

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH BULLETIN

FOR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2009

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT – DECEMBER 6, 2009

Saint Alphonsus

Roman Catholic Church

A Pennsylvania Charitable Trust

750 Pittsburgh Street • Springdale, PA • 15144

Phone: 724-274-5084 • Fax: 724-274-7035 • e-mail: stalphonsus@verizon.net

Web Page Address: www.stalphonsuschurch.com

Administrator: Rev. George E. Saladna, S.T.L., S.S.L.

Weekend Assistant: Rev. James P. McDonough, S.T.L., J.C.L.



Parish Established September 9, 1901 Church Dedicated September 5, 1926

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY MASS: Sat. 5:00 P.M. and Sun. Morn. at 8:00 A.M. & 11:00 A.M.

WEEKDAY: Mass held in Chapel next to Church. See bulletin each week or call Rectory for schedule of the 8:00 A.M. Mass which is not held every day (never on Sat morn).

HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION: these days vary in time and obligation from year to year. See bulletin or call Rectory each time for details.

CONFESSIONS: Sat. from 3:30 to 4:30, and anytime by appointment.

MARRIAGE, BAPTISM: call parish office (six months before marriage).

COMMUNION CALLS AND OTHER SERVICES: call office for information.

PARISH OFFICES & STAFF

ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER (RECTORY: former Convent building)

(724) 274-5084

Marsha Etzrodt, Secretary

Office Hours: Mon. - Thur.: 8 to 4, Fri.: 8 to Noon

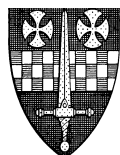
LIGUORI CENTER OFFICES (school building side entrance)

(724) 274-2547

CCD & Youth Min. - Karen Mueller

Social Services - Cathy Moxie

Music Director/Organist – Vickie Roof



New Parishioners: We welcome new parishioners whether newly moved into the area or those who have fallen off through inactivity. Welcome! Register by calling or coming to the parish office. Become an active, attending and supporting member of the parish. And please let us know if you move away or have your telephone or address changed. Thank you.

Church Hall Telephone: (724) 274-2547

Diocesan Victim Assistance Hotline 1-888-808-1235

CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF
PITTSBURGH
VICARIATE
NO. 4



© Annika Nelson

FACT OR FICTION?

The historical fact of the birth of Jesus was denied a few years ago by the New York public school system in pleadings filed with a federal court to justify its total ban on Christmas Nativity displays in New York's public schools. New York's legal briefs disputed the claim that the Nativity scene depicts a historical event, and that this event is the basis for the celebration of Christmas.

Today's Gospel for this Second Sunday in Advent, taken from Saint Luke's Ch. 2 which sets the scene for the appearance of John the Baptist beginning his preaching, and the Christmas midnight Mass Gospel, also from Saint Luke, describes the world scene at the time of Jesus' birth. They proclaim that the Incarnation, the coming of God among us as a man, born of a woman and born under the law, is a historical fact and not just a dream or the product of the human imagination.

Consider today's text; "In the 15TH year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zachary, in the desert...."

And the announcement surrounding Jesus' birth, comes from an earlier day, but in the same type of solemn historical setting: "A decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was when Quirinius was governor of Syria...."

These Gospel narratives which are written records of the foundation of our faith, the birth of Jesus, differ completely from what can be called "fairy tales." The Gospels do not start out with, "Once upon a time," as do stories about Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, or about Jack and the Beanstalk, or Cinderella, for "once upon a time" really is understood to mean "at no particular time." No, the beauty of Saint Luke's message is that truth is really stranger than fiction. No one could ever have imagined that God the creator would love us

so much that he would come among us and make his dwelling with us. This is what captivates our hearts and elicits the response of faith.

The New York public schools, the federal courts and all sorts of current anti-Christian elites may proclaim and say what they want. What they say will be nothing new. People have always refused to believe in God, in the supernatural and the practice of religion. But our faith in the coming of Jesus 2000 years ago and his coming again at the end of the world is not something that we have created in our minds.

We have heard the testimony of witnesses, such as St. John, who tells us at the end of his Gospel:

"This is the disciple who bears witness concerning these things, and who has written them, and we know his witness is true."

-- Father Saladna

SCHEDULE OF MASSES FOR THIS WEEK

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7 – Saint Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor
8:00 AM Andrew Oravec



© J. S. Paluch Co., Inc.

Immaculate Conception

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8 – Immaculate Conception of Mary – Today is a Holy Day of Obligation for all Catholics. WE HAVE THREE MASSES, ALL ON

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8:

6:30 AM Sophia Dzik
12:00 Noon For all Parishioners, Liv. & Dec.
7:00 PM Deceased Members of the Lalle Family

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9 – Saint Juan Diego
8:00 AM Mary Sardone

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10 -- No Mass scheduled for today

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11 – Advent Weekday
8:00 AM Margaret Blume

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12 – No Mass on Saturday morning

5:00 PM [For Sunday] Living and Deceased Members of the Dietrick and Filbert Families

NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13 – Third Sunday of Advent

8:00 AM For all Parishioners, Liv. & Dec.
11:00 AM Catherine and Nancy Pillitteri

REST IN PEACE – The parish family of Saint Alphonsus wishes to extend their deepest sympathy to the family of Mary Desmone. Please remember the deceased and her family in your prayers.

HOLIDAY DECORATION OFFERING ENVELOPES –

In your envelope packets you will find the traditional envelope for Holiday Decorations, with a place to mark the name of someone you would like to remember by your offering. Our special Christmas Day bulletin insert for December 25 will contain the names of these “memorials.” In order to be published, they must be received here no later than Friday, December 18. Please mark the names clearly (print rather than script).

IF YOU MISPLACE OR LOSE ANYTHING in Church, we try to place found items in the Activity Room (the little room off the left side aisle which leads to the emergency exit). Look there if you lost something. It may well be there.

CHILDREN'S ENVELOPES – We have boxed sets of Young People's envelopes in the Activity Room. Little kids should be encouraged to have their own envelopes, since it makes them feel important (and they are) and it teaches them that the church is theirs, too. This is obviously not a “money-maker,” and we do not register the names of the givers or amounts, but it is nice to see little kids participating in the offertory, even if they have just a few pennies in their envelope. Help yourselves – the envelopes are in the Activity Room.



REMINDER: If you took a tag from the Christmas Tree, **please return your gift to the Church lobby on or before Sunday, December 13.** Thank you.

PARISH ADVOCATE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Our Catherine Moxie has completed the required training to serve as a Parish Advocate for Persons with Disabilities, a program sponsored by the Diocesan Department for Persons with Disabilities. The role of the Parish Advocate is to assist the pastor in his ministry to welcome and include persons with disabilities into full participation in the life of the Church. Our Parish Advocate will reach out to persons with disabilities and their families to determine what they need in order to become active in the life of our parish and will work with parish leaders to make all aspects of parish life accessible. For more information, please call the Parish Office.

“HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO ARE CALLED TO HIS SUPPER” – Preparing to receive Christ worthily in Holy Communion -- EXAMINE YOUR CONSCIENCE

This is the title of a document issued by the American Catholic Bishops at their annual meeting in Washington, D.C. in 2006. It emphasizes the age-old teaching of the Church that mortal sin, no matter what kind, keeps one from receiving Holy Communion, and that such sins must be confessed in the Sacrament of Penance before one can approach the altar for the Eucharist.

The Bishops lamented the fact that some people choose to live in a state of serious sin and then compound the sin by presuming to come to Communion without first confessing and repenting of mortal sin. The Bishops said that reverence for Jesus present in the Sacrament demands respect not only from Catholic politicians who support abortion and then dare to receive Holy Communion, but also from all Catholics. Whoever knowingly and obstinately rejects the Church's teaching on doctrine and morality puts himself outside of communion with the believing Church.

“In order to receive Holy Communion we must be in communion with God and with the Church. If we are no longer in a state of grace because of mortal sin, we are seriously obliged to refrain from receiving Holy Communion until we are reconciled with God and the Church,” the Bishops said. To do otherwise causes serious scandal to others who are looking for good example.

The Bishops give examples of such serious (mortal) sins which bar one from receiving Holy Communion. Among them are the following: murder, including abortion and euthanasia, deliberate hatred of others, all sexual activity outside the bonds of a valid marriage, sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable adults, physical or verbal abuse, swearing false oaths, missing Mass on Sundays or Holy Days without a serious reason, stealing, slander, pornography, and all other violations of serious commands of God and Christ's Church.

Remedies for such sins which lead to proper disposition for receiving Holy Communion are confession, prayer, Scripture reading. And, attendance at Mass includes maintaining reverent silence before Mass begins, refraining from food and drink for an hour before Communion, modest dress at Mass and listening attentively to the readings and homily. In other words, participating in the Mass with our whole hearts and minds and bodies. And standing in the vestibule as far away from the altar as possible during Mass not only gives scandal to the young, but is hardly worthy of one who professes to believe in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar.

ENTERTAINMENT DISCOUNT/COUPON BOOKS for 2010 are being sold by the Parish Social Services (Ladies of Charity). They are available at \$20 after Sunday Mass in the Activity Room, or at the Parish House during office hours. There is a limited number for sale this year, so if you are really interested it would be wise to get them early. Proceeds from the sale go toward the works of the Ladies of Charity

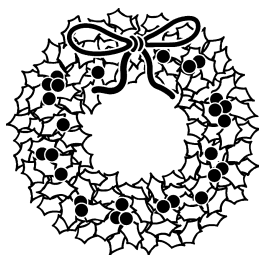
OPLATKY (CHRISTMAS WAFERS) – Oplatky will again be available this year through our Parish Social Services. A colorful packet of 10 wafers (8 white, 2 pink) is sold for \$5.00, with proceeds going to Social Services in their outreach to the elderly and sick. They will be sold in the Activity Room after all Masses each Sunday before Christmas

THOSE WHO ARE SICK AT HOME and unable to attend Mass are invited to call the Rectory to arrange to receive Holy Communion at home. Also, people who are having major surgery and who know of this in advance should be anointed. Fr. Saladna will be happy to arrange for this to be done either in our own Church or at your home, since hospital stays are so brief and so hectic that it is almost impossible at times to have this done in the hospital with due privacy.

TURKEY VOUCHERS – Our parish has a fine tradition of helping the poor and needy during the Thanksgiving/Christmas holiday season. “Turkey Voucher” gifts, used for food purchases, are given to our Parish Social Services and to the clients of the local Food Bank. Your donation (any amount), dropped in the collection basket in these envelopes, will be used to assist the Food Bank and Parish Social Services in their holiday distribution. Again, thank you.

HOLIDAY CHRISTMAS SEALS

Today, Sunday, December 6, the Knights of Columbus will be handing out or placing near the Church doors their annual Christmas Seals for the benefit of the “Bishop’s Project” to assist two schools established and operated by our Diocese of Pittsburgh. They are St. Anthony School Programs and the McGuire Home for Exceptional Children. If you would like to help the Knights in this worthy project, you can do so by taking a pack of seals after any Mass. If you wish to make a donation, use the envelope provided and follow the directions there on. Any amount you wish to give will be greatly appreciated and is deeply needed. If you cannot make a donation at this time, please keep and use the seals anyway.



LOOKING AHEAD: SCHEDULE OF MASSES AND CONFESSIONS FOR FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, CHRISTMAS, HOLY FAMILY, AND MARY, MOTHER OF GOD (NEW YEAR’S DAY)

FOR FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT:

December 19 – Saturday – 5:00 PM
 December 20 – Sunday – 8:00 AM and 11:00 AM

FOR CHRISTMAS:

December 24 – Thursday – 5:00 PM and 10:00 PM
 December 25 – Friday – 8:00 AM and 11:00 AM

FOR HOLY FAMILY:

December 26 – Saturday – 5:00 PM
 December 27 – Sunday – 8:00 AM and 11:00AM

FOR MARY, MOTHER OF GOD (New Year’s):

December 31 – Thursday – 5:00 PM
 January 1 -- Friday – 8:00 AM and 11:00 AM

+++++

CONFESSION SCHEDULE:

Saturday, December 19 – 3:30 to 4:30 PM -
 Monday, December 21 -- 6:00 to 7:00 PM – (one priest)
 Tuesday, December 22 – 6:00 to 7:00 PM – (one priest)
 Wednesday, December 23 – 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM - (three priests)

+++++

CLEANING AND DECORATING SCHEDULE:

Saturday, December 19 – 8:00 AM (coffee and donuts) to 10:00 AM. **Volunteers needed and appreciated.**

POST THIS COLUMN ON YOUR REFRIGERATOR DOOR FOR FUTURE REFERENCE!

MEMORIAL GIFTS

Thank you for the following donations to the St. Alphonsus Memorial Fund:

IN MEMORY OF AGNES ANKER by Christine Stamm and Amy Pitrone.

IN MEMORY OF MARY DESMONE by Knights of Columbus #5021, Springdale.

IN MEMORY OF REV. JOSEPH KOPECKY by Tom and Marsha Etzrodt; Helen Sherrieb.

IN MEMORY OF OLIVE LUKAC by M/M Clyde Dreher; Lelis Family.

IN MEMORY OF ANDREW SUSA by Martin and Amelia Kosdrozky; Marlene and Gary Deily; Audrey and John Wilson; Roberta and Bob Sarniak; John and Rae Ann Tabis; Richard and Lois Tabis; Susan and Michael Sample; Mary and Gordon Sarti.

IN MEMORY OF HELEN ZOTT by Fran and Cathy Moxie; Barbara Simpson; M/M John Wilt; Gertrude Wanamaker; Paul and Erma Jean Lutz; Jim and Jan Dugan; John Takach.

expression advent also includes that of 'visitatio', ... a visit, which in this case means a visit from God: He enters my life and wishes to address Himself to me".

"In daily life we all know the experience of having little time for the Lord, and little time for ourselves. We end up becoming absorbed by 'doing'. Is it not often true that it is activity itself that possesses us, society with its multiple distractions that monopolises our attention? Is it not true that we dedicate a lot of time to entertainment and leisure activities of various kinds?"

"Advent, this potent liturgical period we are entering, invites us to remain silent as we come to appreciate a presence. It is an invitation to understand that the individual events of the day are signs God addresses to us, signs of the care He has for each of us. How often does God make us aware of some aspect of His love! To maintain what we might call an 'inner diary' of this love would be a beautiful and rewarding task in our lives. Advent invites us and encourages us to contemplate the living Lord. Should not the certainty of His presence help us to see the world with different eyes?"

The Holy Father went on: "Another fundamental aspect of Advent is that of waiting: a wait that is, at the same time, a hope. ... Hope marks the journey of humankind, but for Christians it is enlivened by a certainty: the Lord is present in the events of our lives, He accompanies us and will one day dry our tears. One not-far-distant day everything will reach fulfilment in the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of justice and peace.

"Yet", he added, "there are many different ways to wait. If the present time is not filled with meaning, the wait risks becoming unbearable. If we await something, but at this moment have nothing - in other words, if the present is empty - then every passing instant seems exaggeratedly long and the wait becomes an over-heavy burden because the future remains too uncertain. When, on the other hand, time has meaning and at every instant we perceive something specific and valid, then the joy of waiting makes the present richer".

The Holy Father encouraged the faithful "intensely to live the present, where we already obtain the gifts of the Lord. Let us live projected towards the future, a future charged with hope". The Messiah, "coming among us, brought us and continues to bring us the gift of His love and His salvation. He is present among us and speaks to us in many ways: in Sacred Scripture, in the liturgical year, in the saints, in the events of daily life, in all creation, which changes its appearance depending upon whether [we see Him] behind it or whether [we see it] shrouded in the fog of an uncertain origin and uncertain future".

"We in our turn", Pope Benedict concluded, "can address Him, present Him the sufferings that afflict us, the impatience and the questions that arise in our hearts. We are certain that He always listens to us! And if Jesus is present, then there can be no meaningless or empty time. If He is present we can continue to hope, even when others can no longer offer us their support, even when the present becomes burdensome".

- Vatican Information Service

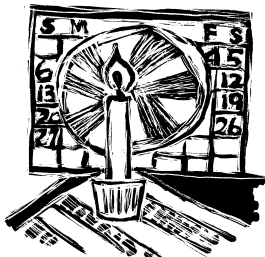
Our Ministry of Support

Thank you for your offerings to Saint Alphonsus Parish
For Sunday, November 22 and 29, 2009

Offertory, 11/22.....	\$3,785.00
Parish Share.....	\$580.00
Retirement Fund for Religious.....	\$2,700.00
Offertory, 11/29 & Thanksgiving.....	\$4,471.00
Parish Share.....	\$1,132.00

PLEASE REMEMBER SAINT ALPHONSUS CHURCH IN YOUR WILL

THE SECOND COLLECTION today, Sunday, December 6, will be the monthly collection for Capital Improvements to our parish. We thank you for your kind and generous support of our Parish.



ADVENT INVITES US TO PERCEIVE THE PRESENCE OF GOD

VATICAN CITY, 28 NOV 2009 - In the Vatican Basilica this evening, Benedict XVI presided at first Vespers for the first Sunday of Advent, the beginning of a new liturgical year for the Church.

In his homily the Pope reflected upon the meaning of the word Advent which "Christians used", he said, "to express their relationship with Jesus ... The meaning of the