



Father Sam's Forum

“People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world....” To me, that sounds a lot like all the hype over the movie, *2012*. Gruesome images of the end of the world...disasters and destruction. But is that what Jesus is talking about...the end of the world?

Let's take a step back. We always begin the new liturgical year with these kinds of images. *End time* or *apocalyptic* are the terms we give these kinds of scriptures. They speak to us from a genre that is a bit unusual because it is not what most of the bible contains. Much easier to hear the prophets like Jeremiah today who speaks about a promise.

Jesus presents some disturbing images of what in theology is called the *eschaton*, a Greek word that means the end-time. All the Gospels contain these kinds of images, and we hear them especially as fall is about to turn into winter, during the last Sundays of the Church year and early Advent. But unless we realize that these images serve to deliver a message and have a purpose, we can get caught up in the images themselves and turn to those who make a living from predicting the end of the world. The message and purpose of the readings are to say to us “get ready” and “the Lord is coming,” which is the first step. But no one knows when that will be. The second step is to consider where the position of the reading is in the Gospel account.

Here in Luke, what we hear today comes after the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, just before his suffering, death and Resurrection. Jesus says that when these kinds of things happen we are to stand erect with heads held high. He will endure through his suffering to the end, and so should we. So there is a promise here just like in Jeremiah today. God will fulfill his promise made generations before. The kingdom of David will last forever.

One of the images we use in Advent is the Jesse Tree, that depiction of Jesus' lineage from David's father, Jesse, through Mary and Joseph. Other Old Testament figures are included as well to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise. Here in our parish we are using the symbol of the star because we believe that Jesus brings light to our darkness. No matter what suffering or discouragement we must face, there is hope. Holding our heads high, we claim a share in the promise given ages ago when God announced that salvation would come. Christ the light is the fulfillment of God's promise.

News: *This week I will be at the second series of seminars for the “Good Leaders, Good Shepherds” training. Please keep us in your prayers as we learn how to be more effective leaders by paying attention to our own personalities and the personalities of others.*

Our Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist will begin to implement some changes in the procedure for Communion distribution today. As a formation opportunity, Jay Specca has gathered groups of liturgical ministers (Ushers, Greeters and Communion Ministers so far, Lectors come next). Our Communion Ministers will be commissioned during Advent, public recognition of their ministry.

Mass Intentions: Nov. 29—Dec. 6

Sunday, Nov. 29—First Sunday of Advent

- 7:45a **Joseph Fisher** (Tom & Dianna Fisher)
9:30a **Gene Farney** (Jerry & Barbara Serrino)
11:30a **Mary Matviko** (Joanne Barton)

Monday, November 30—Andrew, apostle

- 8:30a **Joseph Knoll** (Joan Knoll)

Tuesday, December 1—Advent Weekday

- 6:30a **Tony Segulin** (Ramona Thibeault)
8:30a **Hubert R. Sonick** (Darcy Sefer)

Wednesday, December 2—Advent Weekday

- 6:30a **Wilma Lokash** (Cousin, Eleanor K. Bangs)
8:30a **Deceased: Fitzsimmons & Vines Families**
(Nancy & Jim)

Thursday, December 3—Francis Xavier, priest

- 6:30a **Joseph Lickman** (Wiegmann Family)
8:30a **Helen Hauck** (Joseph Takacs)

Friday, December 4—Advent Weekday

- 8:30a **Donald E. Huffner, Sr.** (Wife)
1:45p **Manor Care: Priscilla Bayer**
(Bill & Dolores Bayer)

Saturday, December 5—Advent Weekday

- 8:30a **Special Intention of Mark Mascara**
(Ripepi Family)
3:00p **Wedding: Kim Button**
John P. Groll
5:00p **Fred Kluglein** (Wife, Carolyn)

Sunday, December 6—Second Sunday of Advent

- 7:45a **For the People of the Parish**
9:30a **Ashley Munsick** (Dolores & Rick Munsick)
11:30a **Elizabeth Huffner** (Women of St. Benedict)

The Sanctuary Candle burns this week in memory of John & Mary Godzo, requested by Joe & Mary Ann Smith.

Knights of Columbus Christmas Seals are available in the narthex. Proceeds benefit developmentally disabled children at McGuire Home and St. Anthony School.



Pastoral Staff

To reach a staff member, dial 724-941-9406, and then the extension number listed.

Pastoral Life & Worship

Rachelle Buynak, Formation Office Coordinator— 107
 Gregory Fincham, Director of Music Ministries— 108
 Dennis Gehrlein, Pastoral Associate— 109
 Cathy Malencia, Middle School Minister— 110
 Elaine Motyl, Young Adult Coordinator— 111
 Janet Roberto, Young Adult Minister— 112
 Marcia Snowden, Catechetical Assistant—107
 Colette Specca, Director of Faith Formation— 113
 Jay Specca, Coordinator Adult Formation & Liturgy—114

Pastoral Administration

Michael Benya, Parish Campus Manager— 105
 Mary Ann Bitters, Parish Secretary— 100
 Justin Cumer, Maintenance— 100
 Shirley Jacobs, Bookkeeper— 100
 Jan Martin, Rectory Housekeeper— 131
 Dave Murtaugh, Maintenance— 100
 Kathy Pfeifer, Parish Life Manager— 106
 John Risher, Weekend Maintenance— 100
 Kevin Wolford, Maintenance Supervisor— 100

- Formation Offices: Religious Education/Youth Ministry— 724-941-9587

St. Benedict Preschool

Beverly Jurcic, Director— 724-731-0222

Readings for the Week of November 29

Sunday: Jer 33:14-16/1 Thes 3:12-4:2/Lk 21:25-28,34-36
 Monday: Rom 10:9-18/Mt 4:18-22
 Tuesday: Is 11:1-10/Lk 10:21-24
 Wednesday: Is 25:6-10a/Mt 15:29-37
 Thursday: Is 26:1-6/Mt 7:21,24-27
 Friday: Is 29:17-24/Mt 9:27-31
 Saturday: Is 30:19-21,23-26/Mt 9:35-10:1,5a,6-8
 Next Sunday: Bar 5:1-9/Phil 1:4-6,8-11/Lk 3:1-6

Eucharistic Adoration

This week is our monthly 24-hour adoration which begins Thursday at 4:00pm and concludes Friday at 4:00pm in the Chapel. All are welcome to come and spend some time in prayer before the presence of the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

Volunteer Thank You Epiphany Party

Once again all parish volunteers will be honored at our annual Epiphany Party, held this year on Saturday, January 9, 2010, following the 5:00pm Mass. Anyone who serves in any kind of volunteer capacity for the parish is invited to join us for this celebration. Please RSVP to the parish office before January 5, 2010.

Serving the Parish Next Weekend: December 5—December 6

Sat. 5:00pm— Fr. Esposito

Lectors: Hruby, Brugger **Greeters:** Reed, Patnesky **EMHC:** P & G Adams, B & R Jordan, T & D Martin, Pfeifer, R & S Satler
Servers: Byrne, Peterson, Quinn, Waigand, Brugger

7:45am— Fr. Esposito

Lectors: DiCello, Trapanotto **Greeters:** J & R Jackson
EMHC: Kail, Klinar, Puskarich, Basile, J & S Christopher, Faina
Servers: E, M & E Jozwiak

9:30am— Fr. Ruffalo

Lectors: Wanninger, Morosco **Greeters:** Stewart, Oberschelp
EMHC: Schultz, Stein, A & L Kelly, J Smith, E & T Mauro, Gaudy, Wanninger **Servers:** Oberschelp, C & A Mavrich, Wisniewski, Hilzendeger

11:30pm— Fr. Ruffalo, Deacon Layton

Lectors: Zuk, Gerhlein **Greeters:** Ragan, Becker **EMHC:** Hayward, Capozza, P Newmaster, B Smith, Huffner, Slomiany, Boyd **Servers:** Luzier, Watson, Chaplin

Pastor's Cabinet Meeting

All members of the Pastor's Cabinet are invited to gather with Fr. Sam and some members of the parish staff on Thursday, December 3, at 7:30pm in room 210. Our agenda includes getting updates about each group's projects and happenings in the parish and, from the pastor and staff, updates on the projects, events and programs they are planning, as well as ideas to facilitate communication. If your name is on the inside back cover of the bulletin, you should plan to attend this meeting.

Advent Confessions

Confessions will be heard during Advent as follows: Wednesdays, December 2 and 16, 6:30—7:00pm; Saturdays, December 5, 12, and 19, 11:00—11:30am; Tuesday, December 22, 3:00—4:00pm; and our annual Advent Penance Service with multiple confessors is scheduled for Tuesday, December 15, 7:00pm. Don't wait until the last minute...plan to make a good confession early in Advent as one of the spiritual gifts of the season.

Parish Christmas Cards

This year we are offering a photo Christmas card of the inside of our church taken last year at Christmas. Boxes include 25 cards and envelopes for \$15.00. You can see a sample in the narthex on the bulletin board, and if you would like to purchase a box or boxes, they are available in the parish office. We have ordered a limited number, so first come, first served until the cards are gone.





Advent at SBA



Advent begins today, and that means time to *stop, look, and listen*. We **stop** to pay attention to all that is going on around us. In our culture, that means everyone is getting ready for Christmas. So, Christians should stop and ask if we are getting ready too. For us,

getting ready means more than trimming the tree and buying gifts. It means preparing our hearts to celebrate the wonder of the Lord's birth. It means preparing a place where Christ may enter. It means cleaning house, that is, the houses of our souls. One way we do this is by going to confession. See the Advent confession schedule on page 2. We **look** for ways to welcome Christ as we prepare. Where is there an opportunity to grow in faith, hope or charity? How can we find a new way to keep the sacred time of Advent when the world around us says it is already Christmas? We **listen** for Christ's voice in our hearts—that quiet voice in each of us that draws us away from all the distractions and into a more intimate relationship with God, for the sounds of our brothers and sisters who are seeking to know the Lord in a deeper way, or who cry out to receive the help they need for the basic stuff of life. *What will you see and hear this Advent season?* Here's a good way to begin: check out the Centering Prayer workshop here on December 5.

Angel Tree 2009

As we prepare for Christmas, our parish once again has the opportunity to reach out to those in need in our community through the Angel Tree Program. Take a tag or tags from the trees that are in the narthex this weekend and next, purchase the gifts indicated, and then return them to the church. **All gifts must be returned before December 6, no exceptions, because they must be sorted before the agency reps come for them on December 7.** If you bring a gift after December 6, it will not be given to the person intended simply because we cannot include it in the sorting. So please be considerate and bring the gifts in the allotted time period. Remember to tape the angel tags or ornaments to the top of the gift. Thank you for your generosity! If you have any questions, please contact Kathleen Chaudhari at 724-941-8546.

Need confidential assistance? Companionship and understanding for a difficult time? Stephen Ministers are here to help you. Call 724-941-5026.

eConnect Workshop

Parents and catechists are invited to attend an "eConnect Workshop" to be held on Tuesday, December 1 at 7:30pm in O'Brien Hall. Lee Miles, our Harcourt Sales Representative, will demonstrate this network system that enhances and expands our textbooks series, "Call to Faith."

eConnect offers a state of the art Catholic network for families that is easily accessed and provides games, activities, conversation starters, podcasts, etc. If you would like more information, or to register, contact Colette Specca in the Faith Formation Office at 724-941-9587, ext 113.

Safe Environment Program

In the aftermath of 2002 and the promulgation of the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Diocese of Pittsburgh instituted a *Safe Environment Program* that mandates all adults who work with children and young people in any way, as an employee or volunteer, to meet the following requirements: register on the diocesan database, obtain a Pennsylvania State Police Clearance and Child Welfare Clearance, attend a Protecting God's Children Workshop, and read and sign the Diocesan Code of Pastoral Conduct. Failure to comply with these directives renders one ineligible to work with children and young people in any capacity.

One year ago, Saint Benedict the Abbot Parish was audited which revealed that we still had some work to do to become fully compliant with the policy. While work has been done over the past year it is not yet completed.

Volunteers who are not in compliance with the diocesan policy on safe environments must work to be compliant immediately. Our coordinator, John Turek, is setting a goal of having all staff, all volunteers associated with formation and youth ministry, and anyone serving in any of the liturgical ministries (Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, ushers, lectors, wedding coordinators, cantors, adult choir members, contemporary choir members, sacristans) to have these clearances completed by Epiphany Sunday, January 3, 2010. Regrettably, we can no longer allow any individual who is not compliant by this date to continue in these ministries. One may resume their ministry once all clearances have been completed. If you need assistance, please contact John Turek by phone at (724) 942-1138 or by email at stbenepsa@yahoo.com or Collette Specca in the Formation Office.



Ask Father Sam

What is the meaning of the Advent Wreath?

Lesson of the Week

How does a parish select Eucharistic Ministers?

In our recently completed series, "Cooking and the Council," I stressed that the most important thing that resulted from the Second Vatican Council was the re-discovery of the primacy of Christian baptism. If we were to speak of a defining statement from the Council what would it be? Benedictine Father Michael Kwatera, St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, says, *the most profound insistence of Vatican Council II – not something new, but recovery of a truth as old as the Bible itself – is this: We live a life of God's favor because of our baptism.* This means that Catholics, born again of water and the Spirit, "are consecrated as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, that through all their Christian activities they may offer spiritual sacrifices and proclaim the marvels of him who has called them out of darkness into his wonderful light." (Lumen Gentium, 10 – the document on the Church)

So if each of us has been consecrated and we are to exercise some share of the priesthood, how does that happen? Basically it happens when we accept a role in the faith community and participate in Church rather than being mere spectators. It is the active stance of being engaged at liturgy, of being unafraid to speak about faith, of being the first to practice charity and outreach to those in need.

Every parish, in order to manifest its life and offer worship as best it can, is supposed to demonstrate a variety of ministries that serve the faithful who come to worship. When we have need for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (the official title), to assist the *ordinary* ministers, the priests and deacons in a parish, the pastor seeks input from any number of sources. He may look to those who have expressed an interest in this ministry, or to those who came from another parish where they served in this ministry. Someone may suggest a name to the pastor, and he accepts the suggestion and invites the person to serve in that ministry.

What is not the case is this: Communion ministers are not any more holy or any less holy than anyone else. We are all sinners, and we are all trying to do our best—well, most of us are—to be the people God calls us to be. So never think you are not worthy to help in the distribution of the Eucharist. But remember that, like all ministry, this is a call to act and live as best you can as a sign of God's love for everyone.

Kids' Christmas Choir

The Children's Choir will sing on Christmas Day at 10:00am Mass. Rehearsal times are the following Thursdays from 4:30 to 5:30pm: December 3, 10, and 17. Those in the Children's Choir should be in 2nd grade or older. If you have any questions, contact Greg Fincham at 724-941-9406, ext. 109.



Youth Hand Bell Choir

The Youth Hand Bell Choir will be ringing at the 10:00am Mass Christmas Day. Those interested should be in 5th Grade or older and able to read music. To sign up, call Greg as soon as possible at 724-941-9406, ext. 109.

Thank You

Ben's Men would like to thank everyone who made *Halloween Howl* a success, especially Simmons Farm for donating the pumpkins and cider, Kim Tucker for painting many smiling faces, and Boy Scout Troop 1313. See you next year!

Tea With Mary

The Women of St. Benedict would like to invite you to attend a *Tea with Mary* on Tuesday, December 8, from 11:30am until 1:30pm at the Franciscan Spirit & Life Center, 605 McRoberts Road. The afternoon will include tea, luncheon, prayer, craft, and a free gift. The cost is \$15 per person. Contact Mary Beth Bokelberg at 724-941-9085 for details.

Baptism Information

Parents who are expecting are encouraged to join us for the pre-baptism sessions we offer monthly. All parents are required to attend a session before scheduling a baptism for their child. The upcoming sessions are set for Sunday, December 6, after the 9:30 Mass; Thursday, January 7, 7:00pm; Sunday, February 7, after the 9:30 Mass; and Thursday, March 4, 7:00pm. Baptism will be celebrated Sunday, December 13, during the 11:30 Mass; Sunday, December 20, after the 11:30 Mass; Sunday, January 3, after the 11:30 Mass; Saturday, January 9, during the 5:00 Mass; Sunday, January 17, after the 11:30 Mass; and Sunday, January 24, during the 9:30 Mass.



Special Scout Sunday

Boy Scout Troop 1313 is planning a special celebration for Sunday, December 27, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Troop 1313 Chartering and the 100th anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America, which will include Mass and a catered luncheon. It is hoped that scheduling this important event over the Christmas holidays will allow for increased Scout Alumni participation. **Be sure to pass the word to former scouts and leaders of our Troop 1313.** For more information, to RSVP, or if you have Scout memorabilia you would like to include for this event, contact Kevin D. 724-942-0388, Rob T. 724-348-0411, or Blaise H. 724-747-3301.

Widow & Widowers

The Widows & Widowers of St. Benedict will meet for dinner on December 16, at Franco's at 6:00pm followed by a movie night in Room 210 to watch *Calendar Girl*. For more information contact Ellie Puskarich at 724-941-4686.

Centering Prayer Saturday

"Be still and know that I am God." Let your heart discover what this phrase from Psalm 46 might mean in your life with a *Centering Prayer Saturday* that takes place at St. Benedict on Saturday, December 5, from 9:00am until 3:00pm. Sponsored by Contemplative Outreach Pittsburgh, this workshop will feature four speakers and conferences that will help you work on a deeper relationship with God. Suggested donation is \$20 which includes all materials as well as six optional follow-up sessions that take place Monday evenings in December and January. Refreshments will be provided on December 5, but please bring along a bag lunch. For registration or more information, please contact our pastoral associate Dennis at 724-941-9406, ext. 109.

Health Care Ministry Update

As our parish family continues to grow, many of our long-time parishioners are faced with a variety of health issues and concerns. Several weeks ago we placed a notice here in the bulletin about creating a more active health ministry program here at St. Benedict. Several people have already expressed an interest. We are hoping to schedule a couple of brainstorming meetings in the next few weeks to see how we might begin this ministry and what direction it might take. If you feel like you have some ideas to contribute or would like to be part of our initial meetings, please contact our pastoral associate Dennis at 724-941-9406, Ext. 109.

This Week In Our Parish

Sunday, November 29

Parish Offices Closed

**Abbey Coffee House Open after
7:45 & 9:30 Mass**

No Faith Formation Classes Today

Monday, November 30

10:00a	WOSB Yoga	(OBH)
6:30p	Aerobics	(PBAC)
7:00p	Catholic Scripture Study	(208)
7:00p	Finance Council Meeting	(Rectory)

Tuesday, December 1

8:30a	Special Needs Children	(210)
9:15a	Catholic Scripture Study	(204/206)
6:00p	Faith Formation Session	
7:00p	Contemporary Choir	(Choir)
7:30p	e-Connect Workshop	(OBH)
7:45p	Cub Scouts Den 4	(Rm A)

Wednesday, December 2

12:00p	AA	(208)
6:00p	Faith Formation Session	
6:30p	Confessions	(Church)
7:45p	Tae Kwon Do	(OBH)

Thursday, December 3

8:30a	WOSB Bridge	(OBH)
9:30a	Light Weigh	(210)
12:00p	NA	(206)
4:00p	Eucharistic Adoration Begins	(Chapel)
4:30p	Children's Choir Rehearsal	(Choir)
6:00p	Aerobics	(PBAC)
7:00p	RCIA	(204)
7:30p	Boy Scout Troop 1313	(PBAC)
7:30p	Pastor's Cabinet	(210)
7:30p	Adult Choir	(Choir)

Friday, December 4

10:00a	Prayer & Share	(Ch Nur & Br. Rm)
4:00p	Closing of Adoration	(Chapel)

Saturday, December 5

7:30a	CMF	(208)
9:00a	Aerobics	(PBAC)
9:00a	Youth Handbell Rehearsal	(Choir)
9:30a	Contemplative Outreach	(204/206)
11:00a	Confessions	(Church)

Sunday, December 6

**Abbey Coffee House Open after
7:45 & 9:30 Mass**

9:00a	Faith Formation Session	
10:30a	WORD	(YM)
10:30a	Parents Baptism Class	(213)
11:00a	Faith Formation Session	

**Hotline for Victims of Sexual Abuse
412-456-3060 or 1-888-808-1235**



TO GET INVOLVED, CALL...

Abbey Coffee House

Ellie Puskarich
724-941-4686

Altar Servers

Kathleen Bench
724-942-0338

Ben's Men

Jeff Mertens
724-941-6484

Bowling League

Blaise Hollot
724-942-0748

Boy Scouts

Kevin Dolinar
724-942-0388

Cantors, Choirs,

Bell Ringers

Greg Fincham
724-941-9406

Catholic Men's Fellowship

Ed Corbett
724-942-6429

Catholic Scripture Study

Tara Curry
724-942-7539

Cub Scouts

Steve Ridge
724-941-9816

Elijah Cup

Carlotta Zuback
724-941-5758

Engaged Couples' Program

Ed & Mary Lou Fraticelli
724-941-4230

Eucharistic Adoration

Mary Ann Campbell
724-941-4297

Extraordinary Ministers

Jack McGinnis
724-941-4213

Finance Council

Fred Abrew
724-941-4696

Food Bank

Susan Brooks
724-942-4287

Funeral Repast

Mary Kay Schaner
724-941-5147

Funeral Server

Dick Gawronski
724-873-7911

Greeters

Erma Grego
724-941-6956

IHN

Mary Spinabelli
724-942-2478

Lectors

Dawn Pustay
724-942-2451

Library

Ellen Mavrich
724-941-2446

Liturgical Environment

Emma Diamond
724-941-8315

Military Support

Jamie Christopher
724-747-9396

Ministry to the Sick

Barb Scheuering
724-941-9104

MOMS

Kathleen Chaudhari
724-941-8546

Pastoral Council

Aimee Schmidt
724-941-7046

Respect Life Committee

Beth Quinn
724-942-1057

Stephen Ministry

Jay Jarrell
724-941-5026

St. Benedict Gardeners

Linda Maydak
724-941-3123

St. Vincent de Paul

Please call parish office
724-941-9406

Ushers

Mike Silvestri
724-941-5238

Wedding Coordinators

Lois McCloskey
724-941-6879

Women of St. Benedict

Nancy Huffner
724-941-6805

Youth Council

Sheila Arcuri
724-942-6431