



Father Sam's Forum

(Today's Forum is part of the article Fr. Michael wrote for the Pittsburgh Catholic this weekend.)

J.M.J.

If you ever attended Catholic grammar school, you perhaps remember that before you wrote your name on any paper in any class you first graced the top margin of the page with the three letters, *J.M.J.* These letters reminded the student as he was about to begin his academic work to call upon the help of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. What a small, yet profound honor was given to the Holy Family every day as students across the United States wrote those three little letters at the top of their page.

Today we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and it provides us an opportunity to meditate upon the importance of the family. The Church proclaims that the family is the cornerstone of the greater community, the foundation of all society. It is the domestic Church where children first learn the love of God. The catechism states, "The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason it can and should be called a *domestic church*." (CCC, 2204) As the family goes, so goes the rest of the world.

The Gospel for today provides only a glimpse into the hidden life of Christ as a child under the care of Mary and Joseph. While leaving Jerusalem, Mary and Joseph came to the realization that Jesus, only 12 years old at the time, was not with them. In haste, the panic-stricken parents returned to the Holy City to search for their lost son. After being missing for three days, Jesus is finally found in the temple, listening to the teachers of the Law. When Mary and Joseph ask Jesus why he did this to them, he responded, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Lk 2:49) The next part of the Gospel is the most astounding, for although Jesus was truly home in the Temple of his Father, he places himself in obedience to Mary and Joseph and returns home to Nazareth. The Creator of heaven and earth, the Savior himself, becomes obedient to his parents.

Obedience is a necessary element to all Christian families. An ancient Church Father once explained that obedience out of fear makes one a slave while obedience out of reward makes one a mercenary. Only obedience out of love makes one a son. When we couple obedience with love, then we become the

sons and daughters modeled after Christ in the Gospel today. This aspect of obedience isn't easy. Our culture in America calls us to be autonomous, self-centered, and egotistical, which become elements opposed to the Christian life.

Holy Day of Obligation January 1, 2010

Everyone is reminded that this Friday, January 1, is a holy day of obligation. This means all Catholics are expected to worship God by participating at Mass. Our schedule here in the parish includes a Vigil Mass on New Year's Eve at 5:00 in the afternoon, and two Masses on New Year's Day, at 9:00 and 11:00 in the morning.

Mass Intentions: Dec. 27—Jan. 3

Sunday, December 27—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)

Monday, December 28—The Holy Innocents

- 8:30a **Becker-Jacquelaï Family** (Joan Becker)

Tuesday, Dec. 29—5th Day in Christmas Octave

- 6:30a **Martin Cawley** (wife, Virginia & children)
 8:30a **Deceased Members of the Suchan & Vandewater Families** (Vic & Mary Ann)

Wednesday, Dec. 30—6th Day in Christmas Octave

- 6:30a **Leo A. Puhala** (James Puhala)
 8:30a **Living & Deceased of Schweinbinz & Busch Families** (Claire Meredith)

Thursday, Dec. 31—7th Day in Christmas Octave

- 6:30a **Florence V. Sonick** (Darcy Sefer)
 8:30p **Earl Williams** (Mary Williams & Family)
 5:00p **For the People of the Parish**

Friday, Jan. 1—Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God

- 9:00a **Joseph Steger** (M/M Joseph Smith)
 11:00a **Alice Resinger** (Timothy & Dianne Thomas)

Saturday, Jan. 2—St. Basil the Great & St. Gregory Nazianzen

- 8:30a **Jo Ann Bork** (Ed & Eileen Donavan)
 5:00p **Tony Segulin** (Ramona Thibeault)

Sunday, January 3—The Epiphany of the Lord

- 7:45a **For the People of the Parish**
 9:30a **Anna Rea** (Diana & Al Nizamoff)
 11:30a **Thomas Laboon** (M/M Kenneth DeSibio)

The Sanctuary Candle burns this week in memory of Bob & Rose Fonzo, requested by Frank & Mary Ellen Meola, and the Altar Flowers are in memory of Martin Cawley, requested by his wife, Virginia.



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

Serving the Parish

December 31—January 1

Thur., 5:00pm— Fr. Ruffalo, Deacon Layton
Lectors: Mahla **Greeters:** EMHC: Vandewater, Bonadio, J & S Brooks, Howell, Greenwald **Servers:** Brooks, Nobers

9:00am— Fr. Esposito
Lectors: Ellsworth, Wanninger **Greeters:** EMHC: Puskarich, Wanninger, Barton, McGinnis, Walnoha, **Servers:** M & P Ellsworth, J & M Lyle

11:00pm— Fr. Ruffalo
Lectors: Ott, Zuk **Greeters:** Stewart EMHC: Huffner, Herald, Oldaker **Servers:** Kimes

January 2—January 3

Sat. 5:00pm— Fr. Esposito
Lectors: Tallon, Specca **Greeters:** Schardt, Mitchell EMHC: G & P Adams, Norton, Mertens, Milavec, Pfeifer, R & C Satler, Corbett **Servers:** Nobers, Quinn, Waigand, Tallon, Corbett

7:45am— Fr. Esposito
Lectors: Trapanotto, Rossin **Greeters:** J & R Jackson EMHC: Glod, McGinnis, Orient, Kail, Barton, Klinar, Puskarich, Berger, Gavran **Servers:** J, M, A & B Lyle

9:30am— Fr. Ruffalo
Lectors: Ross, Glover **Greeters:** Oberschelp EMHC: Capozza, McGovern, J Smith, L & A Kelly, Schultz, Cushma, Glover, Bonadio **Servers:** A & E Ross, Cushma, Mackay, Kimes

11:30pm— Fr. Ruffalo
Lectors: Auer, McCabe **Greeters:** Bartoli, Fisher EMHC: Slomiany, Stein, Huffner, B Smith, P Newmaster, Hayward, Fisher, L & K Newmaster **Servers:** Luzier, F & M Meola

Readings for the Week of December 27

Sunday: 1 Sm 1:20-22,24-28/1 Jn 3:1-2,21-24/Lk 2:41-52
 Monday: 1 Jn 1:5-2:2/Mt 2:13-18
 Tuesday: 1 Jn 2:3-11/Lk 2:22-35
 Wednesday: 1 Jn 2:12-17/Lk 2:36-40
 Thursday: 1 Jn 2:18-21/Jn 1:1-18
 Friday: Nm 6:22-27/Gal 4:4-7/Lk 2:16-21
 Saturday: 1 Jn 2:22-28/Jn 1:19-28

Children's Envelopes for 2010 are available for pickup in the narthex of the Church and in the Formation Office.

Eucharistic Adoration Cancelled for January

Our monthly 24 hour Eucharistic Adoration will be cancelled for December 31 and January 1 due to the New Year's holiday. A special Eucharistic Adoration has been scheduled on January 16, from 9:00am until 4:00pm, to offer prayer for the annual March for Life. If you are willing to commit to one of these hours, please contact John or Diane Slagel at 724-941-2885.

Rest In Peace

Please remember in your prayers our parishioners **James Thomas** and **Clara Fink**, and **Mary Fagioletti**, mother of our parishioner Dr. Robert Fagioletti, who died recently. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

Parish Offices Closed

Because of the New Year holiday, our parish offices will observe these closings: 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. Our offices are also closed Wednesday, December 30 at Noon for the Staff Christmas Luncheon.*

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.



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. If you host, teach, bake, serve, facilitate, lead, sing, greet, read, or in any other way offer your talents and time to the parish, you should attend. RSVP to the office before January 5, 2010.

Spring Fling

There will be an organizational meeting on January 7 in Room 213 at 7:30pm in the Family Life Center. Everyone is welcome to attend. For further information, please contact Ellie Puskarich at 724-941-4686 or e-mail ecpuskar9@yahoo.com. New faces are always welcome.

March For Life

The annual March for Life will be held on January 22 in Washington D.C. The bus will leave St. Benedict's parking lot at 6:00am. Donuts and beverages will be provided; however, you should bring a lunch. There is a restroom on the bus with one comfort stop along the way. After the March, the bus will depart Washington D.C. at 4:00pm for our return home. There will be a stop for dinner at your own expense. We will arrive back at St. Benedict's parking lot at approximately 11:00pm. For additional information or if you have questions, please contact Ken or Theresa Ross at 724-916-4864.

March For Life Registration Form

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Total number attending: _____

How many are students: _____

Cost for the trip is \$15 per person, \$30 maximum per family—Teens are free.

Make checks payable to St. Benedict the Abbot

Return this form with payment to the Parish Office.

Thank You One & All

Many thanks to everyone who shared cards, goodies and gifts with us for the celebration of Christmas. We appreciate your kind sentiments and good wishes. May God continue to bless and keep you in loving care and joyful hope of what is promised.

Capital Campaign Lists

Everyone who donated \$1000 or 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 determined and we want to have the correct information when it is made and installed.

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.

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.

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



Ask Father Sam

*We talk about grace a lot.
How would you explain what grace is?*

Lesson of the Week

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?

Believe it or not, this question came to me from a regular parishioner who brought a friend to Mass here. The woman told her she found the people very friendly, but was surprised at the number of those who left before the Mass had ended. I have thought about that myself, and some of you might recall that Fr. Michael preached a homily about Mass etiquette that included this topic.

While there may be a good reason to leave early, like a sick person at home who can't be left alone for long, I doubt that most of those who do so have a valid excuse for this behavior. Speaking with other priests, it is not a problem unique to our parish. I recall that even in my former parishes, the back of the church seemed less full as I was processing during the closing hymn. So, what is the reason behind this?

I wish I could give an answer, but I'm stumped. So, I asked about it and here are the responses I received. "There won't be any seats left at Eat n' Park if we stay until the end." "The parking lot takes 20 minutes to clear." Another version of this is that "it takes too much time to get out onto Valleybrook Road from Friar Lane."

Have any other reasons? Let me know them please. On Sundays, a good idea is to take some time and stop at the coffee house after the first two Masses. We are trying to build community in this very large parish, and you might just say hello to someone new. As far as traffic patterns, why not exit the alternate way? Leave via the driveway by the Rectory onto Stonebrook to Thompsonville to McMurray Road. And as you are sitting in the car waiting to exit, wouldn't it be a great time to discuss the homily or Gospel?

Think about it. When we enter the sacred time of worship, we are meant to set aside everything else and focus on what we are giving back to God. We can never pay the debt we owe for our salvation, but we do our best when we worship. So, if we come to worship with a clock ticking, "I have to leave in an hour," or "I can't believe this baptism is happening at Mass and it will take ten minutes longer!" maybe we shouldn't bother coming. Maybe being overbooked is not such a good thing.

The Silver Ring Thing

The Silver Ring Thing is a high-tech, high-energy performance that educates teens about the benefits of remaining abstinent until marriage and the dangers of promiscuous behavior. On January 15, the Silver Ring Thing will be held at Seton LaSalle High School from 6:30pm until 9:30pm, and all teenagers, parents, and youth workers are invited to attend. With dramas, videos, special effects, and speakers, teenagers will be motivated in a unique and personal way to choose to commit to both God and their future spouse to remain chaste until marriage. For further information please contact Janet at 724-941-9587.

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.

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, 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.

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

Mark these dates!

Look now what's coming in 2010:

- Parish Lenten Mission, March 21, 22, 23 with Frank Runyeon, star of stage and screen
- Lenten Penance Service, March 24, with multiple confessors
- The Passion Play, March 26, 27—be a part of this production as a singer, actor, stage hand, etc.

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.

Pre-Cana Classes

St. Louise de Marillac will be offering Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation Classes on January 18 and 25, February 1, 8 and 15. The classes will be held each Monday evening in the Bishop Leonard Room from 7:00pm to 9:00pm. The cost is \$60. Please contact St. Louise de Marillac Parish at 412-833-1010 with any questions or to register.

Retrouvaille

Stress in your marriage? Retrouvaille helps couples through difficult times in their marriage. In today's busy world, many couples experience anger, coldness, frustration, and loneliness. For confidential information about or to register for the program beginning with a weekend on January 8 please contact Retrouvaille at 412-277-3434. More information is available at www.helpourmarriage.com.

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 27

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

Parish Offices Closed

No Faith Formation Sessions Today

Monday, December 28

6:30p Aerobics (PBAC)

Tuesday, December 29

No Faith Formation Session Today

7:00p Contemporary Choir (Choir)

Wednesday, December 30

12:00p AA (208)

**Parish Staff Christmas Luncheon—Offices Closed
at Noon**

No Faith Formation Session Today

6:30p Confessions (Church)
7:45p Tae Kwon Do (OBH)

Thursday, December 31

Parish Offices Close at 12:00pm

Friday, January 1

Parish Offices Closed

Saturday, January 2

7:30a Catholic Men's Fellowship (206)
11:00a Confessions (Church)

Sunday, January 3

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

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

Natural Family Planning

The Creighton Model with NaPro Technology is a natural family planning method as effective as the pill in avoiding pregnancy (but without any of the danger), and it's also effective at achieving pregnancy. It is an excellent way to diagnosis women's health issues and also to help treat them. This is not your parents NFP. It's easy and effective. Please contact Karen at 724-822-8823 or karen@cmpgh.info for more information. Also, please visit www.cmpgh.info.



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