

*Fr. Dan's Den:* "O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant....Come and behold Him, born the King of Angels." These words from the English Capuchin priest John Francis Wade echo throughout the world signaling the coming of Emmanuel, God with us. This sacred hymn speaks of a storied tradition. Did you know that this religious carol actually made it to the top ten of the record charts more than once. In addition it is sung in numerous churches on this glorious day. "O Come let us adore Him."

It is both inspiring and heartwarming to witness so many people in Church coming to adore our Lord on this day. The saying is so true, "Jesus is the reason for the season."

With Sister Dorothy, our Pastoral Associate, our parish and school staff, I wish you all a Merry and Blessed Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year. I want to welcome all of our visitors and those who, for whatever reason, are not always with us. While our membership continues to decline as a result of death and relocation, the spirit of our family is alive, well and hopefully contagious. I hope that you will make every effort to join us each Sunday. What better New Year's resolution is there than to consistently practice one's faith and attend Mass regularly? It is one thing to say we're Catholic and it is a whole other thing to be a Catholic.

To be a Catholic is to be a registered member of the Church, loving God and neighbor, receiving the Sacraments, participating in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and contributing to the temporal goods of the Church. Please be sure to be a registered, active member. Please be advised that we cannot give sponsor letters to those who are not registered. If you do not receive Church envelopes, it is because you are either not registered or you are registered but because Church envelopes were not used, the Church discontinued sending them. The cost of postage for Church envelopes is quite high. In the end I hope everyone feels most welcome at St. Bart's.

There is another carol entitled, "I'll be home for Christmas." I hope and pray that everyone finds St. Bart's to be a home. And Sister Dorothy and I thank you for the privilege to serve you. Do not ever hesitate to call on us for assistance.

Speaking of Sr. Dorothy – please join me in wishing her a Happy Birthday. A few years ago Sister entered the world on December 26. Happy Birthday Sister and

thanks for all that you do. You are a blessing to me and our parish.

Please be sure to read the special Christmas bulletin from the parish and school staff.

In lieu of cards and gifts, it has been the custom of this parish to hold an Appreciation Dinner for all volunteers and those who share in any type of ministry (Lectors, Ushers, Eucharistic Ministers, Church Cleaners, Choir, Cantors, Wedding Coordinators, Funeral Servers, Prayers of the Faithful Writers, Bulletin Contributors, Ladies of Charity, St. Vincent de Paul, CCD Catechists, Children's Liturgy of the Word, Bingo Workers, etc.). The Appreciation Dinner will take place on Friday, January 27, 2006. Please be sure to call the rectory to make your reservation. The evening will include a buffet dinner, beverage, dessert, door prizes and dancing.

Next Sunday is January 1 – The Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God and a Holy Day of Obligation. Masses will be Saturday, at 5:00 PM and Sunday at 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM. There will be no Confessions on Saturday, December 31. If you are in need of Confession, feel free to call me and make an appointment.

Wednesday is the last day to make a reservation for the New Year's Eve Party. The night begins at 8:00 PM, lasts till 1:00 AM, and includes 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. To make a reservation - call the rectory.

There will be no Holy Hour this Wednesday, December 28. Also, so that our rectory staff can enjoy some much deserved time off, the Rectory office will be closed Monday, December 26, 2005 and January 1, 2006. Also, the office will close each day this week (Monday through Friday) at 5:00 PM.

Finally I want to thank everyone who worked so hard to make our Advent celebration so special. In particular, a special thanks to Sister Dorothy, Mary Ellen Lang, our Music Director, and Wanda Weber, Bell Choir Director. Christmas is not a day but a season. So let us continue our celebration, "Joyful and triumphant," "O Come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord."



School News with Mrs. Fleet

Our school family wishes all of you a very Merry Christmas and a most happy and healthy New Year! We are most grateful to all of you for your continued prayers and support of an excellent Catholic education. May God bless you always! **School is not in session** until January 3, 2006.

**Thanks for continuing** to save Campbell product labels, Shop N Save receipts, and Box Tops for Education for us. We appreciate your helping hands.

**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.

St. Teresa of Avila School Anniversary

St. Teresa of Avila School, located in the North Hills of Pittsburgh, is celebrating their 100 year anniversary next year. If you are alumni of St. Teresa, you are asked to email [stteresa100@hotmail.com](mailto:stteresa100@hotmail.com) with your name, address, and year of graduation. Or, you can call St. Teresa School at 412-367-9001. A celebration as well as a memory book are currently in the planning stages and they are looking to have representatives from as many graduating classes as possible. Thank you!

**LOVE**

Let those who never loved before,  
love now:  
Let those who always loved,  
love the more.

—Anonymous

Religious Education News

**CCD Christmas Break:** Classes will resume on Sunday, January 8.

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.

Respect Life Meditation

(Pro-life Rosary, 3rd Joyful Mystery) "In becoming man, the Infant Jesus shows the great love God has for the human person. By choosing to be poor, Jesus teaches that all persons have equal human dignity." We pray for those who advocate abortion as a cure for material poverty that they will turn in confidence to our heavenly Father to care for the new life he has created.

B-I-N-G-O

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!

**CHRISTMAS DAY SECOND COLLECTION**

We all realize what a significant time the Christmas Season is for people to reach out in love and generosity to others: family, friends, and, in a special way, to those in need. A longstanding tradition in the Diocese of Pittsburgh on Christmas Day is the Christmas Collection for Children and Youth, formerly known as the "Orphans Collection." The proceeds from this collection are used to support a number of programs in our diocese, which serve many children and young people who depend on our generosity and our loving concern for them. As has been the practice in the past, this collection is credited toward our parish share goal.

## Mass Intentions



**MON., December 26 - St. Stephen**  
10:00 A.M. Sue Della Chioppa (Family)

**TUES., December 27 - St. John**  
10:00 A.M. Elmer Herold (Gretrude, wife)

**WED., December 28 - Holy Innocents**  
7:00 P.M. No Holy Hour

**THURS., December 29 - St. Thomas a Becket**  
10:00 A.M. Neal & Maslen Families (Family)

**FRI., December 30 - The Holy Family**  
10:00 A.M. Rose Antonucci

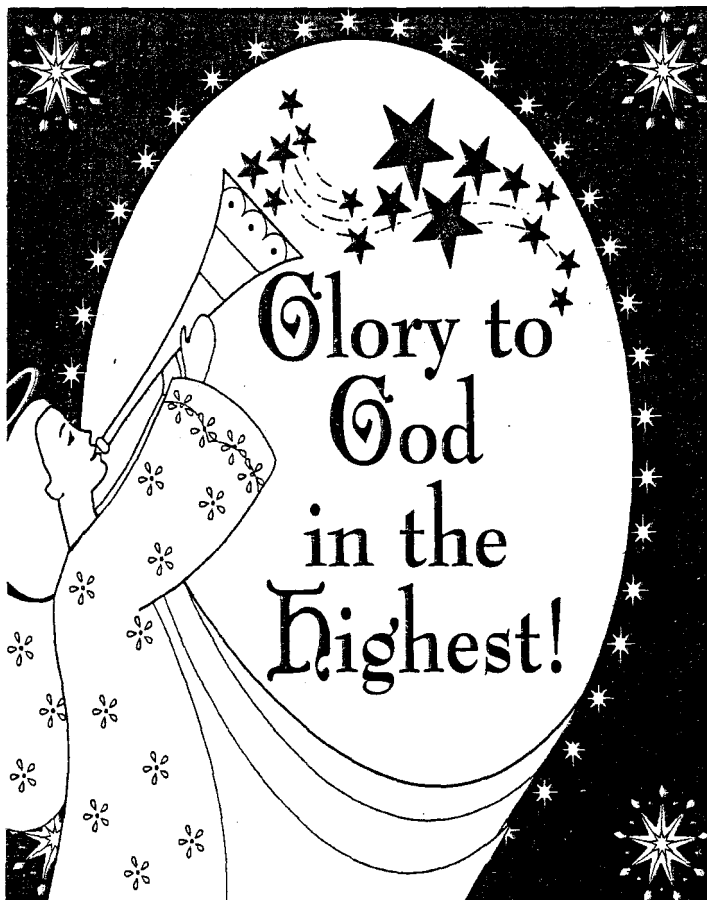
**SAT., December 31 - Seventh Day of Christmas**  
10:00 A.M. Sylvia Scherger (George & Ginny Saniga)  
11:00 A.M. No Confessions  
5:00 P.M. Theresa L. Molchen (Matt Molchen)

**SUN., January 1 - Mary, Mother of God**  
8:00 A.M. People of the Parish  
10:30 A.M. Salvatore Migniongio (Daughter Angelina)

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

Prayers are also requested for the faithful departed.

Vincent DePaul, Margaret McMahon, and Winifred Goetze



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## The Gift of God's Word

On this day of gifts and gift-giving, it seems appropriate that we take a moment to reflect on the great gift of God's Word. Because it is creative, God's Word always points to its author, always calls us to respond. Because it is powerful, God's Word can link the sublime with the ridiculous, the transcendent with the immanent, the divine with the human. Because it is graceful, God's Word establishes a relationship of deep intimacy between us and God.

At the heart of God's Word lies a tantalizing tension between the mysterious and the mundane. In our liturgical celebration, this unresolved tension both reveals the meaning of life for us and calls us to respond, to act upon that meaning.

Once accepted and opened, the gift of God's Word is a gift that keeps on giving and keeps on calling us to give in return. It dares us to be like the gift-giver and to become gifts for others, not only at Christmas, but at every moment of life. © Copyright, J. S. Paluch Co.

## Treasures from our Tradition

An old joke asks, "What time is Midnight Mass?" The answer is not really obvious, since Christmas is unique in having several distinct celebrations. The readings and prayers vary greatly from hour to hour. The Vigil Mass hinges on the family heritage of Jesus and his origins. The concept of "midnight" predates clock time, and really has to do with a celebration in the hours of darkness. Years ago, it was not possible to receive Communion without fasting for a full day, so the late hour of this Mass made it possible for the people to receive. The first Mass after sunrise, the Mass at Dawn, was once known as "The Shepherds' Mass," and later Masses set aside stories of Jesus' birth to focus on the key to the day's celebration: John the Evangelist's majestic theology of Christ's identity as the Word made flesh, dwelling among us. One feast, four separate Masses. Only monasteries manage the whole round. Parishioners typically take just one entry point into the mystery. Yet, there is much to savor and celebrate in the coming of Christ into the world. Christmas is not a day, but a season. You still have two weeks to send those Christmas cards before you're officially late!—James Field, © Copyright, J. S. Paluch Co.

