

## TIDINGS

OF HOLY NAME OF JESUS NATIONAL CATHOLIC PARISH

A Monthly Newsletter of Information and Events

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No. 1

### A BRAND NEW YEAR. A BRAND NEW COMMITMENT.

As the old year came to an end, we had to remind our parishioners of their financial obligations to the parish and church. We try our best to keep careful watch of your donations. This is important because formal membership in the parish requires a specific financial commitment. In a democratic church, your voice is important, and your voice depends, in part, on an up-to-date membership. For those who suffer financial hardship the Parish Committee has established financial exemptions. In such cases, the parishioner is asked to donate as he or she is able to afford. All that we ask is that a financial hardship request be brought to the Parish Committee in the strictest confidence. These minimum financial commitments to the parish are necessary for us to meet our financial obligations as an institution. Whatever parishioners are able to donate above and beyond these minimum recommendations allows the parish to have greater leeway in her activities and capital improvements.

The minimum financial requirements of the parish are flat. This means they do not vary as, for example, the taxes we pay to the government. Our tax rates increase as our incomes increase. In the church we ask the same minimum donations regardless of ability to donate financially. We do this because we trust that a member will give to his or her church appropriately and according to the dictates of conscience. The New Testament is rather uncompromising in its treatment of wealth. (Read if you choose *The Good Book* by Peter J. Gomes, especially chapter 14) I believe this has much to do with the apocalyptic orientation of the writers; they believed that Jesus would return triumphantly sooner than later, and that this would mark the end of time as we know it. With such a shortened perspective of time, the accumulation of any amount of wealth could be viewed as selfish. While this is obviously not the case after some 2000 years, its perspective on wealth can be interpreted but not rejected. Wealth is a tool not a goal. We obviously have responsibilities that require

wealth to be managed, but we have moral responsibilities to fulfill with our wealth, as well.

If I make \$100,000 a year and donate only 1% to Holy Name of Jesus that equals \$1,000; if I make \$50,000 a year that 1% figures out to \$500; and if I make \$20,000 a year that entails a donation of \$200. Holy Name does not even require \$200 a year for a single member's minimum contribution. Instead, we trust in your commitment to the parish and to the church, and to their ideals. We trust that this personal commitment will help determine, in light of your resources, the donations you freely offer to your church beyond the mandatory.

This idea of commitment is a perspective on membership that we seldom emphasize, and we may suffer because of this. Article III of the church's constitution equates *member* with *believer*, and a believer receives the sacraments and "believes in the ideals, principles and aims of this Church." Furthermore, a believer helps to "realize the aims and mission of this Church." The spiritual duties of believers are to express acts of "worship, love and obedience towards God by private prayer ... corporate worship ... [and] active participation in the sacramental life of the Church." We are very stringent on determining membership based on financial commitments to the church. Can you imagine the uproar if we were as stringent with the spiritual duties that equate member with believer?

By separating the financial and spiritual responsibilities of membership, we may also have allowed for the separation of member and believer. What do we believe if all we do is pay dues to a church? Rather than going down that path, however, this is a New Year, a time of new beginnings, an opportunity for new commitments. Some people cannot afford to donate, and we allow for hardship exemptions. Some cannot come to church, and I bring the sacraments to them. But if there is no excuse, why not take the opportunity of the New Year to make a new commitment to God, church and your own spiritual self? Let us again equate member with believer.

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**  
**MONTH OF JANUARY**

January 1, 2008 – Feast of the Circumcision.

Mass at 9:00am.

January 4<sup>th</sup> – Monthly visitations to the sick and the shut-in of the parish.

January 5<sup>th</sup> – Confession for the youth of the parish at 10:30am.

January 6<sup>th</sup> – **FEAST OF EPIPHANY.** Polish Mass will be recited at 7:45am.

English Mass will be celebrated at 9:00am, with the blessing of incense, chalk and water.

**ANNUAL** meeting of the Parish United Youth Association at 10:00am.

January 7<sup>th</sup> – Epiphany home visitations begin for the season

January 12<sup>th</sup> – Parish Committee Christmas party at 6:00pm at the rectory.

January 19<sup>th</sup> – Youth Convocation 2008 meeting in Webster at 11:00am.

January 20<sup>th</sup> – **FIRST SUNDAY OF PRE-LENT.**

Mass will be celebrated at 9:00am.

January 27<sup>th</sup> – **MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP SUNDAY.**

A special collection will be accepted after Mass for the National United Choir's Music Scholarship Fund.

**ANNUAL** meeting of the Adoration Society at 10:00am.

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“Destiny is no matter of chance. It is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for; it is a thing to be achieved.” – William Jennings Bryan

**FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION**

On the eighth day after His birth, Mary and Joseph would have formally named their child Jesus. This would have happened at his ritual circumcision, which is the rite that extends back to the time of Abraham, the first patriarch. Yahweh made a covenant with Abraham. It is written in the Bible: “I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.” (Genesis 17:7) As a sign that Abraham and his descendents accepted God's covenant, all males would be circumcised on the eighth day after birth. (Gen. 17:9-12)

This commandment to circumcise was judged central to the covenant relationship. It symbolized the contract that allowed God and His people to sojourn together. When even a person of Moses'

stature apparently disregarded it, the consequences were severe. (Exodus 4:24-26) Circumcision marked Abraham's offspring as the chosen people of God.

Jesus enters into this tradition on the eighth day after His birth. He becomes one among the covenant people. His traditions carry Him back to the beginning of Israel. This faith-tradition is where Jesus begins. Jesus will go beyond the tradition into which He was born, but He never rejects it. And on this day, He would have received the name Jesus, the name which means *Yahweh saves* or *Yahweh delivers*. This is the name given to Mary in Luke's Gospel (1:31). Matthew, which is more attuned to the Jewish precedents of the Jesus story, has the name revealed to Joseph along with the name's rationale: “For He will save His people from their sins.” (1:21) Jesus has taken on the salvific work of God. He is within the tradition, and beyond it, as well.

This commemoration of the covenant symbol of circumcision and the naming of Jesus is the background for the church's feast day that begins the New Year. It is not orientated toward the calendar, but rather toward the life of Jesus. What a perfect sentiment to capture our thoughts and expectations as we begin the New Year. This feast day is also especially important for us here at Holy Name of Jesus Parish because it is our parish's name day. For all these reasons I hope that you will choose to gather with me at Mass on January 1<sup>st</sup>. I always hope that to begin the year in God's House is a good omen for the future.

**FEAST OF EPIPHANY**

According to tradition, the Magi of Matthew's Gospel arrive in Bethlehem on the twelfth day after Christmas. They come to Jesus' home bearing prophetic gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The first gift reveals Jesus' royalty as the son of David – the Messiah; the second gift tells us of Jesus' divinity as the Son of God; and the third gift is the burial spice that foretells Jesus' sacrificial death in our place and as our Saviour.

Epiphany falls on a Sunday this year. Before Mass begins, we will bless water, incense and chalk. The incense symbolizes the gifts of the Magi, and the chalk and water will be used by the priest in the blessing of homes during the Epiphany visitations. Come and celebrate the continuing Christmas celebrations with the church.

Others may think Christmas is over and done with, but in the church the celebration moves forward. Just as the revelation of Jesus' birth moved from the Holy Family and the shepherds to the Magi of the Eastern kingdoms so our Christmas celebration continues outward into the Epiphany season.

#### **EPIPHANY HOME VISITATIONS**

As the Magi traveled with their gifts to the home of Jesus so the church comes with her gift of blessing to the homes of her members. Beginning on January 7<sup>th</sup>, Fr. Calvo will be visiting the homes of parishioners. A schedule of visitations will be printed weekly in the Bulletin. When the priest arrives, it would be wonderful to have the whole family gathered together. Please turn off radios, scanners and televisions during our prayers. If you have a crucifix, it could be placed in the room where the blessing will take place. If you also have a blessed candle from Candlemas, this may be lit during our prayers. I also come with a piece of chalk that was blessed on Epiphany. If you would like to have your doorpost marked with the traditional "20 K+M+B 08" (which symbolizes the year 2008 and the initials of the Wise Men), please let me know before I leave your home.

#### **SEASON OF PRE-LENT**

Easter is early this year. It falls on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, which is the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox. This means that Ash Wednesday is February 6<sup>th</sup>. The three Sundays prior to Ash Wednesday mark the season of Pre-Lent. This is a transitional season that begins on January 20<sup>th</sup>. It allows us to move more seamlessly from the joys of the Christmas/ Epiphany Season to the pathos of Great Lent. Pre-Lent is our remote preparation for Holy Week and even Easter.

#### **MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP SUNDAY**

On January 27<sup>th</sup> the parishes of the church are asked to accept a special contribution for the Music Scholarship Fund of the National United Choirs. Your donations at this time allow the NUC to present scholarships to our church musicians. It is hoped that as they hone their musical skills that they will then share these gifts with the church. If we have any aspiring musicians among us, applications for scholarships will be available in the coming months.

#### **MONTHLY VISITATIONS**

During the first week of each month, I visit the sick and the shut-in of the parish. If the person is able, I share with them the sacraments of Penance

and Communion. If you or someone you know is unable to worship with our congregation because of health reasons, please feel free to call the rectory to add the name(s) to my visitations list. It is important that our people still feel connected to the parish even if they can no longer come and join the congregation at church.

#### **LAY READERS**

The parish has a good group of lay readers. These are the parishioners who read the Lesson each Sunday at Mass. If you would like to come forward and join this group, please speak with Fr. Calvo for more information.

#### **PARISH CHOIR**

Also as we begin the New Year, I bring to your attention a gift that we may sometimes take for granted: our choir. Their gift of music and song adds a great deal to our worship. This is one of the most dedicated groups within our church. They meet regularly once a week throughout the year to practice, and then gather again for our Masses on Sundays and Holy Days. If you have been blessed by God with a musical talent, whether singing or playing an instrument, whether you are a man, woman or child, please consider joining our choir and adding to the beauty of our praise to God.

#### **ST. JUDE'S CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL**

The parish is a continuing supporter of St. Jude's Children's Hospital. On a bulletin board in the parish hall are pictures and stories of a few of the children we are able to help through our donations. The parish sends \$19/month as an expression of our Christian charity. If you would like to help support this effort, please clearly mark your donation as for St. Jude's, or you may drop your donation in the collection jug that is placed in the church vestibule. And Thank You.

#### **PARISH WEBSITE**

I hope you have a chance occasionally to check our parish website: [www.holynamedeerfield.org](http://www.holynamedeerfield.org). There is a great deal of information to be found there for current members, and it is a great tool to share with people you know who may be looking for a place to worship. To help defray the cost of maintaining the website we solicit ads. If you have a business, a charity or an event that you would like to advertise, please check the link on the website or speak with Lynnette Poe at your convenience.

**If someone you know needs a hospital visit, please notify the rectory.**