

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH BULLETIN

FOR

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 2012

MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD – JANUARY 1, 2012

Saint Alphonsus

Roman Catholic Church

A Pennsylvania Charitable Trust

750 Pittsburgh Street • Springdale, PA • 15144

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Rev. Kenneth E. Kezmarsky, Pastor



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 the main Church. See bulletin each week or call Rectory for schedule of the 8:00 A.M. Mass which is usually not held on Saturday morning.

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

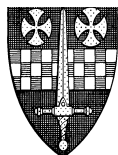
LIGUORI CENTER OFFICES (school building side entrance)

(724) 274-2547

CCD & Youth Min. - Karen Mueller

Social Services - Cathy Moxie

Music Director/Organist – Vickie Roof



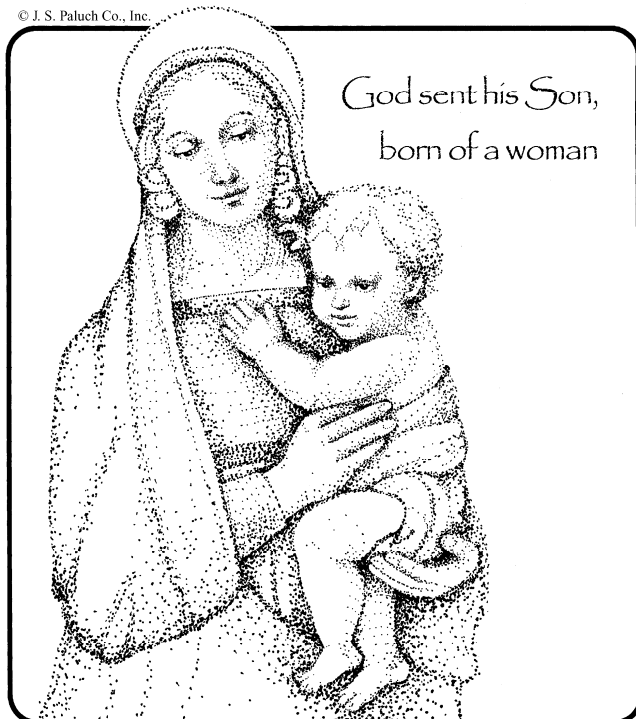
New Parishioners: We welcome new parishioners whether newly moved into the area or those who have fallen off through inactivity. Welcome! Register by calling or coming to the parish office. Become an active, attending and supporting member of the parish. And please let us know if you move away or have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

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The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God

THE LORD BLESS YOU

The Book of Numbers sounds to contemporary ears like the title of some dry statistical treatise. But much of it is poetry or song, as can be seen from today's beautiful first reading: "The LORD bless you and keep you! / The Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! / The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!"

Isn't that a great choice for the first scripture reading of the first day of the new year? It leads us into the mystery of God's appearing in our world, not in some terrifying explosion, but in kindness and peace, "born of a woman."

God comes to us as a human baby, born of a human mother, to show us that we are so much more than we tend to think we are. We are not slaves, but heirs of God. In Jesus, through Mary, God shines upon us kindly and gives us peace.

LOOKING FOR ANGELS

Today's Gospel reading begins with the shepherds rushing "in haste to Bethlehem." We know why they were running. Angels had appeared to them in the night, a breakthrough from the world beyond the ordinary. And the shepherds responded with great excitement.

Some nine months earlier, an angel had burst into the life of the young woman Mary. That

also was a breakthrough from the world beyond our world, a message from the Divinity. It was a call to Mary to see beyond the ordinary possibilities of her life. She responded with an open heart and became the Mother of God.

After the shepherds had departed, "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." The angels also reach out to us, call to us from God. We must be alert for their call. We must listen for those messages from beyond our ordinary world. Mary can help us stay awake this year, alert and listening for God's call.

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SCHEDULE OF MASSES FOR THIS WEEK

MONDAY, JANUARY 2 – Saints Basil the Great and Gregory, Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church

8:00 AM Ann Lochrane

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3 – Christmas Weekday

8:00 AM Michael J. Faith

WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY AND FRIDAY – NO MORNING MASS

NEXT SATURDAY, JANUARY 7 – No Mass on Saturday morning

5:00 PM [For Sunday] Sophia Dizik

NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 8 – The Epiphany of the Lord

8:00 AM Anna Grebb

11:00 AM For all Parishioners, Living and Deceased

THE BLESSING WE RECEIVE

The blessing we experience in Christ Jesus is proclaimed in Numbers as the special blessing for the people of Israel. They and we are to be blessed by the invocation of God's loving kindness, the shining glory of God's face turned toward us in love, not away from us in anger. We are blessed by God's own peace!

Our wish and our hope are fulfilled in this blessing, which is made visible in the coming of Jesus. In Jesus, the image of the invisible God, God's face is shown to us and God's presence is made known to us in faithful and loving kindness.

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PASTOR'S NOTES

Happy New Year! Wow, a brand new year has started, and it is hard to believe that it really is here. What promises have been made that have already been broken? We make these resolutions on the first of the year, and then almost immediately, we tend to forget them. Maybe this year it should be different. I do not make such promises anymore.

Hopefully we look forward to getting our school roof worked on in the Spring.

Our Religious Education and R.C.I.A. process classes will continue.

We did have a beautiful Christmas celebration. I again wish to thank all those who helped in any way to make our Church look so wonderful. The generosity of our parishioners to me was so great, as well as to the parish itself. Thank you so much.

May our prayer for the coming year be positive and meaningful. If we made any promises, we must keep them. Let us continue to treat one another with respect and dignity, and pray for any people who have hurt us in the past as we begin this new year.

May God continue to bless us and our parish efforts today, tomorrow and forever.

Fr. Ken

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WE ARE CALLED TO CELEBRATE! Join young people from our district for a Teen Mass and Movie on Sunday, January 22, 2012 at Our Lady of Victory Parish. Mass begins at 5 PM and will be followed by food and fun from 6-8 PM. Join us for a taco bar, ice cream sundaes and the comedy of Tim Hawkins. Please plan to join us! Bring a friend! Please call Mrs. Mueller at 412-841-2017 with any questions

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THIS YEAR, THE ANNUAL MARCH FOR LIFE will be held on Monday, January 23RD, 2012 in Washington, DC. If you are interested in attending the March for Life with a group from our parish, please contact Karen Mueller at 412-841-2017 for information.

Your Ministry of Support

Thank you for your offerings to Saint Alphonsus Parish for Christmas

Offertory.....	\$10,021.50
Parish Share	\$2,705.00
Christmas Charities	\$3,888.00

THE PITTSBURGH DIOCESE is home to two nationally recognized educational programs for children with special needs: **St. Anthony School Programs and DePaul School for Hearing and Speech** (formerly known as The DePaul Institute). A special collection to benefit these two organizations will be taken the **weekend of January 14-15 at all Masses.**

St. Anthony School Programs provides Catholic special education to children with development delays and autism in 5 elementary/intermediate classrooms, two secondary classrooms and two college-age programs located on the campuses of Duquesne University and the University of Pittsburgh. This year St. Anthony's has also partnered with Carlow University to add an academic component to the curriculum for qualified post-secondary students. DePaul School for Hearing and Speech provides Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) education to children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Without the use of sign language, DePaul students learn to listen and speak and successfully transition to their neighborhood schools with their typically hearing peers.

Your donation will help St. Anthony School Programs and DePaul School for Hearing and Speech to further their goals of providing quality educational programs and services for their students. Your support is critical. Your generosity will help these organizations forever improve the lives of their students and families.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

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

IN MEMORY OF CATHERINE AND BILL GOLEBIESKI by daughter, Karen Golebieski.

IN MEMORY OF STEVE KARNEY by Ladies of Charity; Joe and Mary Lou Lawson; Tim and Barbara Williams; Ray and Eleanor Hajduk; Debbie, Joe and Marissa Kandziolka; Paul and Sara Wrona; Jim and Janice Dugan; Tony Jursa; Marie Marshall; the Howard Meyers Family; John Takach; John and Helen Strama; Mike and Ann Hamorsky; Richard and Betty Selby; Helen Olearchick; Gertrude Wanamaker.

IN MEMORY OF ROBERT J. KONDRAK by Yvonne Kondrak.

IN MEMORY OF HELEN PALOVCAK by husband, John Palovcak.

IN MEMORY OF VIOLET PYSH by Joe and Mary Lou Lawson; Matson Insurance Agency; Matson Lumber Company; Schneider Downs & Company; Helen Olearchick; Gertrude Wanamaker; Eileen and Rich Miller.

IN MEMORY OF CHARLES SPIX by Millie Evans and brother, Chuck.

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DR. KING MASS AND PROGRAM – all are invited to the Annual Dr. King Mass on Sunday, January 15, at 12 Noon at St. Paul Cathedral with Auxiliary Bishop William Waltersheid. A light reception, program, and recognition of Dr. King student essay winners will follow the Mass.

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9TH ANNUAL DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BLOOD DRIVE FOR LIFE – Monday, January 16, 1-6 PM at St. Benedict the Moor Church. Support this effort to save lives. Mark the date on your calendar and invite others to donate. Call to pre-register and for more information: Diocesan Office for Black Catholic Ministries, 412-456-3170.

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RACHEL'S VINEYARD, a weekend retreat designed to heal the emotional and spiritual wounds of abortion, will be held January 27-29, 2012 at the Spiritan Center in Bethel Park. In a confidential and supportive atmosphere, Rachel's Vineyard demonstrates God's love, forgiveness, and compassion to women and men struggling with abortion's aftermath. Financial aid available. Sponsored by the Diocese of Pittsburgh and Catholic Charities. For more information, visit www.ccpgh.org or call 412-352-5348. The deadline to register is January 20.

POPE: WE MUST RENEW OUR WAY OF BEING CHRISTIANS

VATICAN CITY, 22 DEC 2011 - In his following address, Benedict XVI reviewed the major events of this year, which has been marked by "an economic and financial crisis that is ultimately based on the ethical crisis looming over the Old Continent. Even if such values as solidarity, commitment to one's neighbor and responsibility towards the poor and suffering are largely uncontroversial, still the motivation is often lacking for individuals and large sectors of society to practice renunciation and make sacrifices". That is why "the key theme of this year, and of the years ahead, is this: how do we proclaim the Gospel today?" in a way that the faith may be the living force that is absent today.

In this respect, the Pope noted that "the ecclesial events of the outgoing year were all ultimately related to this theme. There were the journeys to Croatia, to the World Youth Day in Spain, to my home country of Germany, and finally to Africa - Benin - for the consignment of the Post-Synodal document on justice, peace, and reconciliation. Equally memorable were the journeys to Venice, to San Marino, to the Eucharistic Congress in Ancona, and to Calabria. And finally there was the important day of encounter in Assisi for religions and for people who in whatever way are searching for truth and peace".

Other important steps in the same direction were the establishment of the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization, which points "towards next year's Synod on the same theme", and the proclamation of the Year of Faith.

Without Revitalizing the Faith, Church Reform Will Remain Ineffective

To all of this is joined the reflection on the need for reform within the Church. "Faithful believers are noticing with concern that regular churchgoers are growing older all the time and that their number is constantly diminishing; that recruitment of priests is stagnating; that scepticism and unbelief are growing. There are endless debates over what must be done in order to reverse the trend. There is no doubt that a variety of things need to be done. The essence of the crisis of the Church in Europe is the crisis of faith. If we find no answer to this, if faith does not take on new life, deep conviction and real strength from the encounter with Jesus Christ, then all other reforms will remain ineffective".

In contrast to the European situation, Benedict XVI asserted that during his trip to Benin "none of the faith

fatigue that is so prevalent here was detectable there. Amid all the problems, sufferings and trials that Africa clearly experiences, one could still sense the people's joy in being Christian, buoyed up by inner happiness at knowing Christ and belonging to His Church. From this joy comes also the strength to serve Christ in hard-pressed situations of human suffering, the strength to put oneself at his disposal, without looking round for one's own advantage. Encountering this faith that is so ready to sacrifice and so full of happiness is a powerful remedy against the fatigue with Christianity such as we are experiencing in Europe today".

Another sign of hope is seen in the World Youth Days where "again and again a new, more youthful form of Christianity can be seen", one possessing five main characteristics. "Firstly, there is a new experience of catholicity, of the Church's universality. This is what struck the young people and all the participants quite directly: we come from every continent, but although we have never met one another, we know one another" because "the same inner encounter with Jesus Christ has stamped us deep within with the same structure of intellect, will, and heart. In this setting, to say that all humanity are brothers and sisters is not merely an idea: it becomes a real shared experience, generating joy".

Secondly, "from this derives a new way of living our humanity, our Christianity. For me, one of the most important experiences of those days was the meeting with the World Youth Day volunteers: about 20,000 young people, all of whom devoted weeks or months of their lives" to the preparations. "At the end of the day, these young people were visibly and tangibly filled with a great sense of happiness: the time that they had given up had meaning; in giving of their time and labor, they had found time, they had found life.. These young people did good, even at a cost, even if it demanded sacrifice, simply because it is a wonderful thing to do good, to be there for others. All it needs is the courage to make the leap. Prior to all of this is the encounter with Jesus Christ, inflaming us with love for God and for others, and freeing us from seeking our own ego". The Pope recalled having found the same attitude in Africa from the Sisters of Mother Teresa "who devote themselves to abandoned, sick, poor, and suffering children, without asking anything for themselves, thus becoming inwardly rich and free. This is the genuinely Christian attitude".

The Joy of Knowing We Are Loved by God

The third element characterizing the World Youth Days is adoration. Benedict XVI remarked on the crowds' silence before the Blessed Sacrament in Hyde Park, Zagreb, and Madrid. "God is indeed ever-present", he

said. "But again, the physical presence of the risen Christ is something different, something new.

Adoration is primarily an act of faith - the act of faith as such. God is not just some possible or impossible hypothesis concerning the origin of all things. He is present. And if He is present, then I bow down before him. We enter this certainty of God's tangible love for us with love in our own hearts. This is adoration, and this then determines my life. Only thus can I celebrate the Eucharist correctly and receive the body of the Lord rightly".

Confession is another essential characteristic of the World Youth Days because, with this sacrament "we recognize that we need forgiveness over and over again, and that forgiveness brings responsibility. Openness to love is present in man, implanted in him by the Creator, together with the capacity to respond to God in faith. But also present, in consequence of man's sinful history is the tendency towards selfishness, towards becoming closed in on oneself, in fact towards evil. Therefore we need the humility that constantly asks God for forgiveness that seeks purification and awakens in us the counterforce, the positive force of the Creator, to draw us upwards".

Fifthly, and finally, the Pope mentioned the joy that above all depends on the certainty, based on faith that "I am wanted; I have a task; I am accepted, I am loved. Man can only accept himself if he is accepted by another. This sense of being accepted comes in the first instance from other human beings. But all human acceptance is fragile. Ultimately we need a sense of being accepted unconditionally. Only if God accepts me, and I become convinced of this, do I know definitively: it is good that I exist. If ever man's sense of being accepted and loved by God is lost, then there is no longer any answer to the question whether to be a human being is good at all. Only faith gives me the conviction: it is good that I exist. It is good to be a human being, even in hard times. Faith makes one happy from deep within".

- Vatican Information Service

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GIFT

What I am is God's gift to me. What I become is my gift back to God.

Anonymous