

# 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent December 2, 2007

## Stewardship is a way of life.

### Tithing is God's Plan for Giving:

Tithing income: November 25, 2007	\$ 1973.00
Income for November 26, 2006	\$ 1960.00
Income for November 27, 2005	\$ 1858.00
Student Offerings	\$ 4.75

**Next week's tithing:** will be for the Retirement Fund for Religious: supporting the retired women and men religious.

**From the pastor:** Although Advent has just begun, for the world Christmas is in full swing. The stores and ads are reminding us of all the things we "need" to be happy. However, we know that nothing in this life will truly fill our needs – only God. Our faithful, weekly tithing is just one way that we acknowledge God first in our lives – and the only One who supplies for all our needs.

**Comments on Tithing from the pews:** "The more I help the church or someone in need, the more generous God is to me."

**My Good Deed for the Week:** Here's what several of our young people offered as their tithe, in addition to their financial gift: A pre-k student said, "I helped my mom find things that she had lost." A 9<sup>th</sup> grader said, "I packaged Thanksgiving dinners for the needy

**Weekly Reflection:** We largely remain oblivious to the deeper movement within us of the unfolding of time, unaware that in the midst of daily, mundane activities – like eating, drinking, marrying, grinding at the mill, etc – God's work of salvation is drawing nearer. Thus, time is not a "container" of mundane events, but is advancing toward something *new* – Christ's definitive coming and the fullness of salvation. Would we live differently today if we did not believe Jesus is coming? Our belief in this compels us to "stay awake" by conforming our lives *now* into the ways of the Kingdom *coming*: "throw off the works of darkness" and "put on the Lord Jesus Christ." "Staying awake" is not to be taken literally, but might be taken figuratively in terms of living the Paschal Mystery – dying and rising every day with Christ. The 2<sup>nd</sup> reading uses two images which help us grasp how to live the Paschal Mystery. We must die to "works of darkness" and put on the "armor of light." Darkness and light; Dying and rising. At this time of year when "night is advanced," we ourselves must be the light of Christ dispelling darkness – just as our Christmas decorations light up the dark night. We are that light when we "stay awake" and welcome Christ.

**About Liturgy: Beginning of the Liturgical year:** The First Sunday of Advent hasn't always been the beginning of the Church's liturgical year. At first the Church celebrated only Sunday, a weekly celebration of the Lord's resurrection. Nonetheless, very early on (probably from at least the mid-second century) there is evidence of an annual celebration of the Lord's resurrection and for a long time the "beginning" of the liturgical year coincided with the Easter Vigil. It wasn't until about the tenth or eleventh centuries that Advent began to be considered the beginning of the liturgical year since, with a more historical mentality, it made sense to begin the liturgical year with the beginning of Jesus' earthly In this way the liturgical year with the beginning of Jesus' earthly life at His birth.

However, interpreting the liturgical year historically runs a risk of celebrating the liturgy solely as a commemoration of historical events, rather than our own participation in these historical events. Instead of a historical mentality, the Paschal Mystery – Jesus' dying and rising – is at the very center of the liturgical year and provides the proper interpretive tool. This means that all the festivals of the liturgical year are meant to lead us into a greater appreciation of our participation in them through our Baptism and daily life in the redemptive mystery of Christ. Rather than "begin" with the birth at Christmas and progress toward the death at the Triduum, throughout the liturgical year we celebrate the *whole* mystery of Christ. Various seasons and festivals zero in on a particular aspect of the mystery, but we can never lose sight of the whole mystery of Jesus birth, mission, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and sending of the Spirit to dwell among us and within us.

## HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION Saturday, Dec. 8:

Saturday, December 8 is a Holy Day of Obligation, the Immaculate Conception of the BVM. Catholics are obligated to attend Mass on this day. Because I'm the only priest and because it is a Saturday, the schedule is as follows:

Friday, December 7 at 7pm at Sacred Heart in Lewistown

Saturday, December 8 at 10am at Sacred Heart in Lewistown

Saturday, December 8 at 12noon at St. Jude in Mifflintown.

**Catholics are obliged to attend Mass twice this weekend: once for the Immaculate Conception and once for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent.**

**Celebration of Our Lady / Fiesta de la Virgen: Saturday, December 8:** Immediately following the Mass for the Holy Day of the Immaculate Conception (1pm), the Spanish-speaking community and St. Jude's Youth Group and their families are hosting an "International Celebration of Life & La Fiesta de la Virgen de Guadalupe." Everyone in the parish is invited to join in this kickoff to the Season of Advent that will include a prayerful and lively celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe, international food and music. Contributions will be accepted to help defray the cost of the Pilgrimage to the Nation's Capital for the March for Life in January 2008.

### Advent Penance Service and Confessions:

Sunday, December 9 at 6:30pm. There will be several priests available to assist in celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation with you. There will also be a service at 3pm at Sacred Heart in Mifflintown. This is the ONLY time several priests will be available for Confessions. If you plan to celebrate the Sacrament before Christmas, please plan to attend.

**WARNING TO PARENTS! Learn about The Golden Compass Movie:** On December 7, a film, aimed at children, will be opening in theaters. According to many Christian sources, the movie has a hidden anti-Christian message for children. More information on the parish website at [StJudeMifflintown.org](http://StJudeMifflintown.org).

This week Fr. Bateman is away on his annual 5-day retreat. He'll be gone Monday – Friday. Fr. Meluskey will be in residence at Sacred Heart for emergencies and Masses.

**St. Jude Youth Group:** Our next regular meeting will be TODAY, Sunday, December 2 following the 9:15am Mass. The

program is being coordinated by Ms. Ashely Boyd. All students grades 7-12 (not in CCD) are invited to join us!

**Penn State Chamber Singers Offer Concert December 4, 7:30pm:** The Chamber Singers from Penn State University will perform a program of sacred music from the past 500 years in a concert at Sacred Heart, Lewistown on Tuesday, December 4 at 7:30p.m. A voluntary retiring donation will be taken.

### MASS SCHEDULE



**Sat. Dec 1** – (Dan 7:15-27; Lk 21:34-36)

6:30pm (bilingual) – Paulette Barnes

**Sun. Dec 2** – (Is 2:1-5; Rom 13:11-14; Mt 24:37-44)

9:15am – Rafael Gracia

**Mon. Dec 3** – **St. Francis Xavier** (Is 4:2-6; Mt 8:5-11)

9:00am – All Souls

**Tues. Dec 4** – (Is 11:1-10; Lk 10:21-24)

**Wed. Dec 5** – (Is 25:6-10a; Mt 15:29-37)

**Thurs. Dec 6** – **St. Nicholas** (Is 26:1-6; Mt 7:21, 24-27)

**Fri. Dec 7** – **St. Ambrose** (Is 29:17-24; Mt 9:27-31)

9:00am – Stanly Wasko

**Sat. Dec 8** – **Immaculate Conception of the BVM** – **Holy Day**

(Gen 3:9-15, 20; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38)

12noon – John Rowland

6:30pm (bilingual) – Victor Swaboski

**Sun. Dec 9** – (Is 11:1-10; Rom 15:4-9; Mt 3:1-12)

9:15am – People of the Parish / Los Feligreses

**Rite of Welcome/Admission as Catechumen:** Next Saturday, December 8, during the 6:30pm Mass, 4 young people will be admitted as catechumens of the Church (people preparing to receive the Sacrament of Baptism at the Easter Vigil). A worship aid will be provided.

### Week at a Glance in our parish:

<b>Sunday</b>	CCD/10:30am
<b>Tuesday</b>	Knights of Columbus/7pm/social hall
<b>Thursday</b>	Weis Market Meeting/9am/social hall
<b>Friday</b>	Spanish Prayer, Praise & Potluck/5pm/church
<b>Saturday</b>	Spanish Choir Practice/5:30pm/parish house
	Confessions/5:30pm/church
	Mass/6:30pm/church

**Memorialize Flowers:** To memorialize flowers at the altar or ambo (podium) please call the office to schedule. Dates available: Dec 9, 16, 23

**March for Life – Pilgrimage to the Nation's Capital set for January 21-22, 2008.** The St. Jude's Youth Organization is once again sponsoring a 2-day bus trip to the nation's capital to participate in the Vigil and March for Life to commemorate the Roe vs. Wade decision legalizing abortion in the US. Everyone in the parish is invited on this church sponsored pilgrimage to pray, advocate and make a peaceful statement with others from throughout the nation to raise awareness of our obligation to protect the life and rights of the unborn. The trip includes:

- ? Visit to St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Harrisburg and the St. Francis Soup Kitchen OR the Mother Seton Shrine.
- ? Visit the Franciscan Monastery in Washington, D.C.
- ? Participation in the Vigil Mass for Life at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception on the night of January 21.

- ? Youth Rally & Mass: MCI Sports Arena on January 22.
- ? March for Life on January 22.

The Juniata County School District has granted permission for this event as an excused absence for students participating in this religious event for Monday and Tuesday January 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. **When:** Monday & Tuesday, January 21-22, 2008. We will be traveling by bus and staying at a Washington area hotel (Days Inn). The Bus will pickup passengers at Sacred Heart at 6:30 am and St. Jude at 7:00 am and return on Monday around 9:30 pm. **Cost:** Provided 50 people go, \$65.00/per person for transportation and lodging. Single and double rooms are available at slightly higher price. \$25.00 Deposit is required at the time of reservation but no later than **December 9th 2007** Contact Ralph or Jill Perez for more information at 535-5835.

The Juniata High School/Community Choir will be performing the Christmas Cantata **THE WINTER ROSE** Performances at the JHS Auditorium at 2:00pm on **Friday, December 14th** (for senior citizens) & **Sunday, December 16th** (General Public). All are invited to this wonderful performance which is free of charge. The choir includes over 120 members including many familiar faces from St. Jude Parish.

**Christmas Cards Available:** Our parish Knights of Columbus Council has made available for purchase, beautiful Christmas Cards which bespeak the true meaning of Christmas: Christ – not Santa and sleighs. The cards are on display in the church.

**Many thanks** to the St. Jude Council of the Knights of Columbus for their generous donation of \$300 toward the purchase of new materials for our CCD students.

**Women's Guild Christmas Party:** December 11 beginning at 6:30pm in the social hall. There will be a catered turkey dinner. The cost is \$7.50 (payable at sign-up). There is a sign-up sheet on the welcome table. All women are invited and asked to bring some Christmas cookies what we will be boxing up to distribute to some of our home-bound parishioners.

**Need a gift idea?** We all eat. Why not purchase Weis or Giant Gift cards as a great stocking stuffer? Benefits our new church!

**Setting up the Christmas Crib:** Following a beautiful and firmly-rooted tradition, many families set up their crib immediately after the feast of the Immaculate Conception, as if to relive with Mary those days full of trepidation that preceded the birth of Jesus. Putting up the cribs at home can be a simple but effective way of presenting faith, to pass it on to one's children. The crib helps us contemplate the mystery of God's love that was revealed in the poverty and simplicity of the Bethlehem Grotto. St. Francis of Assisi was so taken by the mystery of the Incarnation that he wanted to present it anew at Greccio in the living nativity scene, thus beginning an old, popular tradition that still retains its value for evangelization today. Indeed, the crib can help us understand the secret of the true Christmas because it speaks of the humility and merciful goodness of Christ, who "though he was rich he made himself poor" for us (2 Cor 8:9). His poverty enriches those who embrace it and Christmas brings joy and peace to those who, like the shepherds in Bethlehem, accept the Angel's words: "Let this be a sign to you: in a manger you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes" (Lk 2:12). This is still the sign for us too, men and women of the third millennium. There is no other Christmas.

*Pope Benedict XVI*