributed this week along with extra door prizes. As a reminder, we will have Bingo on Monday, December 26, 2005, and Monday, January 2, 2006. On December 26, we will be giving away a JVC 20" flat screen TV!

St. Vincent College

High school juniors or seniors and their families are invited to Get Acquainted Day Open House at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, on Saturday, January 14. Registration is from 8:45 to 9:00 AM, followed by an introduction to Saint Vincent College and a student panel. For those who wish to stay, lunch will be available in the Community Dining Center at 12:00 noon. Find out more about this top-ranked Catholic, Benedictine, liberal arts college. Listen to financial aid and admission presentations, meet faculty, administrators, and coaches, and take a campus tour. For information or reservations, phone 1-800-782-5549, email [admission@stvincent.edu](mailto:admission@stvincent.edu), or register online at [www.stvincent.edu/admission/visit](http://www.stvincent.edu/admission/visit).

Additions to Perfect Attendance

Please note that the following students had perfect attendance for the first grading quarter, in addition to those announced in last weekend's bulletin: Glenn Deabner, Lawrence Gyles, Zachary Johnson, Fabrizio Longo, Alexis Modero, Terrence Stanton, and Dennis Turpin.

**Mass Intentions**



**MON., December 19 - Late Advent Weekday**

10:00 A.M. Edward C. Wirth (Joyce & Jim Dawson & Wife)

**TUES., December 20 - Late Advent Weekday**

10:00 A.M. Sara Sciallo (Daughter)

**WED., December 21 - St. Peter Cansius**

7:00 P.M. Holy Hour

**THURS., December 22 - Late Advent Weekday**

10:00 A.M. Ed Condron (Maria Baggetta)

**FRI., December 23 - Late Advent Weekday**

10:00 A.M. Frances & Joseph Triolo

**SAT., December 24 - Vigil of Christmas**

10:00 A.M. No Mass/No Confessions

5:00 P.M. People of the Parish

10:00 P.M. People of the Parish

**SUN., December 25 - Nativity of the Lord**

8:00 A.M. People of the Parish

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.

Charles Knox

**Christmas Decorating**

Are you planning to join us to decorate the Church for Christmas? This is a wonderful opportunity to really delight in the spirit of the season as a group. We will be doing some decorating after the 10:00 AM Mass on Thursday, December 22, 2005, and also more will be done in the evening starting at 6:00 PM. Your assistance will be appreciated at anytime that you may be available.



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**Blessing of a Manger or Nativity Scene**

God of every nation and people,  
From the very beginning of creation  
You have made manifest your love:  
When our need for a Savior was great  
You sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary.  
To our lives he brings joy and peace,  
Justice, mercy, and love.  
Lord,  
Bless all who look upon this manger;  
May it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus,  
And raise up our thoughts to him,  
Who is God-with-us and Savior of all,  
And who lives and reigns for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**Blessing of a Christmas Tree**

Lord our God,  
We praise you for the light of creation:  
The sun, the moon, and the stars of the night.  
We praise you for the light of Israel:  
The Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scripture:  
We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son:  
He is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace,  
Who fills us with the wonder of your love.  
Lord God,  
Let your blessing come upon us  
As we illumine this tree.  
May the light and cheer it gives  
Be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts.  
May all who delight in this tree  
Come to the knowledge and joy of salvation.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**Blessing of Homes**

Lord God of heaven and earth,  
You revealed your only-begotten Son to every nation  
By the guidance of a star.  
Bless this house  
And all who inhabit it.  
Fill them with the light of Christ,  
That their concern for others may reflect your love.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.