

4th Sunday of Advent December 21, 2008

Stewardship is a way of life.

Tithing is God's Plan for Giving:

Tithing income: December 14, 2008	\$ 1741.00
Income for December 16, 2007	\$ 2744.50
Income for December 17, 2006	\$ 2413.10
Student Offerings	\$ 4.00

Next week's tithe will be for the Pastor's Aid Fund

From the pastor: A gift is something that we do not have to give! No law requires us to give gifts on Christmas. Similarly, our gifts to God are prompted by the spirit of generosity. We give because we want to give. We give because we love. Tithing is giving a gift...for every gift we have ever received. Thank you for your faithful, weekly gift to God through your tithe.

Comments on Tithing from the pews: "It is funny how income is rather relative. Compared to some I am rich. Compared to others I am poor. My gift counts especially because I give it thoughtfully and from the heart."

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 2nd grader said, "I helped put up the Christmas lights." A 4th grader said, "I helped make a special dinner for my grandparents." A 6th grader said, "I filled the dishwasher and swept the kitchen."

Weekly Reflection: "Words! Words! Words! I'm so sick of words!" Eliza Doolittle sings in *My Fair Lady*. We ourselves often say, "Talk is cheap." In today's readings, God speaks: first through Nathan the prophet to King David, then through Gabriel to the Virgin Mary. We also say, "Actions speak louder than words." Unlike so many of our own words, God's word always bears meaning and power – words and actions fuse for the good of all people. God's word is always active and effective, bringing about our salvation. God's whole plan of salvation is an ongoing annunciation. While the saving plan and work is always God's, it is not without the invitation for human response. What both David and Mary planned for their lives didn't quite happen the way they envisioned. But when David and Mary trust and cooperate with God, a whole new in-breaking of God takes place. God's announcements through Nathan & Gabriel prepare us well for Christmas. We have only a few days left before Christmas, the mystery of God becoming man. Now is the time to rehearse our own "yes" to God by imitating God's word-action. Perhaps we could consciously make our holiday greeting to others a way to make concrete our generosity and joy. Perhaps we could take a few minutes out of our busy days to listen for God's word to us, say yes, and then put it into action.

About Liturgy: Reflecting on the word "mystery": "Mystery" is a favorite word of St. Paul (and we heard it in today's 2nd reading). It was also favored by the early Church. So much so that the early designation for the Sacraments was "the mysteries." We might detect a use of the notion of mystery in 3 different ways. First, mystery refers to the plan of salvation that God set in motion from the time of Adam & Eve's first sin. Establishing David's throne forever is one more step in this unfolding plan of salvation. Second, mystery refers to the birth of Jesus Christ; He Himself embodies the plan and carried it forward by His death and resurrection. Third, mystery refers to the Sacraments by which we

share in God's unfolding plan of salvation. This is how we ourselves participate in the establishment of God's everlasting reign. Liturgy is the ritual enactment of God's mystery. Our full, conscious and active participation in liturgy is our full, conscious and active participation in God's mystery of our salvation. Our yes to liturgy is our obedience of faith. This 4th Sunday of Advent turns us to Christmas and tends to blur a clear distinction between seasons. What we celebrate Christmas Day & next Sunday (Christ's coming) we celebrate every week – Christ is already present through God's plan of salvation, in Christ, and in us through the Sacraments – the Mysteries – of the Church.

PARISH NEWS

March For Life, January 22, 2009: St. Jude's Parish Youth invite you to the March for Life in Washington, D.C. It is urgent that we, as Catholics who fight for the protection of the innocent unborn, make our voices heard by President Obama. If you have never been to the March, this is the year to go! Our 1 day trip will include (time and weather permitting) a short visit to the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception; then, join 14,000 other young Catholics at the Rally for Life and Mass at the VERIZON Sports Arena; then we proceed to the Mall to begin the March. The Juniata County School District has granted permission for this event as an excused absence for students participating in this religious event for Thursday January 22nd. We will be traveling by bus. The bus will pickup passengers at 3:30am and return on Thursday around 9:30 pm. Cost: Provided 40 people go the cost is \$46.00/per person for transportation. Meals: are separate and are estimated at \$25.00. Registration with \$35.00 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit is required at the time of reservation but no later than December 7th 2008 and checks should be made out to "St. Jude Youth Group." Contact Ralph / Jill Perez for the form or information at 535-5835.

MASS SCHEDULE



Mon. Dec 22 – (1 Sam 1:24-28; Lk 1:46-56)

9:00am – Fredrick Mtichell

Tues. Dec 23 – (Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Lk 1:57-66)

Wed. Dec 24 – (2 Sam 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16; Lk 1:67-79)

Christmas Eve Readings: (Is 9:1-6; Titus 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14)

6:30pm (English) – The People of the Parish

8:30pm (Spanish) – Los Feligreses

Thurs. Dec 25 – (Is 62:11-12; Titus 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20)

Fri. Dec 26 – Feast: St. Stephen (Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59; Mt 10:17-22)

9:00am – Frederick Mitchell

Sat. Dec 27 – Feast: St. John (1 Jn 1:1-4; Jn 20:1-8)

5:00pm (English) – Lucille Hall

6:30pm (Spanish) – Mildred Rocco

Sun. Dec 28 – (Gen 15:1-6, 21:1-3; Heb 11:8-19; Lk 2:22-40)

9:15am – The People of the Parish

Last Chance for Commemorative Christmas Ornaments are available at the St. Jude "Heavenly Gifts." Cost is \$10.00 each – available in blue or cranberry. They would make a great gift!

How to Contact the Rectory: Several people have asked how to call the rectory since we've moved into the new office. When the office is closed, option "2" on the phone system says, "If this is an emergency, or you need to contact the rectory..." Just push "2" on the phone, and your call will be forwarded to the rectory where

you can again choose from several options: 2 = emergency; 3 = Fr. Bateman or 4 = Fr. Thoms. We do want to be accessible to you, but also provide some separation between "home and office." So, if you need to speak with us "after hours," please contact us at the rectory. If it is something that can wait until we go to the office, please leave a message there on the office phone. Thanks for your understanding as we make this switch to our phone systems.

Parish Christmas Open House & Blessing of Parish Office: As in other years, I want to have an Open House for all our parishioners. But this year, because Sacred Heart just moved into a new office building at 9 N. Brown Street, the open house will be in their new parish office. We'll begin at 6pm with a formal "Blessing of the Office," then there will be a chance to just walk around and spend some time with each other (and taste my great-grandmother's famous eggnog). This year's open house at the office will be on **Monday, December 29 from 6-8pm**. All are welcome! Please, no gifts, just come and enjoy some refreshments and enjoy the holiday spirit with fellow parishioners.



Upcoming Events: Please remember to mark your calendars for these coming events surrounding the holidays and parish events:

Christmas:

Christmas Eve Mass: 6:30pm (English); Music at 6pm

Misa del Noche Santo: 8:30pm (español)

Christmas Day: 9:15am (English); Music at 9am

New Year's – HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION

(Mary, Mother of God)

New Years Eve: 6:30pm (English)

New Years Day: 9:15am (English)

Parish Christmas Dinner: January 4, 2009; 5:30pm

AROUND THE DIOCESE

TV spots for the For Your Marriage campaign of the U.S., Bishops in our Diocese. They will air on WGAL TV 8 starting in December and continuing until March. The spots promote the website and promote healthy marriages: www.foryourmarriage.org The messages were created from "person-on-the-street" interviews gathered around the country. In the messages, couples speak about everyday things that they do for each other to show love and commitment as they answer the question: "What have you done for your marriage today?" The answers range from getting up early with the baby to carrying a spouse's purse. They show that short-term kindnesses cement a lifelong relationship. The couples include young and old and a rich variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The airing of the spots is made possible by local contributions to the annual Catholic Communication Campaign.

EDUCATION

STATEMENT of the President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. continued... On this issue, the legal protection of the unborn, the bishops are of one mind with Catholics and others of good will. They are also pastors who have listened to women whose lives have been diminished because they believed they had no choice but to abort a baby. Abortion is a medical procedure that kills, and the psychological and spiritual consequences are written in the sorrow and depression of many women and men. The bishops are single-minded because they are, first of all, single-hearted.

The recent election was principally decided out of concern for the economy, for the loss of jobs and homes and financial security for families, here and around the world. If the election is misinterpreted ideologically as a referendum on abortion, the unity desired by President-elect Obama and all Americans at this moment of crisis will be impossible to achieve. Abortion kills not only unborn children; it destroys constitutional order and the common good, which is assured only when the life of every human being is legally protected. Aggressively pro-abortion policies, legislation and executive orders will permanently alienate tens of millions of Americans, and would be seen by many as an attack on the free exercise of their religion.

This statement is written at the request and direction of all the Bishops, who also want to thank all those in politics who work with good will to protect the lives of the most vulnerable among us. Those in public life do so, sometimes, at the cost of great sacrifice to themselves and their families; and we are grateful. We express again our great desire to work with all those who cherish the common good of our nation. The common good is not the sum total of individual desires and interests; it is achieved in the working out of a common life based upon good reason and good will for all.

Our prayers accompany President-elect Obama and his family and those who are cooperating with him to assure a smooth transition in government. Many issues demand immediate attention on the part of our elected "watchman." (Psalm 127) May God bless him and our country.

COURTESY ANNOUNCEMENT

Adult Enrichment classes will be held on the first Wednesday of every month at Sacred Heart Parish, Lewistown, starting January 7, 2009 after the 7pm Mass, in the church basement. Each month we will discuss a new topic. January's topic will be End of Life Issues and the Church's teaching. Questions, comments and suggestions on topics will be welcome. Contact Fr. Bateman at the parish office or Daniel Swigart at 899-6278.

Sr. Felice's address is 350 Bernardsville Road, Mendham, New Jersey 07945-2923 if anyone would like to send her a Christmas card she would be glad to hear from you.

SACRED HEART SCHOOL

What is 1st Grade Doing? In language arts, 1st grade has learned about short vowels and words that end with -x, -s and -ing. They have also learned to identify cause and effect, setting and fact vs. fantasy. Writing sentences with proper word order has also been covered this month. In math class, subtraction has been the operation of choice. Students have practiced various subtraction skills and are doing very well with a sometimes tricky topic.

As part of our faith development, students have been studying how God the Son teaches us to care for the sick and poor. They have also learned other ways to show and share God's love with others. The class is eagerly looking forward to Christmas and would like to share their prayers for you and your family at this special time of year. (Mr. Fitzgerald)

Sacred Heart School will host a **Business After Hours Event** sponsored by the Juniata Valley Area Chamber of Commerce on January 20, 2009 from 5:30 – 7:30pm. Chamber members are invited to see displays and activities throughout the evening. Members of the parish are invited to join us as well.