

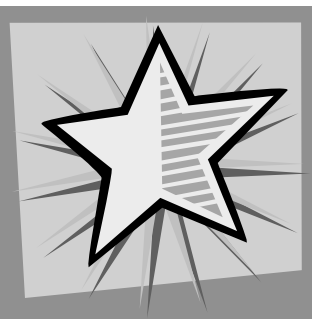


Father Sam's Forum

Too small. Who knows what that feels like? I do. In grade school I was the first one in the line because I was always the shortest of the boys. My cousin, Joe, a year behind me, had the same problem. Even today, Joe is very short while I have grown some, and, in fact, in my family I am listed among the taller folks. I know some of you will find that a stretch—no pun intended, but it's true.

The prophet Micah was lamenting that poor Bethlehem, that "little town" was a rather insignificant place and yet chosen by God to be the place from where the ruler of Israel would come. We know the story. David the king came from Bethlehem, and Jesus was born there.

As Advent comes to a close this week, take some time to think about the story. Before the rush of Christmas, stop a moment and remember how God always picks what we may think the smallest, the most insignificant, the least likely, and works his power there. Today's Gospel gives us the most remarkable example. We have two women, one who is about 70 and beyond child bearing years, the other a girl about 14. The older woman is a kind of outcast in her tribe and family. She has been barren, and that was seen as a curse from God, a kind of punishment for some sin. The younger one is suddenly expecting a child without the benefit of a husband. She is engaged but not yet married. Here we have another outcast. Least likely for anything great are these two women, and yet from each comes a child who is remembered in every generation. God's plan is not according to convention or human wisdom.



This week we welcome Christmas 2009. May I extend to all of you my deepest wish for a Blessed Christmas and all the best in the coming year. From Fr. Michael, Deacon Jack, and the entire parish staff, *we wish you a Merry Christmas!* Welcome to everyone who has come

home for the holidays and will join us for worship. We hope you return often. **Note the closing of the parish offices this week—see page 3 for details. Also note, no morning Mass on Saturday, December 26, so our priests can spend time with their families for Christmas.**

Christmas Decorating

Our annual decorating party is set for this Tuesday, December 22, at 7:00pm in the church. *We'll begin in the Chapel with prayer.* Six 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, Hangings, 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. Each person has something to offer.

Mass Intentions: Dec. 20—Dec. 27

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**

Monday, December 21—Late Advent Weekday

- 8:30a **Matarazzo & Rullo Families**
(Rose & Mario Rullo)

Tuesday, December 22—Late Advent Weekday

- 6:30a **Katherine Mueller** (Janet & Lee)
- 8:30a **Hubert Ueberschaer** (Wife, Dolores)

Wednesday, December 23—Late Advent Weekday

- 6:30a **Mary Grace Bodnar** (The Wall Family)
- 8:30a **Patsy Lachina** (Lachina Family)

Thursday, December 24—The Vigil of Christmas

- 4:30p **Intentions of our Flower Donors**
- 7:00p **Intentions of our Flower Donors**

Friday, December 25—Nativity of the Lord

- Midnight **For the People of the Parish**
- 8:00a **Intentions of our Flower Donors**
- 10:00a **Intentions of our Flower Donors**
- 12:00p **Intentions of our Flower Donors**

Saturday, December 26—Stephen, first martyr

No morning Mass

- 5:00p **Frances Resignalo** (Wedding Coordinators)

Sunday, December 27—The Holy Family

- 7:45a **For the People of the Parish**
- 9:30a **Angela & Domenico DeIuliis**
(M/M Frank Pasquarelli)
- 11:30a **John & Michael Maimone** (Imhoff Family)

The Sanctuary Candle burns this week in memory of Patricia Trocano, requested by Robert Trocano, and the Bread & Wine is in memory of Paul Schweibinz, requested by Claire Meredith.



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 20

Sunday: Mi 5:1-4a/Heb 10:5-10/Lk 1:39-45
 Monday: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/Lk 1:39-45
 Tuesday: 1 Sm 1:24-28/Lk 1:46-56
 Wednesday: Mal 3:1-4,23-24/Lk 1:57-66
 Thursday: 2 Sm 7:1-5,8b-12,14a,16/Lk 1:67-79
 Friday: Is 52:7-10/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18
 Saturday: Acts 6:8-10;7:54-59/Mt 10:17-22
 Next Sunday: 1 Sm 1:20-22,24-28/1 Jn 3:1-2,21-24/Lk 2:41-52

Liturgical Minister Schedule

Serving the Parish Christmas;
 December 24—December 25:

Thur., Dec. 24, 4:30pm—Fr. Ruffalo

Lectors: Reisz, Mahla **Greeters:** EMHC: Baumgartner, McGovern, Capozza, Boyd, C & R Satler **Servers:** C & M Reisz, Nobers, J & Z Verner, Hillen

7:00pm—Fr. Keane

Lectors: Jung, Brugger **Greeters:** EMHC: Vandewater, Bonadio, Milavec, J & S Brooks, Scheuering **Servers:** Brooks, Hilzendeger, Brugger

Fri., Dec. 25, Midnight—Fr. Esposito, Fr. Ruffalo, Deacon

Layton **Lectors:** Norton, Specca **Greeters:** Stewart **EMHC:** Huffner, Orient, Norton, Weaver, Specca **Servers:** Bowlin, Byrne, Jozwiaks, Weaver

8:00am—Fr. Esposito

Lectors: Ellsworth **Greeters:** EMHC: Barton, McGinnis **Servers:** M & P Ellsworth, Lyles

10:00am—Fr. Ruffalo

Lectors: Greeters: EMHC: Schultz, Greenwald, Bench, Herald **Servers:**

12:00pm—Fr. Ruffalo

Lectors: Mauro **Greeters:** EMHC: Huffner, Mauro, Hayward, Ott **Servers:**

December 26—December 27:

Sat. 5:00pm—Fr. Ruffalo

Lectors: Oliverio, Morrow **Greeters:** Reed, Patnesky **EMHC:** Vandewater, Greenwald, Sarra, Scheuering, Specca, Femiani, Satler, D & D Martin **Servers:** Peterson, Byrne, J, J & N Bianco

7:45am—Fr. Ruffalo

Lectors: Mamros, Hollot **Greeters:** Barton, Barker **EMHC:** E & R McMillan, Petricca, Faina, S & J Christopher, Basile **Servers:** Severa, Kelly, Bowlin

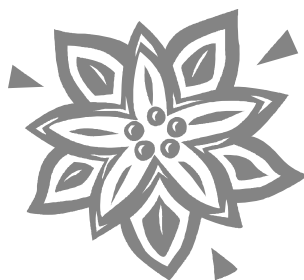
9:30am—Fr. Esposito, Deacon Layton

Lectors: Benya, Wells **Greeters:** Oberschelp, Stewart **EMHC:** Walnoha, Glod, E & T Mauro, Orient, Torres, Bayer, Serrino, Kail **Servers:** Maher, D & M DeRienzo, A & D Wells

11:30pm—Fr. Esposito

Lectors: Luttner, Auer **Greeters:** Ragan, Bartoli **EMHC:** Herald, Capozza, Black, McGinnis, Baits, Oldaker, Bench **Servers:** Graves, K & C Bench

Christmas Masses 2009



The main celebration for Christmas is the **Mass at Midnight**. All are welcome to participate in this solemn and joyous liturgy, with the Procession of the Infant to the Manger Scene, preceded by a concert of carols that begins at 11:30pm. The Mass includes full choir and instruments. Fr. Sam's homily is titled, "Hear the Angels Sing!" We are following the same schedule of Christmas Masses as 2008, two Vigil Masses (4:30 and 7:00), Midnight Mass, and 8:00, 10:00, and Noon on Christmas Day. The Contemporary Choir will lead the singing at the 4:30pm Vigil Mass, and the Children's Choir and Hand Bell Choir will sing at the 10:00am Mass. 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. Ministers of Communion will bring the sacrament to those outside the main worship space. 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 with details about seating.



Parish Offices Closed



Because of the Christmas holidays, our parish offices will observe these closings: Thursday, December 24 (Christmas Eve), and Friday, December 25 (Christmas Day). The Staff Christmas Luncheon is Wednesday, December 30. Offices close at 11:30am and remain closed for the rest of the day. On New Year's Eve, December 31, the offices close at

Noon, and will be closed on January 1, 2010. *N.B. Our offices are always closed on holy days and holidays as well as Saturdays. The parish offices are open on Sundays from 8:45–11:30am except on holiday weekends.*

Confessions

The last confessions before Christmas will be heard on Tuesday from 3:00–4:00 in the afternoon. We will have several visiting priests assisting our own priests to accommodate your needs. ***There are no confessions on Saturday, December 26, because our priests will be taking time to spend with their families from Christmas Day through Saturday evening.***

The schedule for liturgical ministers for Christmas Masses and January 1 Masses is included in this week's bulletin on page 2. Ministers were chosen based on the order the sign up forms were received.

Capital Campaign Lists

Everyone who donated \$1000 and more to the campaign to build the new church should check the listings we have posted in the narthex. Advise Kathy in the office for accuracy of spellings, etc. The memorial plaque or another kind of memorial listing is being decided and we want to have the correct information when that is made and installed.

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.

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

Sharing Our Treasure

<u>Date</u>	<u>Offertory</u>	<u>Debt</u>	<u>Parish Share</u>
Nov. 1	\$19,802	\$8,508	\$2,439
Nov. 8	\$17,793	\$6,070	\$4,297
Nov. 15	\$23,093	\$3,142	\$1,142
Nov. 22	\$18,813	\$820	\$247
Nov. 29	\$19,201	\$1,160	\$790
On-Line Giving	\$7,077	\$1,915	\$700
Monthly Totals	\$105,779	\$16,152	\$9,615
Weekly Average	\$22,362		
Weekly Budgeted	\$22,000		

The snapshot of finances for November shows we are doing well by our budget as far as income, although we are lagging behind because of expenses this year to date. Our Finance Council will present the parish financial health report in late January so that everyone can know where we stand and what challenges we have ahead. Thanks to everyone who has used on-line giving as the way you make your contributions to the parish. We continue to rely on the great generosity of our members to help us sustain our mission and be the vibrant parish we claim to be. *Parish Share 2009 still lags behind and we owe about \$70,000 on our goal. If we don't meet this by mid February 2010, we will have to use regular parish funds which means more deficit spending.*

Parish Christmas Cards



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 available in the parish office.



Ask Father Sam

A friend of mine came to Mass here and commented that so many people left early. Why is that and does that happen at other parishes?

Lesson of the Week

What is the Pastor's Cabinet?

To better serve the needs of such a large parish as ours, I brought the idea of a "cabinet" of parish leaders to help communicate all the necessary information we have to share. Every president, chair, leader, etc. of any parish group, club, ministry, or organization is invited to attend these quarterly meetings with me and sometimes with members of the parish staff.

It is impossible for me to be everywhere I would like, especially with the administrative duties I have. Evening meetings and appointments take much of my time, and by gathering as many people as I can at one meeting, this allows my schedule to remain open for other appointments and duties. Our large parish has many activities, and everyone does not read the bulletin, check the web site, or otherwise pay attention to all that is happening. So how can we offer information? The *Pastor's Cabinet* is one way.

With one of our goals in the Pastoral Plan as better communication, this group offers me a way to share information as well as for each one of the leaders to share with one another. Staff members can also provide information about programs and events so the leaders can report back to members about what is happening in the parish. The more we know, the better we can participate.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 26, 7:00pm. If you think you should be present to represent your group, ministry, or organization, feel free to attend.

*A Blessed Christmas to all, from
Fr. Sam, Fr. Michael,
Deacon Jack, and the entire
Parish Staff*

*Thank you for your cards and gifts, goodies
and kind wishes this holy season!*

IHN Thank You

IHN would like to thank Jonathan Bertrand for supporting our ministry by building two large closets in Abbey Hall for our supplies. We also extend our congratulations to him on earning his Eagle Scout award! A big thank you is extended to all the volunteers who helped with the family of four during Thanksgiving week. They really appreciated St. Benedict's hospitality.

Preschool News

Registration for the 2010-2011 school year will begin January 13 for parishioners and January 19 for those who are not parishioners. If you have a child who is preschool age and would like to enroll them in our preschool, registration forms will be available in the church office, the preschool office, and on the web site after the first of the year. Please call Bev Jurcic at 724-731-0222 if you would like to schedule a tour of the school or if you have any questions.

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

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.

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



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 this 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.

Centering Prayer in January

Just "BE" in the Silence

Even if you were unable to take part in the December seminar, there's still an opportunity to experience centering prayer. During the Mondays of January, a prayer session and video instruction will take place from 7:00pm to 8:30pm in Room 204. For more information or if you have questions, please call our pastoral associate Dennis at 724-941-9406, Ext. 109.

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 20

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

No Faith Formation Sessions Today

Monday, December 21

6:30p Aerobics (PBAC)
7:00p Catholic Scripture Study (208)

Tuesday, December 22

3:00p Confessions (Church)

No Faith Formation Session Today

7:00p Church Decorating Party (Church)
7:00p Contemporary Choir (Choir)

Wednesday, December 23

12:00p AA (208)

No Faith Formation Session Today

7:45p Tae Kwon Do (OBH)
7:45p St. Vincent de Paul (206)

Thursday, December 24

Parish Offices Closed

Friday, December 25

Parish Offices Closed

Saturday, December 26

No confessions today

Sunday, December 27

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

Parish Offices Closed

No Faith Formation Sessions Today

Health Ministry Update

Several people gathered in early December to share ideas and talk about starting a health ministry program here at St. Benedict. We've looked at what other parishes are trying in the area and reviewed some of the information from the Mercy Hospital Parish Nurse Symposium held in November. We'll be meeting again on January 5 at 7:00pm in Room 204. Whether you're a health professional or not, if you are interested in helping us get this program started, please contact our pastoral associate Dennis at 724-941-9406, ext. 109.



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