

ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH BULLETIN

FOR

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2009

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD – JANUARY 11, 2009

# *Saint Alphonsus*

## Roman Catholic Church

A Pennsylvania Charitable Trust

**750 Pittsburgh Street • Springdale, PA • 15144**

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**Web Page Address:** [www.stalphonsuschurch.com](http://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.

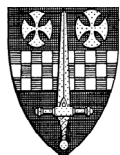
**WEEKDAY:** Mass held in Chapel next to Church. See bulletin each week or call Rectory for schedule of the 8:00 A.M. Mass which is not held every day (never on Sat morn).

**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.



**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

### 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

CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF  
PITTSBURGH  
ALLEGHENY  
VALLEY DEANERY

# This is My Beloved Son



## SIGNS OF OUR LIFE

Today, we celebrate the **BAPTISM OF THE LORD**. Jesus is baptized by John in the Jordan River and introduced to the people by John and by the Holy Spirit who descends on him in the form of a dove.

A lot of people ask why Jesus was baptized. After all, he was God and had no need to repent or reform. This is true, and even John protests, saying, "You should be baptizing me, and not the other way around." However, Jesus tells John to let it happen, for in doing all these things, even though it was not necessary, Jesus is giving us an example of obedience to the will of God.

An even better question would be, "Why are **WE** baptized?" Why do we receive **ANY** of the Sacraments? Why do we have to confess our sins to the priest? Why do we have to have hands imposed on our heads and be anointed with oil when we are Confirmed? Why do we have to receive Holy Communion? Why do we have to go through a ceremony when we are married in the Church?

It all has to do with **SIGNS**. We need signs in our lives because we cannot see the mind or the heart or the spirit of our God. We need to be reminded through visible signs of the presence of the healing, of mission and other abstract concepts. These notions are beyond the body, and signs are representations of them. For example, at a wedding, the couple exchange not only vows but also give rings, and when they place the ring on each other's finger, they say, "Take this ring, which is a **SIGN** of my love for you and my faithfulness."

This is what **BAPTISM** is and what **ALL THE SACRAMENTS ARE**: signs. Signs (ceremonies, words, actions) which represent and actually produce and cause the effect they signify.

To get back to our original question, why do we have to be baptized? – the answer is so **WE** can know and feel and experience the presence of God in our souls and our lives. We who are made up of body and soul, and whose soul comes to know things through the body...we need to have **SIGNS** (Sacraments) that these things are happening to us.

So let those who complain and say, "We don't have to confess our sins to the priest," also say, "We don't have to have Baptism for our babies," or "We don't have to have anointing for our bodies," or "We don't have to have Communion for our souls."

Accepting the **SIGNS** of the Church is the same as accepting the will of Christ for us. And Jesus gives us all these Sacraments for our benefit and convenience, not for his. He doesn't need them. We do.

Let us renew our own Baptism vows today as we celebrate the Baptism of Christ by John.

-- Fr. Saladna




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### SCHEDULE OF MASSES FOR THIS WEEK (First Week in Ordinary Time)

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**MONDAY, JANUARY 12** – Weekday Celebration  
8:00 AM Mary Mieszkowski

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 13** – Saint Hilary  
8:00 AM Joseph Parise

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14** – Weekday Celebration  
8:00 AM John A. Bohna

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 15** – No Mass scheduled for today

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 16** – Weekday Celebration  
8:00 AM Michael J. Faith

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 17** – No Mass on Saturday morning  
5:00 PM [For Sunday] Leontina Marciasani

**NEXT SUNDAY, January 18** – Second Sunday of Ordinary Time  
8:00 AM For all Parishioners, Liv. & Dec.  
11:00 AM Nancy and Catherine Pillitteri

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**MANY HAVE COMPLAINED ABOUT** people eating and drinking or gum-chewing in Church and not just children. Milk, juices and other liquids have been spilled on the cushions or the floor rug and, worst of all, wads of chewing gum stomped on the floor and ground into the carpet. Please! Respect the furnishings of the House of God. The kids can have a good time at Baby Jesus School and eat and drink over there to their heart's content.

**A REMINDER TO THOSE WHO ATTEND THE DAILY (WEEKDAY) MASSES IN OUR CHAPEL.** As announced October, 2008, if a Funeral Mass is held in the Church (usually at 10:00 AM), the earlier Mass at 8:00 AM will be cancelled. Many of the people who come to the daily Mass also sing in the Resurrection Choir, and the Altar Servers, also. So, rather than have a Mass with practically no one in attendance, and then repeat with a Mass for the Funeral, we will just have one Mass when we have a Funeral in our Church which includes a Mass. When this happens, we will make an announcement to daily Mass goes a day or two before. The Intention for the cancelled Mass will be rescheduled or the stipend returned. This practice will also help build community, with more people attending the Funeral of a brother or sister parishioner.



**WORLD MARRIAGE DAY** is celebrated the weekend of February 7-8, 2009. There will be a diocesan celebration of World Marriage day on Saturday, February 7, 2009, at St. Maurice Parish, Forest Hills. It will begin with Mass at 5:00 PM in the

Church with Bishop David Zubik as the presider and homilist. Following Mass there will be a wine and cheese reception in the parish hall. A presentation by Mike Clark of Chanel 4 News will follow. Donation is \$10/couple. To register please call the Office for Family Life and Catechesis at 412-456-3160.

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE** – Yearly boxed sets of envelopes for use by little children and young people can be found in the Activity Room. Little kids like to feel they belong and are important, and so they are. A good way to show this is for them to have their own envelopes and to learn that every little bit helps. God does not measure the amount, but rather the good heart and good will. Thus, these envelopes are not intended as moneymakers, but as a teaching tool. They should be taught to take a penny or nickel or whatever from their own piggy bank, and give something each week, as do the “big people.”

Take these envelopes from the Activity Room. No need to write names or numbers from the box, for we do not record these donations. They are recorded in the book of the one who loves the little children and who encourages them to come to him, Jesus himself.

**LOWER VALLEY MEALS ON WHEELS** program is in great need of volunteers to cook meals. It only requires 3 hours a month and they work out of the St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Springdale, Please call Paulette to volunteer or for more information at 724-224-6685.

**“PROTECTING GOD’S CHILDREN” – IMPORTANT MEETING FOR ALL CHURCH EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS, SPECIAL MINISTERS (Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Adult Servers, Choir, Ushers, etc., etc.) – Next Sunday, January 18, from 12:00 Noon to 3:00 PM, in our Church Hall, there will be an important training and “awareness session” about detecting and combating child abuse. This meeting and presentation is designed to make us all aware of the need, the necessity and the means to detect child abuse and combat it, if and where it presents itself.**

A postcard notice has been sent to all those to whom this applies. Please mark the date and time so that this important obligation to your Ministry can be met. Thank you very much for your service, and for your cooperation.

**NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 18 – 12 Noon to 3:00 PM for all those who received the postcard notice.**

#### MEETINGS:

1. **CCD** classes resume today, January 11, at our regular time, 9:15 AM. Please be on time. And remember, attendance at Mass on Sunday is truly an “obligation” on the part of both the students and Catholic parents, and is expected of them.
2. The **YOUTH GROUP** will hold their **JANUARY MEETING** today in the Liguori Center, beginning at 9:15 AM. All High School students are encouraged to belong to the Youth Group. Exciting winter activities will be discussed at today’s meeting.
3. **BABY JESUS SCHOOL** – remember that BJS will be held every Sunday there is CCD. Parents of infants and toddlers are invited to bring their children over to the school, top floor (enter through the side doors) for fun and games **DURING THE 11:00 AM MASS**. Bring them over before Mass and pick them up after Mass.
4. **CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS** – meeting this Wednesday, January 14, at 7:00 PM in the Church Hall.
5. **NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 18 – “Awareness Session” in “Protecting God’s Children”** – in the Church Hall, from 12:00 Noon to 3:00 PM. Those who must attend this session will have already received a postcard reminder in the mail. Attendance at this session is obligatory to satisfy the commitment made by our Diocese to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

**SOUPERBOWL OF CARING: FEBRUARY 1, 2009 –**

We are on a mission to fight hunger and poverty. You can help. Our Youth Group will hold soup pots at church doors on Super Bowl Sunday, February 1, 2009. They will join young people in churches across the country to collect money for those who are hungry and hurting. In 2008, over 14,000 groups participated in the Souper Bowl of Caring generating over \$8 million dollars nationwide.

None of the money is sent to the Souper Bowl of Caring headquarters. It goes to local Food Banks. Organizers only ask that each participant report their collection so national totals can be determined and announced. Since the Souper Bowl of Caring began in 1990 more than \$41 million has gone to help people in need. Please support the youth of our church in this effort to “love our neighbors” by dropping your dollars in the soup pot on February 1<sup>st</sup> after Mass.

**GOD’S BELOVED**

Only one week has passed since we celebrated the feast of the Epiphany. No longer are we focused on the images of the child Jesus surrounded by his parents and the magi at the manger in Bethlehem. Today, it’s as if the Church has pushed the “fast forward” button in the life of Jesus. Today we celebrate his baptism in the Jordan. When the Lord Jesus rises from the waters of baptism, the heavens open and a voice announces, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). This event sets the stage for the unfolding of Jesus Christ’s life and work, which will become our focus for the rest of the year as we tune our ears to Saint Matthew’s Gospel. As we prepare ourselves for this work, let us be reminded that we, too, were counted among God’s beloved at the moment of our own baptism.

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**ANNUAL PARISHIONER CONTRIBUTION**

**REPORTS** will be mailed to everyone after January 18. Some may need them for tax returns. Any 2008 envelopes received up to and including Sunday, January 11 (today), will be credited to your 2008 totals. Everything received after that will be credited to 2009. Please do not call us for your 2008 tallies. We will send them to you as soon as they are ready, after January 18, the last date for us to accept donations credited to year 2008.

**Your Ministry of Support**

Thank you for your offerings to Saint Alphonsus Parish For Sunday, December 21, 2008, Christmas, Mary, Mother of God, and Sunday, January 4, 2009

Offertory, 12/21 .....	\$3,978.75
Parish Share .....	\$1,540.00
Christmas .....	\$6,983.00
Christmas Charities.....	\$5,900.00
Mary, Mother of God.....	\$1,300.00
Offertory, 1/4 .....	\$5,070.00
Parish Share, 1/4 .....	\$585.00

**PLEASE REMEMBER SAINT ALPHONSUS CHURCH IN YOUR WILL**

**SPECIAL COLLECTION NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 18 –**

**DEPAUL SCHOOL FOR HEARING AND SPEECH (Formerly DePaul Institute) –** DePaul School for Hearing and Speech was founded in 1908 by the Diocese of Pittsburgh and the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill to provide education for deaf children. The school continues in that tradition today. DePaul is now located in Shadyside in the newly renovated Sacred Heart High School.

DePaul for Hearing and Speech is a tuition-free, State Approved Magnet School, for children newborn through age 15, dedicated to teaching children with moderate to profound hearing losses to speak clearly and to understand spoken language with confidence.

DePaul School for Hearing and Speech is the only program of its kind in Southwestern Pennsylvania. It is strongly endorsed by the medical community in Pittsburgh as the premier school for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**AND ST. ANTHONY SCHOOL PROGRAMS –**

Provides inclusive Catholic Special Education to students with intellectual disabilities and autism in environments with their same age general education peers from the ages of 5 through 21.

St. Anthony School Programs help both Catholic and non-Catholic students with developmental disabilities to live their life to its fullest potential intellectually, socially, academically, vocationally and spiritually.

**POPE BENEDICT SPEAKS ON THE EPIPHANY****JESUS IS THE WISDOM OF GOD INCARNATE**

VATICAN CITY, 4 JAN 2009 (VIS) - At noon today the Holy Father appeared at the window of his study overlooking St. Peter's Square to pray the Angelus with the thousands of pilgrims present.

At the beginning of the Mass the Pope recalled that "the liturgy again invites us to meditate on the same Gospel proclaimed on Christmas Day, that is, the Prologue of St. John. After the chaos of racing around buying gifts these past days, the Church invites us to contemplate again the mystery of Christ's birth in order to better understand its profound meaning and its importance for our lives".

"It is", he said, "an astonishing text that offers an extraordinary synthesis of all of Christian faith. It begins from on high: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'; herein lies the unheard of and humanly inconceivable novelty: 'And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us'".

Benedict XVI emphasized that this "is not a figure of speech but a lived experience! John, an eyewitness recounts it to us. ... They are not the erudite words of a rabbi or doctor of the law but the impassioned witness of a humble fisherman who, called by Jesus when he was young, in his three years of living with Christ and His apostles felt His love - to the point of defining himself 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' - who saw Him die on the cross and appear resurrected, and who received His Spirit together with the others. From these experiences, meditated upon in his heart, John drew a certain conclusion: Jesus is the Wisdom of God incarnate, is His eternal Word who was made a mortal man".

Highlighting that "knowing Jesus, being with Him, listening to His preaching, and seeing the signs he performed, the disciples recognized that all of Scripture was fulfilled in Him", the Pope said that "each man and woman needs to find profound meaning in their own existence. To do so it is not enough to read books or to follow Sacred Scripture. The Child of Bethlehem reveals and communicates to us the true 'face' of the good and faithful God who loves us and does not abandon us, not even in death".

The Holy Father affirmed that "the first to open her heart and contemplate 'the Word made flesh' was Mary, the Mother of Jesus. A humble girl of Galilee thus became the 'Seat of Wisdom'. Just like John the

apostle, each of us is invited to welcome her into our homes in order to know Jesus more deeply and to feel His faithful and inexhaustible love. This is my wish for each of you, dear brothers and sisters, at the beginning of this new year".

- Pope Benedict XVI, Vatican Information Service

**TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION**

One of the most ancient and enduring sites for baptism in Rome is the church of San Giovanni in Fonte. This church is in fact a baptistery, and houses the font for the Lateran Basilica, the cathedral of Rome. The Emperor Constantine sponsored its construction in the year 315, and it is therefore the oldest baptistery in the world. It is the model for nearly all later baptisteries, including perhaps the font in your own parish church. In the fourth century, churches didn't contain baptismal fonts. Baptism was a once-a-year event, at Easter, and mostly for adults. Within a century, new practices soon masked the original purpose of Constantine, and later popes made additions, like a nave and altars, and even side chapels.

High above the place where the immersion baptism pool once stood, an inscription in mosaic tile is a lyrical expression of our baptismal tradition. It speaks of the font as the "womb of the church," and encourages the sinner not to be afraid of the water. "Though your sins be many and great, do not draw back afraid. Reborn from this stream, a Christian you shall be." The actual font is very old, but it is not the ancient flowing pool. As you often see in Italy, there are smaller pools carved into the marble railing of the font, just big enough to dip an infant. The present font has a carving of the baptism of Constantine, leading some to think that he was baptized here. That's not the case, since he waited until the last minute for a deathbed baptism, as people often did in the fourth century. It's not on the usual tourist path in Rome, but just a few steps from the Lateran Basilica is the best place in Rome to renew your baptismal vows and to marvel at the life-giving stream that has "washed the whole earth" over the centuries.

-Rev. James Field  
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