

Connections...

December 30, 2001 – The Holy Family

- + *The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream: "Rise, take the child and his mother; flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you."* Matthew 2:13-15,19-23
- + *What has come into being in the Word was life, and the life was the light for all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.* John 1:1-18

Love in the face of junk

A woman took her aging mother into her home. The mother had a stroke and needed time to recover. The daughter was very solicitous and painstakingly attentive to her mother's every need. Finally the daughter's exhaustion and worry got the better of her and a horrible fight took place—over a hard-boiled egg. In the middle of the war of words, the mother stopped short and asked, "Why are you doing all this for me, anyway?"

The daughter began to list reasons: *I am afraid for you. I want you to get well. I feel that maybe I ignored you when I was younger. I need to show you that I am strong. I need to get you ready for going home alone.*

The daughter could have gone on giving reasons all night.

But her mother said simply, "Junk."

"Junk!" the daughter screamed.

"Yes, junk," her mother quietly repeated. "You don't have to have all those reasons. We love each other. That's enough."

The daughter felt like a child again. When your parents show you something that is true you don't feel put down or embarrassed—you feel better, because it is true, and you know it.

"You're right, Mom. You're really right. I'm sorry."

"Don't be sorry. Junk is fine but you don't need it anymore. I love you."

[From *How Can I Help?* By Ram Dass and Paul Gorman.]

CONNECTION: Family is the one place that does not demand 'junk' from us, the one circle that does not need reasons for loving. Family is where we are always welcome, where we always feel safe, where there is always room for us. Today we celebrate the Holy Family—Mary, Joseph and the Child. As is clear from Matthew's Gospel read these last two Sundays, their struggle as a family was filled with heartache, fear, misunderstanding and doubt, but together they created a family of love and compassion, of nurture and acceptance. Within our own families, we experience together the heights of joy and the depths of pain; but always, within our families, the love of God comes alive—love that is totally selfless, limitless and unconditional, both in good times and (especially) in difficult times. The love asked of a family can be hard, demanding and long-suffering. But it is enough. ♦

Looking Ahead

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30

- 7:30am Mass (Cantor & Organ)
9:30am Mass (Choir & Organ)
11:30am Mass (*Spiritu* Contemporary Group)
1:00pm Hallelujah Chorus (Choir room)
2:00pm 7th & 8th Grade Schola (Choir room)
3:00pm *Hosanna* (Choir room)
6:15pm Mass (No music)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31 - New Year's Eve

- 5:00pm Vigil Mass
11:00pm Candlelight Vigil Mass

TUESDAY, JANUARY 1 – New Year's Day

- 10:00am Mass

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2

- 8:30am Word/Eucharist (Chapel)
9:00am Quilters Group (Anne & Joachim Room)
6:30pm Cantor Rehearsal (Church)
7:00pm Baptism Class (St. Vincent de Paul)
7:15pm Choir practice (Choir Room)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 3

- 8:30am Mass (Chapel)
10:15am Script/Comm (Innsbruck)
2:00pm Script/Comm (St. Anthony)
2:15pm Mass (Trevilla)
7:00pm Parish Council Mtg. (St. Clare)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 4

- 8:30am Mass (Chapel)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5

- 4:30pm Mass (Cantor & Organ)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 6 – EPIPHANY

- 7:30am Mass (Cantor & Organ)
9:30am Mass (Choir & Organ)
9:30am CIC (St. Frances)
10:00am RCIA (St. Vincent De Paul)
10:30am New Parishioner Registration
11:30am Mass (*Spiritu* Contemporary Group)
1:00pm Baptisms (Church/Chapel)
1:00pm Hallelujah Chorus (Choir room)
2:00pm 7th & 8th Grade Schola (Choir room)
3:00pm *Hosanna* (Choir room)
4:00pm Epiphany Vespers (Church)
6:15pm Mass (No music)
7:00pm Confirmation Candidates (Lower Level)

PLEASE NOTE: The parish office is will close at 12:30 p.m. on Monday, December 31.

Feast of Mary, Mother of God

Monday, December 31, 2001

5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass

11:00 p.m. Candlelight Vigil Mass
Followed by Potluck Hors d'oeuvres

Tuesday, January 1, 2002

10:00 a.m. Festival Eucharist

Epiphany Vespers

Sunday, January 6, 2002

4:00 p.m. (Hospitality Following)

Before I forget...

- “Do not go where the path may be. Go instead where there is no path, and leave a trail.”
- Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “The difference between a hero and a coward is one step sideways.”
- Gene Hackman, Actor
- Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.
- Isaiah the Prophet

Four monkeys were put into a room. In the center of the room was a tall pole with a bunch of branches suspended from the top. One particularly hungry monkey eagerly scampered up the pole, intent on retrieving a banana. Just as he reached out to grasp the banana, he was hit with a torrent of cold water from an overhead shower. With a squeal, the monkey abandoned its quest and retreated down the pole. Each monkey attempted, in turn, to secure the banana. Each received an equally chilly shower, and each scampered down without the prize. After repeated drenchings, the monkeys finally gave up on the bananas. With the primates thus conditioned, one of the original four was removed from the experiment and a new monkey added. No sooner had this new, innocent monkey started up the pole than his (or her) companions reached up and yanked the surprised creature down the pole. The monkey got the message—don't climb the pole. After a few such aborted attempts, but without ever having received a cold shower, the new monkey stopped trying to get the bananas. One by one, each of the original monkeys was replaced. Each new monkey learned the same lesson. Don't climb the pole. None of the new monkeys ever made it to the top of the pole. None even got so far as a cold shower. Not one understood precisely why pole climbing was discouraged, but they all respected the well-established precedent. Even after the shower was removed, no monkey ventured up the pole. (**Competing for the Future** by Gary Hamel and C.K. Prahalad.)

Tuesday is the beginning of a brand new year. What are we going to do with it? We have all these good resolutions: lose weight, exercise more, stop smoking, eat better, read more, go to church every Sunday, spend more time with the kids, study harder. Are they the same ones as last year? What stops us from achieving our goals? Are we afraid of an imaginary “cold shower?”

Look at a toddler as he or she is beginning to take its first step and learning to walk. There are a lot of falls and yet they don't stop trying. They want to walk. There are plenty of “cold showers.” Children are not lazy when they want to go places.

The older we get, the harder it is for us to take those first steps of faith. Why are we adults so afraid to take risks, especially in our faith lives? Maybe, that's why Jesus said that only those with the faith of a child will enter the kingdom of heaven (Mark 10). Children have their future before them. It's easier to live in the past, in the good old days. And, yet, wasn't Jesus spiritually daring? Is there anything you do that is risk free? Is there anything you eat that is risk free? Is there anybody you know who is risk-free? Try getting a life insurance policy. Try getting a loan from the bank. Try asking someone out for a date. They all see us as a possible risk.

Will we trust God completely this year? Maybe we want to go places or do things that are not good for us. If we trust the Lord, He may take us to places we'd rather not go, but will we be disappointed? I believe that God keeps calling us to new opportunities broader and deeper than anything that we dared to dream about. Good Friday leads to Easter. And there is no Easter without Good Friday. Don't let anyone talk you out of going for those “spiritual bananas.” Maybe they had a cold shower but that doesn't mean you will.

The Kingdom of Heaven needs people who will take a risk on God instead of letting the kingdom of this world keep us playing it safe.

Fr. Bill

P.S. I'm off to the land “down under” see you in March!

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

We would like to thank everyone who sent Christmas cards and gifts. Your generosity to your parish priests is very much appreciated. Please be assured that your thoughtfulness is most touching.

With our prayers and sincere thanks,

Fr. Bill & Fr. Michael

From the Associate...

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Well, if I look across the year 2001, and ask what was accomplished, I feel pretty good about it. As so many of you, I am very happy and grateful for our new Pastoral Center. I see how much it blesses our experience of community, with the opportunity to gather for donuts and coffee after masses, as well as pancake breakfasts, receptions for volunteers, weddings, funeral luncheons, etc. I also feel that the spiritual life of St. John's is growing. I see more reverence and devotion towards the Eucharist. I observe the dedication of countless parents to their children and school activities. I appreciate the numerous ways parishioners are getting involved with ministries both seen and hidden: choir, lectors, befrienders, prepare couples, etc. It's exciting to see 9:30 a.m. Mass so full that people have to search for open seats. And the new Chapel of the Angels is wonderful for intimate groups; so also the beauty of our new monstrance and the adoration chapel, the Cenacle, which will provide the opportunity to adore the Lord in silence, stillness and holiness, beginning this March. This foundation of prayer will enrich the parish beyond words, and will refresh the adorers to the point where each will ask, "How did I ever get along without this weekly hour of mystical embrace?" St. John's has an exciting future, in the presence of our glorious Savior Jesus Christ, our Heavenly Father, and the Holy Spirit of love and life. We shall not forget also our Blessed Mother Mary, the sweet virgin, who tenderly kisses us, compassionately consoles us, and affectionately receives our consecration and veneration, as she intercedes on our behalf. You are so beautiful Mary!

On a personal note, I am delighted to have accomplished one of my own resolutions for 2001, and that was to finish my Master's Thesis (in Theology), which was overdue. The subject was the concept of conscience according to Cardinal John Henry Newman, a fascinating and brilliant man of the nineteenth century, who converted from the English Church to Catholicism, and through his influence so also did thousands follow him. This was a great learning opportunity. So much of it still applies today. I also made a resolution in 2001 to arrive earlier (on time plus a little, I guess), for Mass and other activities. I'm not so sure I advanced all that much in this area. One of the deacons told me the other day that if I really wanted to do an act of charity, I'd show up fifteen minutes early and talk to the servers. Well, I guess I have to make it a resolution for 2002 as well. Part of my problem I think, is that I feel inside that if I've got fifteen minutes, then I can get just one more thing done before I really have to get there. But this can get a little chaotic: just ask the daily sacristan, Loretta Witkowski, she's seen a few whirlwinds. Poor thing. So what resolution will you make for 2002? An hour a week in our adoration chapel would be a great one. Maybe a new ministry or outreach program to get involved in? I know one man

who resolved to read a book a week, and thus he finished over fifty books in one year. I also know a Christian Brother who vowed never to make a negative comment. I'm not sure how he did, but I'm told there was a notable difference in conversation with him. Maybe say a prayer for God to help you see what a good New Year's resolution would be, and then do it together.

Fr. Michael

From the Facilities Coordinator...

What a wonderful building we have for our new Pastoral Center! We are using it seven days a week, often 15 hours a day! It's not unusual to have three or four hundred people using the building at one time. Where did we ever put all the people and activities before now?

As we began using our new pastoral center, a number of issues surfaced regarding functions not related to parish programs. We want to address these issues before making any new commitments to parishioners or outside groups.

Currently, the Building Policies Committee of the Parish Pastoral Council and the facilities coordinator, Pat Keyes, are working together to update guidelines for use of the new parish center facilities.

We expect that parishioners and outside groups will be able to use the new space once we have finished the facilities policies and guidelines. We will resume making new commitments for these groups by May. In the interim, Pat Keyes will accept inquiries about future dates, and try to answer questions you might have.

Watch for updates in the Forerunner and the weekly bulletin. Thanks, too, for your patience.

School News...

Classes resume January 3, 2002

Catholic Schools Week is coming soon—January 27 through February 1, 2002.

Registration for St. John's kindergarten for the 2002-2003 school year is part of Catholic Schools Week. If you are considering enrolling your child in St. John's excellent, fully accredited school, please join us at our Catholic Schools Week OPEN HOUSE, Sunday, January 27, at 12:30 p.m. (following 11:30 a.m. Mass). Registration takes place in the school cafeteria from 12:30—1:30 p.m.

Please bring the following for registration:

- 1) Birth certificate
- 2) Baptismal certificate (unless baptized at St. John's)
- 3) A fee of \$50 is paid at the time of registration. No student is considered registered unless this fee accompanies the registration form.

Seniors...

It's time to sign up for another trip to Grand Casino—Hinkley. Wednesday, Jan. 23, 2002. 9:15 a.m. departure. \$6 (\$5 back at the door). For questions/information call Ginny Petro at 763-754-5254.

Pastoral Ministry...

For the New Year... an idea!!

Many people in our nursing home could use more contact with people in the community – conversation, some laughs, special one to one time. If you would like to be a friend to someone in the nursing home, call Anne Marie at 651-633-8333 ext. 1237.

It's a meeting free week! Enjoy these holidays, they go by all too quickly.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

Those in our community who are ill:

Beau Anderson, John Battmer, Donald Beaubien, Marcelline Beseler, Marcella Boomer, Helen Cmiel, Ann Czech, Louis Czech, Leona Doroff, Lenore Dougherty, Joe Fellner, Bernadette Hearn, Norris Hoium, Bernice Hopkins, Henry Horbatuck, Br. Joseph Katzmarek, Michael Kavanagh, Kevin Keenan, Herb Loscheider, Joe Maciaszek, Nancy Mehrer, Rupert Meyer, Irene Mitchell, Corliss Moore, Howard Morris, Donna Murphy, Georgianne Myers, Marjorie Peterson, Norman Petri, Ben Ruebbelke, Dennis Ryan, Ed & Eleanor Stich, Richard St. Germain, Sr., Dan Sebesta, Mary Shea, Bob Sorem, Frances Vonacek, Mildred Werner, Linda Zappa, Clair Pesek (father of Tom), Chuck & Catherine Busher.

PRAYER LINE

Call one of these numbers with your prayer requests.

All requests are confidential.

651-633-1618

763-784-5254

651-636-5251



ANGEL TREE THANK YOUS

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of the Angel Tree Project.

- ◆ The volunteers who made and colored the angels.
- ◆ The people who put the angels on the tree.
- ◆ The volunteers who collected

the gifts on Saturdays and Sundays.

- ◆ The volunteers who delivered the gifts on Monday mornings.
- ◆ Everyone who brought an angel gift or gift certificate back. All gifts were in on time and that make it possible for the agencies to process and get the gifts to the recipients on time.

** Please note: A lovely poster from Holy Rosary Catholic Church in South Minneapolis is in the plaza. Please stop by and read it! Angel Tree Committee

Faith Formation...

BAPTISM CLASSES

Wednesday, January 2, 2002 – St. Vincent De Paul Room
Last baptism class before Lent – Wednesday, February 3.
Call Mary Ann Zervas at 651-633-1540 to register for the class and if you have any further questions.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF CHILDREN (CIC)

Family Fun Night!

Movie – and treats!

Possible guest speaker! Come and join in the fun.

St. Vincent De Paul Room (Pastoral Center)

Tuesday, January 8, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

All parents and students are invited!

ELEMENTARY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Classes will resume the week of Jan. 15/16. There are NO CLASSES Jan. 1/2 & Jan. 8/9. Happy Holidays!

CELEBRATE THE WORD

Celebrate the Word will resume on Jan. 6. We will have our first gathering in the new chapel. We are still in need of volunteers for this program. All materials are provided. Please call Teresa Nueman at 651-633-1540 ext. 1234.

SEEKERS (Adult Theological Book Club)

We are seeking to form an adult faith. We read a wide variety of books, and raise a variety of questions. You are always welcome to join us, we ask only that you read the book. The book for January is **Papal Sin** by Garry Wills (Image Books, Doubleday). We will meet Thursday, January 31, 7-8:30 p.m., St. Vincent De Paul Room. Questions call Mary Ann Zervas at 651-633-1540.

CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIALS



If you would like to remember someone you have lost, or honor someone special in your life, during the Christmas Season, we invite you to donate, in their name, to the Christmas plant, wreath & tree fund. We have much additional space to decorate this year! To participate, please complete the form below and send it with \$20 (suggested amount) to the pastoral center or drop in the Sunday collection. We will accept donations through Christmas & will acknowledge them in January bulletins.

In Memory Of / In Honor Of (circle one):

From: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Youth Newz...

Junior high Odyssey (faith formation) students have completed the first two sessions of the program focusing on bible study. Odyssey will begin again in January and students will be studying "moral decision making". A "parents only" session will be held on January 9, at 4:45 or 6:30 p.m. Students sessions will resume January 16.

The second Senior High Service Club has ended. Over 15 students participated in the projects including cleaning, baking and playing games with residents. They celebrated their success with an evening of rock climbing.

Jr. High Live has ended and will resume January 16. The junior high participants have made great use of the 6 games tables in the youth room as well as the space in general.

Confirmation students are now focusing on the Holy Spirit in our regular sessions. Over 200 people attended the candidate/sponsor evening retreat. We spent the time focusing on relationships with each other and our images of God. The first of these retreats is over. The theme for each retreat is discipleship.

All 7-12th graders are invited to spend Monday, January 21, at Afton Alps, skiing and snowboarding. Participants will leave St. John's gym entrance at 10:00 a.m. and return at 7:00 p.m. The cost for the trip, \$25, includes transportation and a lift ticket. Equipment rental is extra. You will also need to pack a lunch and dinner or bring money for food. Chaperones are needed for this event and chaperones will be given a free lift ticket. Please submit a permission slip and money to Rebecca Janicke by January 14. See the *Newzpaper* for more details or contact Sara at 763-754-7666.

Birthright

Caring help for pregnant women.

651-646-7033 – St. Paul
763-757-0715 – Coon Rapids

The parish exists to proclaim the Word of God; to celebrate the Eucharist; to teach our Tradition; to bring comfort to the sick, dying and grieving; to introduce children and youth to Roman Catholic Christian living; to work for justice; to provide charity to those in need; to build up community; to celebrate the love of couples; to bring God's forgiveness to people; to journey together to God's kingdom.

We depend on your generous stewardship in a special way at Christmas and year's end. Please remember the faith community at Christmas. Thank you for your constant generosity.

Fr. Bill Murtaugh

Circle of Women...

The Circle of Women will take a winter break and resume our meetings on Thursday, January 10, 2002. Happy Holidays! See you in January!

Music Notes...

We are seeking pianists and other instrumentalists to provide occasional music at the Sunday, 6:15 p.m. Mass. Contact Cheri Sykes at 651-633-8333 ext. 1231.

Boy Scout Troop 93 News...

Saint John the Baptist sponsors us. Our troop operates with Scoutmaster Charlie Goebel, Senior Patrol Leader Justin Lee, and the Flaming Arrow, and Panther Patrols. Some of the things we have been involved with this fall...

We set up our annual "Scare Trail" at our October camp-out, which was partnered with the Cub Scout Pack. There was plenty of fun and scaring, followed by a large camp fire, smores, tonka toasters, and hot drinks. We have had fun nights roller skating in November and swimming in December as well as our regular meetings to work on advancement, leadership, and plan for upcoming events. We also had our annual Christmas Wreath fundraiser at the church during the last two weekends of November and we wish to thank all the people that bought and supported us during that event. At the same time over 60 coats were donated to our coat drive, and we thank those that provided warmth to those in need.

Congratulations go out to Troop 93's latest Eagle Scout Mike Goebel. His court of honor was held on December 2nd in St. Joseph Hall. We had fun serving pancakes in St. Joseph's Hall after the Immaculate Conception 9:00 mass. It was our first pancake breakfast in the new hall, and enjoyed the large crowd that shared the morning with us.

All the boys and adults in Troop 93 wish all of you a blessed Christmas season, and look forward to seeing you in the community in 2002.

Bulletin Board...

PLAYGROUND POSITION AVAILABLE

If you are a mom, dad or grandparent and love to work with children, have consistent policies and are punctual, St. John's is looking for a playground supervisor for grades 1-8. Hour are 11:45-1:05 daily. This position pays \$10 per day. Call the school office at 651-633-1522.

Weekly Collection

YEAR END GIFTS... If you wish to make a contribution to St. John's for credit in the 2001 tax year, the check must be dated NO LATER than 12/31/01 and must be received in the parish office by January 3, 2002. If you wish to make a gift of stock before the end of the tax year, please contact Bob Mike, Parish Administrator, 651-633-8333. Thank you for your support!