

TIDINGS

OF HOLY NAME OF JESUS NATIONAL CATHOLIC PARISH

A Monthly Newsletter of Information and Events

Vol. 25 – 2012

Month of January

No. 1

Setting our Goals

January 1st is the beginning of a new year and the day of New Year's resolutions. New Year's resolutions are a bit arbitrary because we can challenge ourselves to be better on any day of the year, but the convention is in place to dare ourselves to be more like the person we hope to be, or in a more particularly religious vein, to be more like the person we are called to be. With this in mind, maybe it is good that New Year's Day falls on a Sunday this year, although I am worried about attendance so few hours after New Year's Eve. But maybe it is good that one of the first activities of 2012 we can choose to be a part of, is to join the community at worship. Maybe the church is just what we need to get us to think a bit more critically about our goals and to get us to think in unexpected ways about our resolutions.

One of our recently completed Advent themes was the spiritual challenge to think about repentance in a broader scope than individual moral lapses. Advent reminded us that we have never been freed from the prophetic responsibility to the community. Individuals are held responsible for the behaviour of their society. What do we tolerate? Fr. John Meier argues in *A Marginal Jew* that Jesus submitted to John's baptism of "repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mk 1:4) because of the sins of His community. Maybe a New Year that begins with church can get us to think in new ways about our resolutions and goals, to think critically rather than conventionally.

We still stand within the Christmas season of the church. We still meditate upon the wondrous mystery of a kenotic God, of a Saviour who emptied Himself of His divinity, and who shares in our full human nature so that God can become one with us. From the moment of the Bethlehem manger, the gospel message of the first shall be last and the last shall be first is heard clearly in the life of Jesus. As we ponder

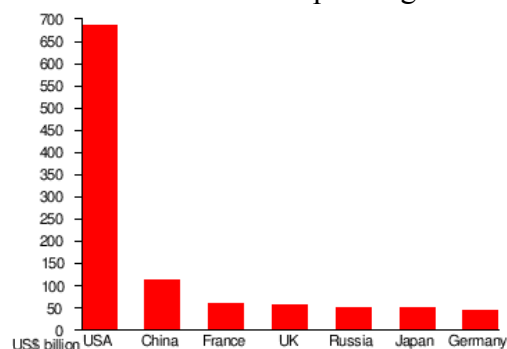
our New Year's resolutions, let us look at our goals through this prism of faith.

Accordingly, let me draw your attention to this cartoon that may be telling about the society we tolerate.



Have we become so orientated to the media and to consumption that "reality" is defined by limousines? In a second-hand story told to me recently, a parent complained about a college-educated child who has not been able to find desired employment. The child's response was a wish to move to the West Coast with some friends, and to live like they do on MTV. This is not made-up. This is the idea of reality that is afflicting our society. What makes it so insidious is that it affects our thinking unnoticed.

Likewise, National Public Radio ran a segment on a very tight Senate race in Virginia. The constituents align on the conservative side of the spectrum in both major parties, and thus so do the candidates. They both profess a desire to cut wasteful government spending, but neither will touch defense spending.



It is worth noting that many of Virginia's less-government voters earn their living from the Defense Department. Are they even aware of their self-centeredness? Maybe a year begun at Mass can start us off thinking more critically about our goals and what we are called to be as

people of faith. Self-centeredness is so prevalent it is not even noticed, and maybe this is exactly why we need a New Year's at church.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
MONTH OF JANUARY

January 1, 2012 – **Feast of the Humble Shepherds**, with special prayers for Sacred Vocations. Mass at 9:00am. Second prayers for the Feast of the Circumcision.

A special collection will be accepted after Mass for our Seminary in Scranton, PA.

January 6th – Monthly visitations to the sick and the shut-in of the parish.

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY. Mass of the day at 6:00pm, with the blessing of chalk and water. Please note special hour of 6PM.

January 8th – Annual meeting of the Adoration Society at 10:00am (Please note special week).

January 9th – Epiphany visitations to the homes of parishioners begins today.

January 10th – Monthly meeting of the Parish Committee at 7:00pm.

January 14th – Confession for the youth of the parish at 10:30am (Please note special week). Pre-Synod meeting at noon, attended by Bp. Paul Sobiechowski.

January 21st – Annual meeting of the YMSofR Men's Group at Amherst Brew Company Restaurant on University Drive at 6:00pm.

January 22nd – Volunteers needed to take the Christmas decorations down in church.

January 29th – Music Scholarship Sunday. A special collection will be accepted after Mass to benefit the National United Choir's Music Scholarship program

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“The past is never dead. It's not even past.”
- William Faulkner

FEAST OF THE HUMBLE SHEPHERDS

In 1906 a Special General Synod was convened and one of its actions was to declare the Sunday after Christmas the Feast of the Humble Shepherds. This Synod was necessary due to the internal and external threats aimed at our two year old church denomination, which had held its first Synod in 1904.

In response to these threats, the Synod established the Feast of Brotherly Love, which is celebrated in September. We would not return hatred for hatred. Rather, we prayed for brotherly love to increase.

The Synod also created the Feast of the Humble Shepherds. We would invoke annually the example of the humble, working people represented by the Bethlehem shepherds, the ones chosen by God in Luke's Gospel to hear the first announcement of Jesus' birth. God had exalted these often shunned and discriminated individuals. God had honoured their honest and humble work as He sent His Son into the world in such extraordinarily ordinary circumstance.

This feast day was meant to encourage the predominantly immigrant and poor church of that day. Those hard working and under-appreciated first parishioners were spiritually strengthened to maintain the good fight of a democratic, people's Catholic church by remembering the example of the Humble Shepherds. This feast reminds us annually to maintain our focus and our grounding. We fight against the meaningless parades of pomp and circumstance. Ours is to be a humble example of church, light on display but laden with meaning and purpose.

With the passage of years, the theme of Sacred Vocations was appended on to the Feast of the Humble Shepherds. We would pray for the virtues of honesty, humbleness and industry as exemplified by the Humble Shepherds of Bethlehem, but with a special concentration on the clergy of our church. We would ask God to bless our clergy and to call forth to Sacred Vocations those chosen by Christ to be the humble shepherds of our congregations.

In conjunction with these prayers, a special collection is accepted after Mass to benefit our seminary in Scranton, PA where the priests of tomorrow will be educated and trained.

This is also an appropriate time to pray for an open-mindedness when it comes to the topic of women in the ministry of our church. With such a dearth of qualified aspirants to Holy Orders, is it not time to at least seriously discuss whether God has called others to Sacred Orders, others who have not been allowed the opportunity to fulfill their vocation?

FEAST OF EPIPHANY

The Christmas stories Matthew and Luke cannot be conflated into one unified account.

They simply do not fit together; they come from different traditions surrounding the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. But within the liturgical tradition of church, these differences must be abrogated because we are not free to celebrate one and not the other. Thus, the tradition arose that the Magi arrived in Bethlehem on the twelfth day after Christmas, which happens to be January 6th. This is referred to as the Feast of Epiphany, the revelation of the Christ Child to the nations.

The Magi, of unknown number, bring gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the newborn "King of the Jews." Matthew is probably here drawing upon the Isaian prophecy: "They shall bring gold and frankincense ..." (60:6) Gold symbolizes the royalty of Jesus as the son of David. Frankincense represents Jesus' divinity as the Son of God. What Matthew adds to the tradition is the gift of myrrh, the burial spice (cf. John 19:39). This gift prophecies Jesus' death as the Son of Man. All of these gifts are represented in the liturgy by the blessing of incense. Chalk and water are also blessed on this day in preparation for the Epiphany visitations to the homes of parishioners.

EPIPHANY HOME VISITATIONS

As mentioned above, the annual visitations to the homes of parishioners begin with Epiphany. The priest takes holy water to bless the homes, and will use the blessed chalk to mark the doorpost of parishioners ("20+K+M+B+12", which refers to the initials of the Wise Men written within the date of 2012).

The visitations will begin in earnest on Monday, January 9th and will continue throughout the month. The schedule of visitations will be printed in the Weekly Bulletin. I would ask that televisions, radios and scanners please be turned off during the blessing, and that if possible the family that is at home gather together for this occasion. If you have a crucifix, it may be displayed in the room of the blessing, and if you have a blessed candle from Candlemas that may also be lit.

MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP SUNDAY

The church has asked that we observe Music Scholarship Sunday on the last Sunday of January. At the completion of Mass, a special

collection will be accepted for the National United Choir's Music Scholarship Fund. These scholarships help our church musicians to advance their study of music with the hopes that they will then share their gifts with the church. Last year Christine Piekarski received one such scholarship and she has been a long-time member of our choir and an occasional soloist. If you would like to apply for a scholarship, please speak to Fr. Calvo about the details.

ANNUAL INVITATIONS

Every January I extend an invitation to our parishioners to become more active in the life and work of our parish.

If you would like to become a **lay reader** at the Mass, the ones who come forward and read the Epistle, please speak to Fr. Calvo. We currently have ten readers who rotate through this once a week ministry. Would you like to become number eleven?

We could really use some additional help **videotaping** our Sunday Mass. We are down to three who help in this capacity. The volunteer tapes the Mass and Fr. Calvo does all of the editing at the FCAT studios. Your help in this way lets the parish reach some of our home-bound parishioners and also to reach out into the wider community. Please speak to Fr. Calvo if you have any other questions.

I **visit** the sick and the shut-in of the parish on a monthly basis. If you or someone you know would like to be added to this list, please contact the rectory. I will be glad to bring them Holy Communion and news from the parish.

The **annual meetings** of the Adoration Society and the YMSofR Men's Group will be held this month. If you would like to join either of these organizations, which do so much for the good of our parish, now is the perfect time.

Lastly, I bring up our **elected offices**. Our annual congregational meeting is not until the second Sunday of March, but the Nominations Committee will begin to work before that time. Mark Stahelski, our Financial Secretary, has let us know that he will not be able to serve another term. This is a very important position on the Committee. If you may be able to help us in this way, please speak to Don Skroski, Parish Committee chairman, or to Fr. Calvo.

The YMSofR Men's Group,
with our very own chef Marc Laurens,
invites you to join us for a special treat.

A

*French Lasagna
Dinner*

The dinner consists of the main course, salad, bread,
dessert and beverage.

The dinner will be served in the Holy Name of Jesus
parish hall, Thayer Street in South Deerfield,
on Sunday, January 15th at 5:00pm.

Adults \$8.00 Children 12 and under \$4

We're hoping this hearty meal will wipe away the
mid-January blues.

Tickets may be purchased after Mass or
by calling the rectory at 665-2129.



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Holy Name of Jesus United Youth Association Super Bowl Sunday Pizza Fundraiser

Country Pie Pizza has been located in Ashfield, MA for 18 years. People from far and wide travel to this small community on Rt. 116 just for their pizza. They make their own sauce and their own cheese blend. I can personally testify to the fact that these pizzas are delicious.

The Parish United Youth Association is running a Pizza Fundraiser. Ashfield is a 30 mile round trip drive from South Deerfield. Just think of the gas you'd burn. But for only \$2 above their in-store price, you can pick-up a half-baked pizza right here at the church on Super Bowl Sunday, February 5th, at 11:00am. Throw it in the oven at 500° for 4-5 minutes and your Super Bowl party just went up a few notches.

Below are your pizza selections.

	COUNTRYPIE PRICES	<u>UYA FUNDRAISER</u>
CHEESE.....	\$13.00.....	<u>\$15.00</u>
PEPPERONI.....	\$15.00.....	<u>\$17.00</u>
SAUSAGE/BACON.....	\$17.00.....	<u>\$19.00</u>
SPINACH, MUSHROOM, RED PEPPER.....	\$20.00.....	<u>\$22.00</u>

Please place your orders by calling the rectory at 665-2129. If paying by check, make them payable to "Holy Name of Jesus UYA." Ordering deadline is January 31st.

On behalf of our United Youth Association, we thank Country Pie Pizza for their support, and you as well.

