



How was your first week of Advent? I realize I was a bit strong in my homily last week, but it is so important for us to truly understand the truth and significance of these four weeks. And, it is very frustrating when Advent really is reduced to just lighting a candle in the wreath before dinner . . . but, all of the concentration is on Christmas. In the next few weeks, we will be hearing about, and trying to understand more of the mission and challenge of John the Baptist, who is the *real* focus of Advent. John had a very specific role in the “Divine Plan” of God. John was to be the “herald” . . . the messenger . . . the one to proclaim that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and the people of God were to “*Reform your lives! The Christ has come! Prepare the Way of the Lord!*” John was challenging them to change in their lives what needs to be changed, to end the sin of their lives, for the Christ had come. And, he used this ritual of Baptism as a way to cleanse them. He would take them into the Jordan River, completely submerge or immerse them, so that they would die, or “drown” their old lives of sin . . . and they would come out of the water cleansed and renewed . . . fully prepared to lead a new life of faith. *This is what Advent is about!* Each year since I was ordained, I have presided over somewhere between 30 and 50 funerals a year. I would safely say that a high majority of those funerals came unexpected, regardless of age. I have buried infants, children, teenagers, and young adults. I have buried parents and grandparents. In fact, I have buried every age group. And, what have we always heard the Lord say? “*At a time when you least expect it, the Son of Man will come.*” This season prepares us for that day when the Lord will come in His Glory to take us home to His Father. It has little, if anything, to do with Christmas. May we allow Advent to challenge us to lead truly holy lives, so that we can be prepared to stand before God in judgment, *at any time*, and, *at any age*.

Tomorrow, December 8th, is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and it is a Holy Day of Obligation. The Blessed Mother Mary, as the Immaculate Conception, is the Patroness of the United States. So, this is a very important feast that we should celebrate as American Catholic people. The Blessed Mother truly watches over us and our country, and serves as a wonderful model of faith for all of us. As we live in these difficult economic and moral times . . . and, as we prepare for a new President and new leaders of our government . . . may we call upon the wisdom and strength of Mary to lead us into better times, and help us to be better people. Our Masses on Monday will be 7:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 7:00 in the evening. Please, parents, bring the children.

I do want to mention that we had a guest come to Mass here, and was a rather upset and felt very unwelcome because, apparently, they were sitting where someone else normally sits every week. I have to say that I am rather stunned by that! People, please . . . for the love of God! Unless I am mistaken, *nobody owns a particular pew!* If someone is going to treat someone else terribly because “they are sitting in my pew” . . . don’t come here! Sacred Heart is not for you! This is a welcoming place! It is wonderful to have guests among us!

I am still very troubled by the mauling death of that poor man at that Long Island Wal-Mart. I just cannot possibly imagine that those people would have just trampled him to death, and kept right on shopping for Christmas gifts! It is just unbelievable that such disregard for human life would happen as

people, supposedly, prepared for a celebration of the Birth of Jesus. Please allow me to just keep encouraging all of us to put an end to this terrible Christmas shopping “hunt”. I worked for Isaac Baker’s, selling suits, shirts, ties, sportcoats, slacks, underwear, . . . everything! . . . and, this time of the year used to be great fun, if you worked retail. In those 7 years, I never, ever saw anything like it, and we had stores in the West Erie Plaza, the Millcreek Mall, and downtown. People seemed to have more respect back then, and a greater appreciation of the dignity and meaning of the season. In all those years in retail, I never, ever heard of the day after Thanksgiving being called “Black Friday”. What moron would possibly give it that name? And, when we call it that, what do we think it is going to be like? I just wish these retailers would stop encouraging people to act like savages, and just open up their stores at the normal times. Why create a “mob” atmosphere? Why add to the behavior? We never did it when I was working, and the stores made plenty of money back then, and people were better behaved. I guess I am just tired of the people of America constantly lowering our standards, especially when it comes to behavior. I will bet that if Jesus Himself truly had His wish, He would cancel Christmas because of what it has become.

OK . . . I give you my opinion, which I get to do whether you ask for it or not! I am the Pastor!!! Have a great 2nd Week of Advent! Prepare the Way of the Lord!

Fr. D.

WEEKLY COLLECTION REPORT:

	Nov. 30, 2008	Dec. 2, 2007
Repairs & Improvements	\$314.00	\$532.00
Human Development	\$25.00	\$25.00
Sacrificial Giving	\$5,916.39	\$7,940.50
Amount Needed	\$7,250.00	
Over/(Short)	(\$1,333.61)	

(*includes loose money). Last week, out of 668 families of the parish, 295 envelopes (45%) were used, with an **average** Sacrificial Giving donation of **\$20.06**. Your parish depends on you for your weekly donation. Thanks for your sacrifice.




HOLY LAND ANGELS - The weekend of December 13th and 14th, Christian families from Bethlehem who make their livelihood through the selling of their handmade olive wood religious articles will be at Sacred Heart Parish.

After all of the Masses, there will be a display in the vestibule of the Church of these hand carved items, such as nativity scenes, crucifixes, rosaries, the Last Supper and many other beautiful religious statues. Please look over the carvings that are available and help support this self-help project to keep the Christians present in the Holy Land of Jesus birth.

Our **Parish Reconciliation Service** will be held on Sunday, December 21st at 7:00PM in church. We will have priests available for confession until all are heard. Please join us.



*Mass Intentions
for the Week* 

 *In Our Parish*

Monday, December 8th - Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary - A Holy Day of Obligation

- 7:00 - Michael Kosinski - Bill, Carolyn and Family
- 9:30 - David Althof - Family
- 7:00 - Jane Lego - Calvin and Jane Lockhart

Tuesday, December 9th - St. Juan Diego

- 8:30 - Sophie and Louis Sawicki- MM Len Kubiak

Wednesday, December 10th

- 8:30 - Communion Service

Thursday, December 11th - St. Damasus I

- 8:30 - Charles Groner, Sr. - Lisa and Tom Colvin

Friday, December 12th - Our Lady of Guadalupe

- 8:30 - Gerry McCarthy - Family

Saturday, December 13th - St. Lucy

- 4:30 - For the Parishioners of Sacred Heart Church

Sunday, December 14th - The Third Sunday of Advent

- 9:30 - Jennie Bowes- Children
- 11:30 - Antoinette Corsi Colao - Daughter, Janet and Family

Priest Schedule for December 20th and 21st

Saturday, 4:30PM - Fr. Detisch

Sunday, 9:30AM and 11:30AM - Fr. Detisch

The Sanctuary Candle is burning in memory of †**Rudy Colonna**, and **Thomas and Julia Vlahos** by Joni.

The Altar Bread and Wine are given in memory of †**Margaret Callahan** by Jamie and Joann Rupp.

Scripture Readings for Next Week

Isaiah 61: 1-2a, 10-11 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-24 John 1: 6-8, 19-28

**ALTAR BREAD AND WINE
SPONSORSHIPS ARE NOW AVAILABLE**



From the beginning of our Church, bread and wine have been brought forward by the people for the celebration of the Eucharist. Many even brought bread and wine from home. It was customary to think of every gift to the Church and the poor as a gift to God and to designate it as an offering. As an observant Jew, Jesus used bread and wine to commemorate the Passover meal with His disciples. Thus, the most sacred food for the Jewish Passover Meal has become the very essence of our Eucharistic meal.

A parishioner saw this at other Churches and thought it would be a good idea to start here at Sacred Heart and Pastoral Council agreed. Starting with the beginning of Advent, we will be accepting sponsorships/offerings for the altar bread and wine used at the weekend Mass. It is the same idea as someone sponsoring the Sanctuary Candle. Every weekend and Holy Days would be available. You could use the offering as a memorial or remembrance or special intention, just like a Mass or the Sanctuary Candle. If you are interested in sponsoring the Altar Bread and Wine, stop by the Parish Office or put an envelope marked "Altar Bread and Wine" in the collection basket. Please remember to put the person who it is in memory or honor of and who it is from so we can publish the names in the bulletin. The cost is \$25 and thank you for your continued prayers and support.

PREPARE

Sunday - Coffee & Donuts will be served in the audi following the morning Masses. *All are welcome!!*

Monday - Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary - A Holy Day of Obligation - The Masses are at 7:00AM, 9:30AM, and 7:00PM.

Boy Scout Meeting at 6:00PM in the audi.

Tuesday - The Rosary will be prayed at 2:00PM in church.

Thursday - Finance Meeting at 7:00PM in the Rectory.

Saturday - Church Cleaning Team #5 (Jay and Earl Mittelmeier's team) is scheduled for Saturday, December 13th.



YOUTH GROUP NEWS - Mark's gospel today introduces us to the story of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Today's youth need introduction to Christ in a way that Jesus becomes the major part of their life. We, as disciples, can introduce Jesus to others by the way we live our lives. Mark tells

us of John the Baptist and how he proclaimed the way for Jesus. We in today's world have an obligation to continue that proclamation so that everyone knows Jesus and His story of love. Please join us Thursday, December 11th from 7:00-9:00pm at Evan's Skateland for our Christmas Skating party. If you would like a permission form for our skating party please e-mail me at catholicconnection@gmail.com. Peace. Jesse

TO ALL THE LADIES OF SACRED HEART PARISH

It's time to "haul out the holly", because the Altar Society's annual Christmas Party is Wednesday, December 10th at the Erie Maennerchor Club. Punch with cheese and crackers will be served at 5:30PM and a sit down dinner at 6:30PM.



A lottery tree will be raffled off, along with several gift certificates to some of your favorite places to shop. So ladies, drive, get a ride, hop on the trolley, flag down a cab, whatever...just get into the holiday spirit and come join our festive Christmas party. We'd love to have you!

RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

What we ask you to give

Religious Give Thanks - "When my eyes came to the enclosed check, I immediately prayed a "Glory Be" and was practically moved to tears," wrote an abbot at an Oklahoma monastery for benefits received from The Retirement Fund for Religious.

About 58% of women and men religious are past age 70; 7% are past the age of 90.. More than 4,900 need skilled nursing care. Even at advanced ages, many work in compensated or volunteer ministry that benefits others.

Religious institutes are financially autonomous and responsible for the support of their members. Income sources include compensated ministry, government benefits, and investment return.

Many elderly religious receive, on average, a Social Security benefit of just \$4,402 per year. The average U. S. beneficiary receives \$12,948 annually. Community living provides some economies of scale, but health care and living costs in most religious communities far exceed income.

Ninety-four cents of each dollar donated benefits frail and elderly religious. *Please give, especially in memory of the religious mentors and guides in your life.*



Pray For Peace