



Bringing Our  
Faith to Life

# Our Parish Life

ST. MICHAEL  
IN OLD TOWN  
*A Redemptorist Catholic Parish*



1633 N. Cleveland Ave • Chicago, IL 60614 • 312.642.2498 • [www.st-mikes.org](http://www.st-mikes.org)



*The Nativity of the Lord  
(Christmas)  
December 25, 2011*

The Word became flesh;  
from his fullness we have received grace  
(John 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14]).

Dear Parish Family,

Merry Christmas! May the blessings of the birth of Jesus be manifestations of God's grace for you, for the members of your family, and for those significant others in your life. This day is truly an occasion of the presence of God at work in our world, a moment of the experience of the creative power of God and a promise of the continued faithfulness of the Spirit of God in our midst. We are all grateful, blessed and energized by the promise that we celebrate this day.

One of the significant realities that we celebrate on this day is the theological manifestation of God becoming Incarnate, becoming flesh in our world. Divinity joins with humanity in the person of Jesus, the Word of God. In this unitive and creative act of God what we proclaim as we celebrate this day is an astonishing and a hopeful declaration of faith. We proclaim that what has seemingly been divided is now made one. God is not something or someone that is "outside" our human experience but is rather "inside" the human family. What is seemingly separate from humanity is forever restored to a relational unity, a bonding between God and humankind in a manner that is intended to be eternal and everlasting.

As people of faith we identify this new reality as redemptive. We proclaim that the birth of Jesus is the birth of our Redeemer but what do we actually mean when we make this very bold statement? From what have we been redeemed, what has been restored, what has been knitted together that was once somehow separate, torn apart or divided?

In truth there was never, according to a strong and classical tradition of theology, any real separation between God and humanity. The perception of such a separation was an arrogant act of foolishness, not unlike the temper tantrum a young child throws when they first try to impose their perceived independence on their parents: "I don't need you and you can't make me!" Human beings, indeed all of creation, cannot be separated from God since God is the life-force, the animating energy, the creative power that creates, enables and sustains all life. If we deny this reality or refuse to accept it our refusal

## This Week at St. Michael

For more information or to participate in any of the activities listed below, please call the parish office at (312) 642-2498.

### Sunday, December 25

10:00 a.m. Christmas Mass

### Monday, December 26

8:00 a.m. Mass  
5:30 p.m. Mass

### Tuesday, December 27

8:00 a.m. Mass with Perpetual Help  
11:00 a.m. Primetimers  
6:00 p.m. Mass with Perpetual Help  
8:00 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous

### Wednesday, December 28

8:00 a.m. Mass  
5:30 p.m. Mass  
6:30 p.m. AA (women only)

### Thursday, December 29

8:00 a.m. Mass  
5:30 p.m. Mass  
7:00 p.m. Rosary

### Friday, December 30

8:00 a.m. Mass  
5:30 p.m. Mass

### Saturday, December 31

8:00 a.m. Mass  
5:30 p.m. Mass

### Sunday, January 1

9:00 a.m. Mass  
11:00 a.m. Mass

#### Please Note:

**There will be no 7:00 p.m. Mass on New Year's Day, January 1.**

**The Parish Office will be closed Monday, December 26 and will reopen Tuesday, December 27, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. The office will then close beginning at noon on Thursday, December 29 and remain closed through January 2, 2012. We will reopen at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 3, 2012.**

## From the Pastor

does not alter the truth but rather just enables us to turn a blind eye to the reality. That being said our blind eye is the same kind of blind eye that a child routinely plays with: "if I close my eyes I can't see them and they can't see me." Just as the child is surprised when they are discovered in their hiding place we too are surprised when our illusion of separation or hiddenness from God is revealed when God stands before us and calls us by name.

Redemption then is not so much repairing that which was torn apart but it is rather restoring our individual and collective vision that refused to see clearly the truth that was always present to us. Once we see, once our sight is healed and restored, we begin to live as a people who are redeemed. This is the "already and the not yet" that we will celebrate as the liturgical year unfolds. We are already redeemed but we have not yet been fully redeemed since there are still those among us who refuse to see. The kingdom of God is in our midst but it has not yet been fully manifested.

I have recently been reading and have become inspired by a book that speaks about the *Emergent Christ*. In this book, which deals with the reality of science and the challenge of faith, the author invites her readers to see the fullness of God as evolving. As Christians we are called forth to grow and develop, we stretch and change and evolve each day. Christians do not look back longingly to the past but rather try and live in the present and anticipate the future where all things will be made whole and entire. Each moment of our human life that speaks to us of healing, wholeness, new life, risk, creativity, and challenge are ways that the manifestation of the Incarnate Christ becomes more and more present in the world in which we live. God is discovered wherever there is life, wherever there is growth, wherever human beings thrive and live life to the fullest. We look to the past and see the imprint of the hand of God at work in our world but we do not try and duplicate a moment long past but rather we seek to make God's imprint alive and present in our world, in our place, and in our time. The grace of the moment is found in the present, the now and not in a distant past that has long since passed into the mist of time.

We should celebrate this day. We should celebrate each and every relationship that we have been blessed with. We celebrate relationship because all of creation is in relationship with the rest of creation. We all share something of the same energy that comes from a loving and a creative God and all of creation, no matter what form it might take, witnesses to the power of the God of life.

If we listen, if we pay attention, if we are willing to invest something of our self in each and every relationship that we experience this day we will enjoy the fullest of God's blessing and life. There is no thing. There is no person. There is no experience that cannot be accepted and experienced by the human person as gift, unless we choose to close our eyes and embrace an illusion that suggests otherwise. So enjoy everything and everyone these days of our holiday celebrations. Be thankful and give praise to the creator God who is the center of all life and whose son Jesus the Christ we joyfully acknowledge and celebrate this day as God's gift to us, the pledge of God's life and love.

Blessings on each and every one. Thank you for permitting the staff at St Michael in Old Town to be part of your holiday celebration. As we welcome you this day know that we welcome you any day that we gather together and celebrate the presence of God in our midst. You are welcome to join us and to be a part of this community. We would welcome you as God's gift to us and a singular manifestation of God's life and love.

Fr. Tom Santa, C.Ss.R.  
Pastor



# St. Michael in Old Town - The Nativity of the Lord

## *The Solemnity of the Birth of Our Lord*

Christmas, December 25

*There is no other day in the Christian calendar that evokes more memories and expectations than Christmas. Though Easter is the defining Christian celebration, the core of our belief and the center of our dogma, Christmas seems to capture our imagination and hold our spirits in thrall as no other holiday or season can.*

*Christmas speaks to us of innocence, of hope, of togetherness. Maybe it has something to do with the image of the infant, lying in the manger. The beginning of life always holds a certain feeling of expectation and joy. Or perhaps it is because Christmas is a feast in which both believer and nonbeliever alike can find some common ground, something to celebrate together, if only the so-called "spirit of the season."*

*As you gather your family, your friends, those you love, around the Christmas table, pause for just a moment and lead them in prayer.*

O God of our beginnings,  
We discover,  
in the birth of your Son,  
in his coming as one of us,  
a promise of hope and deliverance.  
Somehow we can sense that this is important.  
We may not always believe.  
We may at times approach life with a certain casualness.  
We may not even always understand why we do what we do,  
choose what we choose,  
or act the way we act.  
But somehow,  
in the birth of your Son,  
we are reassured.  
Our hope is reborn,  
and the promise of something better for all,  
peace for humankind,  
seems possible again.  
Bless us as we gather around this table,  
with our individual hopes and dreams,  
surrounded by family and friends,  
nourished by the bounty of your hands.  
Form us into your people once again,  
and grant to each of us the promise we find in the Christ Child.

R. Amen.

Rev. Thomas M. Santa, C.Ss.R.

[The Essential Handbook for Advent and Christmas](#), (Liguori Publications, 2000)

*Saint of the Day  
&  
Mass Intentions*

Sunday, December 25  
*Birth of Our Lord*  
10:00 a.m. Parishioners - Living & Deceased

Monday, December 26  
*St. Stephen*  
8:00 a.m. † George Simon  
5:30 p.m. † Don Ryan

Tuesday, December 27  
*St. John*  
8:00 a.m. † Margaret Schreiber  
6:00 p.m. † Don Ryan

Wednesday, December 28  
*The Holy Innocents*  
8:00 a.m. † John & Marie Reiff  
5:00 p.m. † William & Angela O'Connell

Thursday, December 29  
*St. Thomas Becket*  
8:00 a.m. Membership Foundation Fund  
5:30 p.m. † Carl & Margaret Decker

Friday, December 30  
*The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph*  
8:00 a.m. † Don Ryan  
5:30 p.m. † Mary Slattery (Birthday)

Saturday, December 31  
*St. Sylvester I*  
8:00 a.m. Jane J. Moore  
5:30 p.m. † Jo Leiting

Sunday, January 1  
9:00 a.m. Belmonte Grandchildren  
11:00 a.m. † Gregg J. Guffrey, M.D.



*This Week's Readings*

Sunday: **Vigil:** Is 62:1-5; Ps 89; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25]  
**Midnight:** Is 9:1-6; Ps 96; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14  
Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20  
**Day:** Is 52:7-10; Ps 98; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14]

Monday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Mt 10:17-22

Tuesday: 1 Jn 1:1-4; Jn 20:1a, 2-8

Wednesday: 1 Jn 1:5 — 2:2; Mt 2:13-18

Thursday: 1 Jn 2:3-11; Lk 2:22-35

Friday: Sir 3:2-7, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Col 3:12-21 [12-17] or Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40 [22, 39-40]

Saturday: 1 Jn 2:18-21; Jn 1:1-18

Sunday: Nm 6:22-27; Ps 67; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21

# Ministry Schedule

## *December 25 - January 1*

Date	Celebrants	Homilist	Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers
<b>Monday,</b> 8:00 a.m. Mass 5:30 p.m. Mass	Fr. Morin Fr. Keena	Fr. Morin Fr. Keena		
<b>Tuesday,</b> 8:00 a.m. Mass 6:00 p.m. Mass	Fr. Morin Fr. Keena	Fr. Morin Fr. Keena		
<b>Wednesday,</b> 8:00 a.m. Mass 5:30 p.m. Mass	Fr. Morin Fr. Keena	Fr. Morin Fr. Keena		
<b>Thursday,</b> 8:00 a.m. Mass 5:30 p.m. Mass	Fr. Morin Fr. Keena	Fr. Morin Fr. Keena		
<b>Friday,</b> 8:00 a.m. Mass 5:30 p.m. Mass	Fr. Morin Fr. Keena	Fr. Morin Fr. Keena		
<b>Friday,</b> 3:00 p.m. Wedding	Fr. Santa			
<b>Saturday,</b> 8:00 a.m. Mass	Fr. Morin	Fr. Morin		
<b>Saturday,</b> 3:00 p.m. Wedding	Fr. Santa			
Date	Celebrant	Homilist	Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers
<b>Saturday,</b> December 31 5:30 p.m.	Fr. Keena	Fr. Keena	—	C. Jaccarino*, S. Keenan, L. Scannicchio, L. Scannicchio
<b>Sunday,</b> January 1 9:00 a.m. Mass	Fr. Morin	Fr. Morin	—	—
<b>Sunday,</b> 11:00 a.m. Mass	Fr. Santa	Fr. Santa	—	V. Classen, P. Clickener D. Kelley, R. Roach
<b>Sunday,</b> 7:00 p.m. Mass	No	Mass	Tonight	

### *Holiday Office Hours*

Please note there will be shortened hours in the Parish Office for the New Year's holiday. We will close at noon on Thursday, December 29 and the office will reopen at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 3, 2012. If you need to contact a priest, please call 312-642-2498 and you will be directed the appropriate extension or number.

# News & Announcements

## Remember in Your Prayers



Bernice Baumgarten, Arlene and Bill Conrick, Katelyn Dodson, Tony Dorsey, Delia Evans, Karyn Hanselman, Alec Johnson, Marge Kempen, Paul Kunach, Dave Lawson, Constantine Lebron, Margaret Lundeen, Annie Morin, Carl Neubeck, Lyla Neubek, Tom Preibe, Christine Ramos, Craig Romaine, Dolores Roth, Fr. Ken Sedlak, C.Ss.R., Joe Spreitzer, Rafael Velez, Carey Weaver, Jayson Weaver

To place or keep a name on our sick list, please call the rectory every 3 weeks to let us know that you, a loved one or friend are still in need of prayers.

## Upcoming Weddings

**December 30, 2011**

Ms. Karen George  
&  
Mr. Quinn Niego

**December 31, 2011**

Ms. Mary Catherine Sisler  
&  
Mr. John Mark Nickels



**January 7, 2012**

Ms. Jamie Fleischhauer  
&  
Mr. Nicholas Hammer

**January 14, 2012**

Ms. Madonna Goodman  
&  
Mr. Jon Nyhuis

## Upcoming Events

January 14, 2012  
April 21, 2012

Marquard Center Dinner  
7th Annual Gala

## St. Michael's Bulletin

Please feel free to take this bulletin home with you after mass. This publication is printed specifically for you so you will have all the latest information regarding mass times, ministry schedules and the events taking place here at St. Michael's Church. Also contained in the bulletin is the contact information for all the staff, commission heads and council chairs. These are the people that conduct the parish business or the events that are held here. They are always willing to help answer questions about anything pertaining to St. Michael's Church.

## Gluten Free Hosts

It has come to our attention that some people may be gluten intolerant and are thus prevented from receiving Holy Communion because of the wheat wafer. If this is true for you please contact Fr. Santa or one of the other priests on staff and the procedure for receiving a gluten free host at Mass will be explained to you.

## Parish Life Commission

**Commission Head: Gisella Tomasio**

**Pastor's Representative: Fr. Tom Donaldson, C.Ss.R.**  
[parishlife@st-mikes.org](mailto:parishlife@st-mikes.org)

Monthly Meetings: 4th Mon., 6:30 p.m., Parish Center

The Parish Life Commission provides a wide variety of programs that enhance the social experience and sense of community for all parishioners of St. Michael in Old Town. Its various activities include: Young Adults group, Docents of St. Michael's (Art and History Tours), New Mom's Groups, New Parishioner Welcome Events, Over 40's Club, Gardening Group.

## Church Tours

Tours of the church are held most Sundays after the 11:00 a.m. Mass in winter and after the 9:00 a.m. Mass in summer. All are welcome. Please meet by the "1871 display" on the east side of the church. Tours for groups can be scheduled by appointment. Please contact Linda Evans at the church office (312) 642-2498 or send an e-mail to [tours@st-mikes.org](mailto:tours@st-mikes.org).

**Tours: January 8, 15, 22, 29 at 12:00 p.m.**

## New Mom's Group

Come meet other moms for coffee and chitchat. Babies and kids are welcome! We meet on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 10:00 a.m. - noon in the Parish Center Dining Room. Bring your own snacks, lunch and toys to share.

## Mom's Night Out

Are you a new mom who needs a night out? Join other new mothers for dinner and drinks.

Contact Laura Demko regarding either event at [LEDemko@gmail.com](mailto:LEDemko@gmail.com) for more information.

## Worship Commission

**Commission Head: Diane Kelley-Thompson**

**Pastor's Representative: Fr. Tom Donaldson, C.Ss.R.**  
**Liaison for Baptism:**

**Fr. Tom Donaldson, C.Ss.R.**

**Fr. Joe Morin, C.Ss.R.**

**Liaison for Altar Servers:**

**Fr. Tom Santa, C.Ss.R.**

**Liaison for Confirmation:**

**Fr. Jim Keena, C.Ss.R.**

**Liaison for Eucharistic Ministers:**

**Fr. Joe Morin, C.Ss.R.**

**Liaison for First Communion:**

**Fr. Joe Morin, C.Ss.R.**

**Liaison for Lectors:**

**Fr. Tom Donaldson, C.Ss.R.**

**Liaison for RCIA:**

**Fr. Tom Donaldson, C.Ss.R.**

**[worship@st-mikes.org](mailto:worship@st-mikes.org)**

The Worship Commission's members plan, prepare, implement, evaluate, and educate about all aspects of the parish's liturgical celebrations.

## Spiritual Living Commission

**Commission Head: Christine Kordiuk**  
**Pastor's Representative: Fr. Ken Sedlak, C.Ss.R.**  
spiritualliving@st-mikes.org  
Monthly Meeting: 3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m., Parish Center

The Spiritual Living Commission offers programs that nurture living in the presence of God. Catholic in its roots and ecumenical in its outreach, the Commission strives to assist all in their desire for meaning, purpose, and community built on the foundation of God's unconditional love.

Ministries include: Adult Confirmation, Religious Education, RCIA, Family, Catholics Come Home, Culture of Life, Marriage Vocation Development & Enrichment, Religious Vocation Discernment, Single Life Vocation Development & Enrichment, Pathways/Stillpoint, Living the Questions, Spiritual Dream group, Bible/Scripture studies, Servant Leadership.

## Finance Council

**Commission Head: Laurence Grant**  
**Pastor's Representative: Fr. Tom Santa, C.Ss.R.**  
financecouncil@st-mikes.org

The Finance Council advises the pastor on the tangible assets of the parish community including financial resources, buildings, and the church's grounds and provides financial oversight for all parish events. The Council discusses various ways to enhance the financial future of the parish. The Council consists of parishioners with skills in finance, accounting, legal, construction and architecture. Membership is by invitation of the pastor.

## We're Counting on You!

Did it ever seem to you that the ushers are preoccupied when they are passing the collection baskets during the Offertory? Perhaps you tried to acknowledge them with a nod or a smile, but they seemed not to notice.

The most likely reason is that they were busy counting the attendees at each Mass while they passed the baskets. We track the attendance at each Mass and have done so for many years. The basis for this information is the ushers' count each week. Tracking the attendance is one of the ways we know if we are shrinking or growing as a parish. These numbers also help us with budget calculations when the Finance Council presents the needs of the parish.

So, the next time your usher passes your pew without returning your acknowledgement, you'll know what is really going on in his or her head.

## News & Announcement

### Volunteers Needed for January 14 Dinner at the Marquard Center

The Human Needs and Concerns Commission is seeking volunteers and donations for the next Marquard Center dinner, scheduled for **Saturday, January 14th** at the Center. The following menu will be prepared and served:

**Chili with Beef & Beans, Cornbread, Tossed Salad and Dessert.**

Volunteers are needed to: 1) prepare the chili in the Marquardt Center kitchen that Saturday afternoon beginning at 1:00 p.m.; 2) bake cornbread and dessert and deliver to the Parish Office on Friday, January 13 or by Noon on January 14; and 3) volunteers to help serve and clean-up at the Center beginning at 4:00 p.m. Anyone interested in volunteering is asked to email [humanconcerns@st-mikes.org](mailto:humanconcerns@st-mikes.org). Please include your name, email address, phone number, and whether you prefer to cook, bake, and/or serve. Donations of the following non-perishable items also will be greatly appreciated.

**Canned red kidney beans**

**Canned tomato sauce**

**Garlic powder**

**Canned diced tomatoes**

**Chili powder**

These items can be dropped off in the basket labeled for food donations located in the back of the church (west side) after weekend masses, or you may bring them to the Parish Office during regular business hours.

If you choose to help mark your donation with **Franciscan Outreach**.

Thank you for your support of this worthwhile activity! Past volunteers will attest that it's also fun and a great opportunity to get to know fellow parishioners.

### Ashland Addison Florist

When ordering flowers and centerpieces remember that St. Michael's has established a partnership with Ashland Addison Florist. Ashland Addison Florist Company will make a **10% donation** back to St. Michael's when you mention St. Michael via the phone or in store or use the special promo code "STMD" when purchasing online. Place your order via phone at (312) 432-1800 or online at [www.ashaddflorist.com](http://www.ashaddflorist.com). **Don't forget to mention St. Michael in Old Town to ensure a donation back to our Church!**

### Rosary Prayer Group

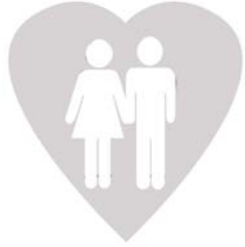
Looking for a way to enrich your spiritual life? Join in praying the Rosary weekly with your fellow parishioners. The group meets on Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. in the Chapel.



### The Next Selection Is ...

The Book Club has chosen the book *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho for their next read. This book details the journey of an Andalusian shepherd boy named Santiago. Santiago, believing a recurring dream to be prophetic, decides to travel to the pyramids of Egypt to find treasure. He then tells a lone gypsy about this treasure. As he leaves, the gypsy mentions one thing: If he does find the treasure, she wants 10 percent of it. On the way, he encounters love, danger, opportunity, disaster and learns a lot about himself and the ways of the world. Join us on January 26, 2012 for our discussion and social time. All are welcome!

# News & Announcements



Save the Date!

St. Mike's Hosts an Evening for Married Couples

Celebrate Valentine's Day  
Renew your marriage vows  
Mingle with other St. Mike's Couples  
Enjoy drinks and dinner  
Listen to a talk about finding balance in your marriage

Saturday, February 11, 2012  
5:30 pm mass at St. Michael's  
\$25 per couple

Check the bulletin in January for more Information

*Thank you for supporting Breakfast with Santa!*

Santa wishes to thank...

## Event Sponsors

A New Leaf  
Einstein Bros. Bagels  
Eva's Café  
Orso's Restaurant  
Treasure Island  
Jeanine Handley

Calumet Photographic  
Elly's Pancake House  
Giggle  
Stanley's Kitchen and Tap  
Walgreens



## *Stillpoint*

St. Michael's Spirituality Resource  
Director: Fr. Ken Sedlak, C.Ss.R., [kcssr@aol.com](mailto:kcssr@aol.com)  
Contemplative Prayer Gathering: Mondays, 7:15 p.m.  
Parish Center 3<sup>rd</sup> Fl Chapel

## Inner Views Christmas Blessings

On these cold and blustery winter days my Mother had hot chocolate brewing on the stove when we came home from school. She patiently watched the milk as it warmed and then she'd stir in four heaping spoons of Nestle's Quick or Hershey's syrup. Now here's a sign of aging, I remember when the only marshmallow were the big ones, not the tiny ones we can get now. We suffered through the inconvenience of massive marshmallows.

In the last four weeks of Advent God has been patiently warming us up. Today is the day when God puts in the chocolate, or as the Gospel puts it, makes us children of God. The Word became flesh and now becomes flesh over and over again in our lives. Today we celebrate the grace of our humanness filled with the divine – this is how God saves.

I hope you've had a chance to enjoy whatever gets you in the mood for the wonder of Christmas. This is not a time to reject or refuse the things that give us comfort, beauty, or simply entertain us. It is a time to savor the gifts and cards that remind us of the people who care. God saves us through our humanness, through one another. There's blessedness in the extravagance and sentimentality of this season.

The "Word became flesh", became human. God saves us in our humanness. Today we take time to soak in the reality of what's happening. We listen to the music, the beauty of the church, the sharing of sacred bread and wine and realize that these are the ways God gets through to us. These are the ways God stirs divinity into our lives.

My youngest sister Kathy was born when I was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I remember holding her. She was so small and so trusting. I could feel her breathing and loved her so much. I would do anything to protect her. Its just came naturally from her and flowed through me.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. God become a baby, the word through whom the whole universe was created became a helpless child. The infinite vastness of creation became a word so that God could get through to us. God became a vulnerable child to open our hearts. In Jesus we find that God will do anything to get through our defenses. This day is soaked in God. But the greatest gift is still to come. The divine is being stirred into our being and this day is the time to savor this

mystery – not just gulp it down.

What is needed is our willingness to let God in. Our willingness is the milk to God's divine chocolate. In the moments of quiet or joy you will feel the joy of God's thrill. God just loves to look into your eyes, hug you from inside and be yours. Like all good parents God's desires are pretty simple.

The Gospels tell us that God made angels. And I'm sure that God loves them. But how do you tell angels apart? They're so spiritual. It's obvious that we are all different, one from another. Each one of us is unique and God's thrill is when we let God turn us into hot chocolate.

Blessed is your Christmas. May you enjoy the divine gift.

Ken Sedlak C.Ss.R. - Stillpoint / PATHWAYS

### **The Meaning of Christmas**

St. Alphonsus Liguori, C.Ss.R.

Consider that the birth of Jesus Christ caused universal joy in the whole world. Jesus was the Redeemer who had been desired and waited for so many years. He was called the desire of the nations and the desire of the eternal hills. Today we behold him, born in a little cave! Let us consider that this day the angel also announces to us the same great joy announced to the shepherds. "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, for a savior has been born."

What great rejoicing there is in a country when the first born son of a king is born. But surely there should be even greater rejoicing when we see the Son of God born! We were lost and he came to save us. He is the shepherd who has come to save his sheep from death. He is the Lamb of God who has come to sacrifice himself, to become our deliverer, our life, or light, and even our food in the most Holy Sacrament.

St. Maximus says that for this reason, among many others, Jesus chose to be laid in the manger where the animals are fed, to make us understand that he has been human and also our food. "In the manger, where the food of animals is placed, he allowed himself to be laid, demonstrating that his own body would be the eternal food of humankind." Besides this he is born every day in the sacrament of the altar; the altar is the crib and we go to the altar to be fed and nourished. Some might desire to hold the Infant Jesus in their arms as the prophet Simeon did, but faith teaches us that when we receive Holy Communion, we too hold the same Jesus who was in the manger in Bethlehem, not in our arms, but in our hearts.

## News & Announcements

### *Seeking Confirmation?*

Are you like many young adult Catholics who somehow missed being confirmed as a younger student? Are you preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage and realizing you would like to reconnect with the sacramental life of the Church? If so, you might be interested in the St. Michael Confirmation preparation process which will begin in February and continue through April. Confirmation will take place the first Sunday in May. There are 6 Wednesday evening sessions, one Saturday retreat day (10am-3pm), and one evening of reflection. Your sponsor is encouraged to attend all sessions with you, but must attend the evening of reflection and Confirmation.

For those baptized in another Christian faith, but interested in becoming Catholic and being confirmed, there are similar opportunities for you. Please read about them below under the RCIA heading.

### *RCIA*

In keeping with the idea of "New Year's Resolutions," perhaps you find yourself thinking about some New Year Resolutions for your spiritual life. If you have been thinking about joining the Catholic faith, completing your initiation through Eucharist and/or Confirmation, or journeying with someone who is seeking to know Jesus Christ and his Message and Mission, the RCIA might be the right place to begin.

The **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)** is a process for those seeking to become one with Christ through Baptism and/or membership in the Catholic Faith. Whether baptized or unbaptized, the process allows for spiritual progression of the individual and the opportunity to learn in depth about what the Catholic Church teaches and believes. For those already Catholic wishing to deepen their own faith and live out a spirit of mission, there is an opportunity to accompany a potential Catechumen (unbaptized adult) or Candidate (already baptized in a Christian Church) as they learn about and prepare for full initiation into the Church. These mentors may serve as sponsors or as members of the Team that prepares the sessions each week.

If you are interested in Adult Confirmation or our RCIA program, contact Mary Catherine Meek at 312-943-4767 or write her at [mcmeek@st-mikes.org](mailto:mcmeek@st-mikes.org). A personal conversation is usually the best start to the process. We offer the following days and times for those at different stages of their journey. Unless otherwise noted, all sessions take place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Lounge of the Parish Center at 1711 N. Cleveland.

### *Religious Education for Students*

**Christmas/New Year's Break for students: 12/25; 1/1/12; and 1/8/12**

### *Infant Baptism Preparation*

All parents who wish to have their baby baptized are required to attend an Infant Baptism preparation session. Parents who have previously had a child baptized are exempt from attending a second class. Parents are asked to register in advance for the class by calling the parish office at 312-642-2498. Sessions take place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Lounge of the Parish Center:

Monday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm and Sunday January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 2:00 pm

**Please note:** The Center for Religious Education will be closed from Dec. 25 through January 9 for the holidays.

# New & Announcements

## *The Spirit of Wellness*

by Coach Joe Cullen



### **HO HO HO....Merrrry Christmas St. Mike's!**

As I have "Frosty The Snowman" on the TV in the background right now, it reminds me that it's indeed Christmas time, and how I'm so thankful and jolly for God's greatest gifts to me; *my friends, family, this Wellness column, our wonderful St. Michael's Church and my health.*

As I do around this time I year, I thought I would briefly highlight my background again for some folks that may not remember and perhaps for those reading this column for the first time. I'm the founder and Certified Personal Trainer of *Certified Health & Fitness*, in Old Towne since 1996. I primarily serve the Chicagoland area and also other parts of the USA.

#### ***My specialization is in:***

- In-home Training
- Adult and Youth Fun and Fit programs
- Speaking Engagements
- Nutritional Guidance
- Writer/Columnist
- Girl Scouts Fitness Coach
- Chicago Police Youth Fitness Coach
- Archdiocese School Wellness programs
- Phone Coaching

and more.....

The information I share with you bi-weekly in "The Spirit of Wellness" comes from a variety of sources; my fourteen (14) years of experience as a Personal Trainer, my research with the American Council on Exercise, The New England Journal of Medicine, WEBMD, The Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA) and other proven, reliable sources.

As the New Year is just days away, try to make an extra effort in 2012 to focus on improving your health with some fun exercising and remember to reduce your portions when eating and let me know how I can help you.

So, thanks again everyone, have a very **Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**. Stay tuned for my next column in early January, and remember; "***Fitness is Fun and Health is Happiness***".

**Questions or Suggested Topics?** You're invited to contact me anytime. My office number is 773-857-7027 or my cell is 312-972-2828. Thank you all!

E-mail: [jcullen@CertifiedHealthFitness.com](mailto:jcullen@CertifiedHealthFitness.com)

Web site: [www.CertifiedHealthFitness.com](http://www.CertifiedHealthFitness.com)

#### **\*\* TIP OF THE MONTH\*\***

To help avoid germs/colds, remember to crack your windows for fresh air when you are sleeping, at work, lounging at home, and even driving your car to help keep you alert. Blasting that heat sometimes can also bring on fatigue.

*And remember, in just 90 days, it will be Spring again!!*

## *Communications and Special Events Commission*

**Commission Head: Jean Coccozza**  
**Pastor's Representative: Fr. Tom Santa, C.Ss.R.**  
[communications@st-mikes.org](mailto:communications@st-mikes.org)

The Communications & Special Events Commission is responsible for marketing and promoting St. Michael, its events and activities, internally to the Parish and externally to the community. Commission members coordinate information and publicize events and happenings through the design of flyers, posters, bulletin and Mass announcements, the St. Michael website, Facebook and local media. The commission also sponsors other fundraising events throughout the year for use in offsetting annual operating expenses and capital restoration projects.

The Communications & Special Events Commission is always seeking new members with an interest in writing, photography, and graphic design. If you are interested in joining the commission or for more information call the parish office at 312-642-2498 or email [communications@st-mikes.org](mailto:communications@st-mikes.org).

## *Human Concerns and Needs Commission*

**Co-Commission**  
**Heads: Barbara Pope and Jeanne Sanna**  
**Pastor's Representative: Fr. Joe Morin, C.Ss.R.**  
[humanconcerns@st-mikes.org](mailto:humanconcerns@st-mikes.org)  
Monthly Meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed., 7:00 p.m., Parish Center

**Mission Statement:** The Human Concerns and Needs Commission identifies needs within our parish and community and develops ministries to provide service and material outreach to address those needs.

**Join us for our next meeting on Wednesday, January 11 on the first floor of the Parish Center at 7:00 p.m.**

## *Music Ministry*

**Director of Music and Organist: Daniel Stucker**  
**Pastor's Representative: Fr. Tom Santa, C.Ss.R.**  
[dstucker@st-mikes.org](mailto:dstucker@st-mikes.org)

Membership to the Parish Choir, Schola Cantorum, is open to all high school, college and adult parishioners. The rehearsals take place on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. It is desirable that singers have a strong love for sacred music and fundamental knowledge of music and singing. If you would like to learn more about the parish choir please contact Daniel Stucker to schedule a time to visit.

**Contemporary Choir Director: Scott Arkenberg**  
[scott@st-mikes.org](mailto:scott@st-mikes.org)