



Father Sam's Forum

“**W**hat should we do?” That’s a simple question, isn’t it? And yet, sometimes we aren’t quite sure what it is we should do. Maybe we are confused about the order to follow so we accomplish something. Or, perhaps we can’t tell what is expected of us. What about if we are just feeling overwhelmed. No energy to do much of anything then.

When the crowds asked John the Baptist what is was they should do in order to prepare for the Messiah’s coming, his answer is recorded in the Gospel we hear today. It can be boiled down to this: *simplify your life, share what you have with others, don’t bully anyone or extort them, be satisfied with what you have instead of wanting more.*

Sounds like good advice even today. It’s always a challenge for me to simplify my life. Just when I think I am doing ok, I get caught up in acquiring. While I regularly go through the closets and drawers every spring and fall, other stuff besides clothing can get in the way of being focused on what really matters. Most of us would agree that we have the basic stuff we need to survive. Less is more, as the saying goes. We don’t want to get caught in the trap of possessions.

But what else might we hold on to that isn’t necessary? The *Letter to the Philippians* today asks us to get rid of anxiety. Operate from a stance of thanksgiving, St. Paul tells us. Then the peace of God will surpass everything else we have and settle our minds and hearts. How about getting rid of a grudge or some pettiness we carry? What if we could let go of gossip or criticism or apathy? All of these are great ways to keep Advent, to prepare for Christ’s coming.

Parish News:

- Don’t forget to check out our web site regularly. It is always being updated and contains so much information that can be helpful. We have, I believe, one of the top sites for our diocese.
- We have been in the process of compiling an email list so parishioners can begin to receive news blasts about parish life. Look for the first just before Christmas. This is one of the outcomes from our Communication Committee and part of the Pastoral Plan presented to the parish last Pentecost.
- Come join us at the *Christmas Coffee House* on Saturday, December 19—it’s free and will get you in the holiday spirit. See page 4 for details!

Christmas Decorating

Our annual decorating party is set for Tuesday, December 22, at 7:00pm in the church. Teams will take an area of the church and sharing their time, energy and gifts, transform our worship space into a beautiful and solemn place where we will celebrate the Birth of the Savior. Cookies and hot chocolate will be served in the Nursery during the time we are decorating. Contact one of the captains listed below—or just show up to help. **Narthex**—Rita Milavec; **Wreaths**—Janet Cleary; **Fabrics**—Emma Diamond; **Nativity and Stars**—Claudine O’Connell; **Body of the Church, Ledges and Windows**—Jackie Schratz; **Chapel**—Mary & Dan McBride. Come out and join us—this is a great community building exercise for the whole parish family.

Mass Intentions: Dec. 13—Dec. 20

Sunday, December 13—Third Sunday of Advent

- 7:45a **Sharon Kubinec** (Sheila Juliane)
9:30a **For the People of the Parish**
11:30a **Casimir Koza, Sr.** (Richard Koza Family)

Monday, December 14—John of the Cross

- 8:30a **Loving Memory of Dick Stewart**
(Mary Stewart)

Tuesday, December 15—Advent Weekday

- 6:30a **John Cavolo** (Helen Hornicak)
8:30a **Loving Memory of Donna Pisarcik**
(The Breier Family)

Wednesday, December 16—Advent Weekday

- 6:30a **Aunt Margaret Evanovich**
(Niece, Eleanor K. Bangs)
8:30a **Thomas Richtar** (Family)

Thursday, December 17—Late Advent Weekday

- 6:30a **Edward Smith** (Bill & Chris Kail)
8:30a **Gene Farney** (8:30am Mass Group)

Friday, December 18—Late Advent Weekday

- 8:30a **Frank Kiefer** (Wife, JoAnn)

Saturday, December 19—Late Advent Weekday

- 8:30a **Liz McNeil** (The DeRienzo Family)
5:00p **Mary Elizabeth Salva** (Rob & Dot Beldon)

Sunday, December 20—Fourth Sunday of Advent

- 7:45a **Doris Patnesky** (Charles Patnesky & Family)
9:30a **Michael F. Bishop** (Gary & Natalie Jasper)
11:30a **For the People of the Parish**

The Sanctuary Candle burns this week in memory of James Heisinger, requested by the Heisinger Family, and the Bread & Wine is in honor of the living & deceased of the Busch & Schweibinz Families, requested by the Claire Meredith.

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



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 December 13

Sunday: Zep 3:14-18a/Phil 4:4-7/Lk 3:10-18
 Monday: Nm 24:2-7,15-17a/Mt 21:23-27
 Tuesday: Zep 3:1-2,9-13/Mt 21:28-32
 Wednesday: Is 45:6b-8,18,21b-25/Lk 7:18b-23
 Thursday: Gn 49:2,8-10/Mt 1:1-17
 Friday: Jer 23:5-8/Mt 1:18-25
 Saturday: Jgs 13:2-7,24-25a/Lk 1:5-25
 Next Sunday: Mi 5:1-4a/Heb 10:5-10/Lk 1:39-45

Protecting God's Children

A training session for the diocesan required workshop, "Protecting God's Children," has been scheduled for December 16, from 9:30am until 12:30pm in rooms 204/206. Please call Colette in Faith Formation at 724-941-9406, Ext. 113 to register.

Christmas Wafers

We have in the parish office the traditional wafers for the Christmas celebration common to those of Eastern European ancestry. The *oplatek* reminds us of the Bread of Life, Jesus, born in a manger surrounded by animals. The offering for a packet of wafers is \$3.00, and each packet contains 4 wafers.

Serving the Parish Next Weekend: December 19—December 20

Sat. 5:00pm— Fr. Esposito

Lectors: DiBartola, Gordon **Greeters:** McCloskey, Grego
EMHC: R & B Jordon, G & P Adams, McGinnis, Getto,
 LaCamera, Baumgartner **Servers:** Curran, Getto, A Weaver, W
 & D DiBartola

7:45am— Fr. Esposito, Deacon Layton

Lectors: Jung, Mamros **Greeters:** Turchick, Boston **EMHC:**
 Puskarich, Glod, Walnoha, Fagioletti, Berger, Prado, Joseph
Servers: Shaw, N & V DeRienzo

9:30am— Fr. Ruffalo

Lectors: Smore, Mahla **Greeters:** Stewart, Oberschelp
EMHC: McGovern, Black, Klinar, Capozza, J Smith, L & A
 Kelly, Stein, Schultz **Servers:** Curry, Pampena, Mullan, Z & J
 Verner

11:30pm— Fr. Ruffalo

Lectors: Gehrlein, Balash **Greeters:** Bartoli, Ragan **EMHC:**
 Herald, Boyd, Slomiany, Huffner, B Smith, P Newmaster,
 Hayward **Servers:** Taylor, Rauscher, Hillen

Christmas Masses

The main celebration for Christmas is the Mass at Midnight. All are welcome to participate in this solemn and joyous liturgy. We are following the same schedule as 2008, two Vigil Masses (4:30 and 7:00), Midnight Mass, and 8:00, 10:00, and Noon on Christmas Day. The efforts last year to maintain a safe setting in church in case of any emergency were done so well we will repeat them this year. Because we anticipate a large group of worshipers for the 4:30 Vigil Mass, we will have overflow seating in the hall and the chapel. Our ushers will seat people as they arrive and fill the church from the front to the back. Look for the insert in the bulletin today.

Rest In Peace

Please remember in your prayers our parishioner **Terrence J. Peters**, who died recently. May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace.

Advent Confessions

Confessions will be heard during Advent as follows: Wednesday, December 16, 6:30—7:00pm; Saturday, December 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.



Newly Baptized

Please welcome to our faith family these newly baptized: **Logan James**, son of James & Donna Christie; **Nathan Thomas & Thomas Gordon, III**, twin sons of Thomas & Ann Marie Laird, Jr.; **Madeline Marianne**, daughter of David & Stephanie McHugh; **Emma Jo**, daughter of Dennis & Julie Phillips; **Gwendolyn Abigail**, daughter of Christopher & Elizabeth Pajak; **Gabriella Grace**, daughter of Chad & Chiara Gessler; **Benjamin James**, son of Dale & Stacey Griffith; **Pearce Logan**, son of John & Christine O'Connor; **Sara Elise**, daughter of Paul & Kathleen Viazanko; **Bradley Wayne**, son of Chuck & Tracy Fultz; **Ivy Katherine**, daughter of Kevin & Jamie Gang; **Valentino Kelan**, son of Ernest & Brigitte Benchek; **Melina Louisa**, daughter of Mark & Cari Losego; and **Sadie Antoinette**, daughter of Timothy & Stephanie Tracy. May they grow in wisdom, age, and grace.

The schedule for liturgical ministers for Christmas Masses and January 1 Masses is included in this bulletin's insert. Ministers were chosen based on the order the sign up forms were received.

WOSB Christmas Party

The Women of St. Benedict will hold a Christmas party on December 17, at 7:00pm in O'Brien Hall. Local singer/pianist David Brewton will delight us with his rendition of popular Christmas carols. All parishioners are invited to come sing along and help us kick off this most joyous season. Bring the whole family and get into the Christmas Spirit! As always, there will be delicious holiday treats!

March for Life 2010

The Respect Life Committee invites all parishioners to join them on the 37th annual *March for Life* on January 22, 2010, in Washington DC. Buses will be leaving St. Benedict at 6:00am and returning before midnight the same day. This peaceful demonstration to our lawmakers is vitally important to show that the sanctity of human life must be protected. Won't you join us? Sign up forms are available in the Parish Office. Look for more details in upcoming bulletins.

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

Pastor's Cabinet News

The Pastor's Cabinet met on December 3 for an information sharing session. Presentations were given about some communication and office issues for all the organizations, groups, and ministries in the parish. Beginning on December 27, we will no longer make announcements at Mass except for spiritually based events, such as "This Tuesday is a holyday of obligation. Check the bulletin for the Mass schedule." Social and other events should be listed in the bulletin. Kathy Pfeifer reviewed the new bulletin guidelines. Everyone, including parish staff, will be expected to adhere by the guidelines as far as meeting the time frame we must follow to publish the bulletin every week. If you want a copy of the guidelines, they are available on the web site or contact the parish office. Fred Abrew, chair of the Finance Council, presented some information about parish needs and clarified some of the expenditures we have had to incur this past summer and fall. The next meeting is set for January 26, 7:30pm.

Check out this great Catholic web site: www.wordonfire.org

Christmas Cards



This year we are offering a photo Christmas card of the inside of our church taken last year at Christmas. On the inside is a quotation from the Rule of St. Benedict and a greeting. 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 now available in the parish office. We have ordered a limited number, so first come first served until the cards are gone.

St. Vincent de Paul

St. Benedict the Abbot Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul thanks you for your generous contributions the weekend of November 28-29. Your gift brings peace to those who are overwhelmed with life's burdens and gives the blessings of Jesus to those who are poor, hungry or suffering. Please take note that there are new *Gift of Love* certificates for Christmas located at the SVdP Center in the narthex. A certificate offers the gift of prayer for any special occasion, to honor the passing of someone dear, or to send your love to someone special at Christmas! Certificates and instructions are available at the SVdP Center.



Ask Father Sam

What is the Pastor's Cabinet?

Lesson of the Week

A relative has started to attend services at a Protestant church. What can I say to her?

It is a common phenomenon today for our relatives who were raised in the Catholic faith to explore other faiths as they begin to mature. I have cousins who are members of fundamental Christian churches, as well as those who have become members of mainline Protestant churches and even some who consider themselves agnostic.

Freedom of religion and how it is practiced is one of our American values. But it feels wrong when we see someone we love who has given up on something we hold to be sacred, special, and a part of our identity, namely our Catholic faith. How can we address this with those people?

The first thing to remember is not to dismiss the person with the kind of "if you do this I will never speak to you again," attitude. That is simply wrong. It's not what Christ would have us do. Ask the person what it is they like about this particular religious group. Is it how they worship in a lively manner? Their bible study? Their sense of fellowship? Often, churches that are not Catholic have mastered these and draw people because of them.

Secondly, what is it about the Catholic faith that they do not understand? Very seldom do people walk away just because they are tired of Mass or being asked to share their talents and gifts. Mostly it is because people are not clear about what the Church teaches or where it came from. Do they have a difficulty with our dogmas about the Virgin Mary? About the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist? About saints and Tradition? These are usually the topics people quote when asked what is it about the Catholic faith with which they are in disagreement.

Inviting the person to study these and learn the truth about them may be helpful. Even Catholics have misunderstandings about what the Church teaches. When people find out the historical and Scriptural basis for our beliefs, it can help to clarify things.

Does the person understand the Mass? Often even our most central aspect of worship is not claimed for what it truly is, the celebration of the sacrifice of Christ for our redemption, and an entering into the Passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Youth Hand Bell Choir

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

Children's Christmas Choir

The Children's Choir will sing at the Christmas Day 10:00am Mass. The final rehearsal will be from 4:30pm to 5:30pm on December 17. Those in the Children's Choir should be in 2nd grade or older. If you have any questions, contact Greg Fincham at the Parish Office at 724-941-9406, ext. 108.

Christmas Coffee House



Join the *Abbey Players*, our new parish theatre troop, in a Christmas Coffeehouse on Saturday, December 19, 7:00pm in the Pope Benedict Activity Center. The players will perform holiday solo songs, play instruments, and dance in group numbers while guests can enjoy coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and some delicious desserts. This night of music and dance is a great way to begin the holiday season and is a great family event for all ages. Admission and treats are FREE!

Volunteer Thank You: Come Celebrate Our 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. RSVP to the office before January 5, 2010.

Housing Needed!

Xavier University Concert Choir will be giving a concert at St. Benedicts on January 3 at 7:30pm. Households are needed who would be willing to host the 53 members of the choir in groups of at least two. Host families will take choir members after the concert, give them a place to sleep and give them a light breakfast before returning them to the church parking lot Monday morning. Please call Greg Fincham at 724-941-9406, Ext. 108 to help.



Charitable Gifts

In most years, if you are over the age of 70-1/2, you must take a required minimum distribution from your IRA. In 2009, however, you may instruct your IRA custodian to withhold the normal required distribution. As usual, the amount of any distribution is taxed as ordinary income. Federal legislation enacted on October 2, 2008 extends the opportunity for you, for the remainder of 2009, to make a direct distribution from your IRA to a qualified charity, such as St. Benedict the Abbot Parish. Such distributions, up to \$100,000, are not subject to income tax. Forms are available in the parish office and you can contact Paul Stabile, the Director of Planned Giving, Diocese of Pittsburgh, with any questions 412-456-3055.

2010 Calendars

We have a limited number of parish calendars for the new year, courtesy of Beinhauer Family Services. The calendars may be obtained in the narthex next weekend until they run out.

Confirmation DVDs can be ordered in the Religious Education Office. Please stop in and fill out an order form. The cost is \$10 and checks should be made out to St. Benedict the Abbot Parish.

Widows & 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.

Catholic School Open House

St. Louise de Marillac School will have an Open House for prospective students on January 10, 2010 from 1:00pm until 4:00pm. Tour the campus, ask questions about placement, courses, etc. Representatives from activities, groups, and clubs will also be present. Pre-registration for enrollment will be available.

Online giving is in full operation! Visit the parish website and click on the link to sign up to begin donating to the parish automatically today. It's easy and convenient!

This Week In Our Parish

Sunday, December 13

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

9:00a	Faith Formation Session	
10:30a	WORD	(YM)
11:00a	Faith Formation Session	

Monday, December 14

8:30a	Lifeline Screening	(OBH)
8:30a	Special Needs Children	(210)
10:00a	WOSB Yoga	(206)
6:00p	Practice for <i>Visit to Bethlehem</i>	(OBH)
6:30p	Aerobics	(PBAC)
7:00p	Catholic Scripture Study	(208)
7:00p	Cub Scout Den 1 & 6	(A & B)
7:30p	Contemplative Outreach	(204/206)

Tuesday, December 15

8:30a	Special Needs Children	(210)
9:15a	Catholic Scripture Study	(204/206)
6:00p	Faith Formation Session	
7:00p	Contemporary Choir	(Choir)
7:00p	Advent Penance Service	(Church)
7:45p	Cub Scouts	(OBH)
7:45p	Respect Life Committee	(208)

Wednesday, December 16

9:30a	Protecting God's Children	(204/206)
12:00p	AA	(208)
6:00p	Faith Formation Session	
6:30p	Confessions	(Church)
7:45p	Tae Kwon Do	(OBH)
7:45p	Widows & Widowers	(210)

Thursday, December 17

12:00p	NA	(UR)
4:30p	Children's Choir Rehearsal	(Choir)
6:00p	Aerobics	(PBAC)
7:00p	RCIA	(204)
7:00p	WOSB General Meeting	(OBH)
7:00p	Cub Scout Den 2	(Rm. A)
7:30p	Boy Scout Troop 1313	(PBAC)
7:30p	Adult Choir	(Choir)

Friday, December 18

10:00a	Prayer & Share	(Ch Nur/Br. Rm)
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Saturday, December 19

7:30a	CMF	(UR)
8:30a	Breakfast in Bethlehem	(OBH)
9:00a	Aerobics	(PBAC)
9:00a	Youth Hand Bell Rehearsal	(Choir)
11:00a	Confessions	(Church)
7:00p	Christmas Coffee House	(PBAC)

Sunday, December 20

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

9:00a	Faith Formation Session	
10:30a	WORD	(YM)
11:00a	Faith Formation Session	



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