

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Catholic Community

Third Sunday of Advent, December 14, 2008

Served by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate



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		<u>Phone</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Marlys Verba	Parish Director	262-5542/262-4749 option 4 Home Phone: 262-8830	marlys.verba@pci.net
Fr. Tony Dummer	Priest Moderator	262-4749, Option 3	tonyomi@ptialaska.net
Fr. Andrew	Pastor	262-4749, Option 3	andyomi@gmail.com
Fr. Joe	Pastor	262-4749, Option 3	joejdowling@yahoo.com
Bro. Craig	Pastoral Associate	262-4749, Option 3	cbonham081@gmail.com

SUNDAY LITURGY: Saturday 5pm, Sunday 9am and 11:30am
First Sunday of month, Youth Ministry 5pm

WEEKDAY LITURGY: Monday through Friday, 12:05pm

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Thursday 11:00 – 11:45am
Saturday 4:00 – 4:45pm

Sacrament of Anointing of Sick: Available during the Sunday masses, or as needed.

Sacrament of Baptism: for children – Parents Prep class required. Call Marlys for reservations.
Best done prior to birth.
for adults – Contact the office about RCIA

Sacrament of Marriage: 6 month process (several classes and FOCUS Test and/or Engaged Encounter, or Couple to Couple...contact a priest.

Pastoral Council: meets the 3rd Thursday of each month (usually)

Prayer Chain: pjham@att.net, Pat Hamilton 262-5250

Sexual Abuse Victim Assistance Coordinator: Marlys Verba

Please Note: Submissions/articles for the weekly bulletin via email must be in by Thursdays at noon to Marlys: marlys.verba@pci.net and you may send a copy to: csponsel@acsalaska.net

SIMBANG GABI

(Filipino Advent Mass)

Two traditions concerning the mass/masses to usher in the event of Christ's birth developed in the early course of our history. A number of countries in Europe like Austria, Belgium, Germany, Hungary and Poland came to celebrate this mass every day during Advent. A second tradition developed in the Latin Church. These countries celebrated the "Misa Aurea" (the Angels Mass) on the nine days before Christmas...much like Las Posadas.

This novena of masses expressed the sentiments of the people towards Mary and manifested the Filipino rite of celebrating **Life** in more festive ways. The Simbang Gabi masses were celebrated in the early morning hours, when the roosters crow to announce the coming of a new day. (Hence, we also have the name Misa de gallo) for a very practical reason. Filipinos were farmers or fisherman, who began or ended their day at dawn.

The roots of Simbang Gabi are all but forgotten now. However, the fascination of going to church (at dawn, in order to start the new day with worship) is as strong as ever today among the Filipinos. For the children, it announces that Christmas is just around the corner. The Filipino immigrants brought this tradition with them when they came to the United States. It is especially strong in the Oakland and L.A. areas of California and also in Juneau, Alaska. Since the cold December in Alaska weather makes it impractical to hold the celebration at dawn, most parishes today have the celebration at night.

(Symbols of the Philippine Christmas)

The most popular symbol is the **Parol** (star lantern). The oldest symbol is the **Belen** which was introduced from the tradition started by St. Francis of Assisi in 1223. The **belen** (nativity set) was found mostly in churches and affluent homes; the **parol** everywhere.

The **parol** represents the star of Bethlehem. The Filipinos could not have picked a better symbol to express two of their important messages: 2000 years ago Joseph and Mary could not find a place for the baby's birth --- today and every year the parol is set out in the window to serve as the guiding light and sign for Joseph, Mary and more importantly Jesus to come in as the household is ready for them. The same symbol expresses to everyone the fact that they household where it is displayed has accepted Jesus, that yes they are a Christian family.

Truth Pursuit practice session will be in the hall after 11:30am Mass on December 14th — all are welcome. For more information, call **Kathy Johnson @ 776-8593**.



A LOOK AHEAD:

Advent Reconciliation service in Kenai December 17th @ 7pm.

Christmas Poinsettia Remembrance Fund is available to remember loved ones during the holiday season. Please put the name on envelope along with \$12/flower in the container in foyer.

Salvation Army Bell Ringing sign up sheet is on the bulletin board. Please consider participating with your family for one hour.

The Liturgical Ministries sign up list is on the bulletin board for Christmas Eve, Midnight Mass and Christmas Day; please fill in if you can help at a specific Mass.

Cleaning/decorating for Christmas will be Tuesday December 23rd; if you can come for only a few hours, consider 10am-noon for doing the foyer and/or 1pm-? For the cleaning/decorating of the assembly area. There is a sign up sheet on the foyer. Please bring vacuums and helping hands.

Children's Christmas Pageant practice for Children's Mass is Sunday, December 21st at 10am. Please meet in Community Room.

Children's Mass participants are asked to bring their Baby Jesus from their crèche sets at home to be blessed during the Mass.

Generations of Faith Planning/Implementation meeting on Tuesday, December 30th at 1pm.

Third Week of Advent

Blessing of the Crèche

God our Father,
bless all who gaze
upon this scene of your Son's birth.
Fill our hearts with the song of angels,
the humility of the creatures,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the longing of the Magi,
and the love of your Holy Family.
This Advent, grant us the virtue of hope,
and bless us throughout the Christmas
season
with the joy of your presence.
Help us to discern the signs of your Spirit,
and grant us the courage to follow wherever
you lead.
Make of our home a new Bethlehem
where you are ever welcome
and all are welcome in your name.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Las Posadas

Las Posadas is a traditional Mexican Christmas celebration that is quickly becoming a cherished custom of both Hispanics and non-Hispanics alike throughout the United States. *Posadas* traditionally takes place on the last nine evenings before Christmas between December 16th and the 24th.

The traditional *Posada* song tells the story of Mary and Joseph. The nightly procession is a way of reliving Mary and Joseph's search for shelter. *Posadas* means "inn or lodging."

Those celebrating the *Posadas* gather together. Children can be dressed as Mary and Joseph. Adults, carrying candles and representations of Joseph and Mary (these are called "*los peregrinos*"), and in some places even a little donkey, form a procession with the children and prepare to go in search of *posada* (shelter). The procession visits homes (usually three per night), which have been designated ahead of time. Mary, Joseph, and those in the procession approach the door of the first home, singing in Spanish: "Do you have lodging?" The people inside the house respond by singing, "Go away. This is no inn." The procession moves to other houses, and again they are refused lodging. At the last house however, the "inn keepers" relent and welcome the exhausted travelers. They sing:

Enter, holy pilgrims. Come into our humble dwelling and into our hearts. The night is one of joy, for here beneath our roof we shelter the Mother of God.

Everyone enters the house and a celebration begins. There is usually food, beverages, and a piñata for the children.

***Las Posadas* will take place once at Our Lady of Perpetual Help on Sunday afternoon, December 21st at 4pm. Meet at the Hall. Dress appropriately for this procession will take place outside.**

Most elderly religious receive, on average, a Social Security benefit of just \$4,402 per year. Community living provides some economics of scale, but health care and living costs in most religious communities far exceed income. This weekend, please support the second collection to benefit the Retirement Fund for Religious. You can help ensure quality of life and adequate health care for elderly women and men religious, who have devoted their lives to our Church. Thank you!



Calendar for December 15 – December 21, 2008 Daily Readings

December 15, Monday: Noon Mass Morning prayer, 7:30am Choir Practice for Children's Mass, 6:15pm	Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a Psalm 25:4-5ab, 6 & 7bc, 8-9 Matthew 21:23-27
December 16, Tuesday: Noon Mass Morning prayer, 7:30am RCIA, 7pm	Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13 Psalm 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-18, 19 & 23 Matthew 21:28-32
December 17, Wednesday: Noon Mass Morning prayer, 7:30am Chore practice for Midnight Mass 6:30pm	Genesis 49:2, 8-10 Psalm 72:1-2, 3-4ab, 7-8, 17 Matthew 1:1-17
December 18, Thursday: Noon Mass Morning prayer, 7:30am Eucharistic Adoration starts after noon service Reconciliation, 11—11:45am	Jeremiah 23:5-8 Psalm 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19 Matthew 1:18-25
December 19, Friday: Noon Mass Eucharistic Adoration continuous from yesterday, ends before Mass	Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a Psalm 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17 Luke 1:5-25
December 20, Saturday: 5pm Mass Reconciliation, 4:00pm	Isaiah 7:10-14 Psalm 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6 Luke 1:26-38
December 21, Sunday: 9:00am, 11:30am Masses	2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 (11B) Psalm 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29 Romans 16:25-27 Luke 1:26-38

Spiritual Survival

If we made a list of everything that we really need in order to stay alive spiritually, what would it include? Some people would say they needed to attend church --- others might not. Some would say they need to belong to an organized community of faith. Others would not. And so on.

But there is one essential element that every truly spiritual person needs. And that element is prayer. In prayer we expose ourselves as we are. We strip off any false fronts and stand naked before God. There is absolutely no place for pretense when we come before God in prayer. What would be the point of entering into a heart to heart conversation with someone, only to hide an important part of our lives?

How could we possibly hide from God --- the one who creates and loves us? And so when we pray, we must pray with complete and total honesty, admitting our weaknesses and our deepest needs. When we open ourselves up in that way, then we make ourselves capable of receiving the strength and help that only God can bring to us. During Advent, paying attention to our prayer may be the most effective preparation of all as we wait to celebrate Jesus' presence among us. Prayer is the one thing necessary if we want to meet Christ. We meet Christ in prayer, and prayer prepares us to meet Christ in one another.

Prayer also presumes and demands that we turn our words of prayer into deeds of love. We are called to live our lives as Christ who was sent to "*bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners.*"

May we use this time of waiting to deepen our prayer life, and so come to recognize the presence of Christ, who comes to us in so many different disguises.

fr.tony,omi

Military Care Packages Thank you, dear parishioners for your very generous donations and support for our Christmas mailing of our Military Care Packages. We had a tremendous response this year, and with your support and our bush elves assembling the packages and taking them to the post office, we were able to send 39 boxes filled with Christmas greetings, religious items—blessed by Father Andy, canned salmon, crackers, cookies, bars, candy, toiletries, socks, magazines, books and more. Blessed Christmas to all! **Please Note:** We received a request for a military care package for **SPC Benjamin Parker**. The post office did not accept the boxes for him saying the address was insufficient. I have no name & phone number with the request. Please call me at **260-2637** with a good address and we will mail it.

Thank You for participating in Operation Christmas Child this year. Together we packed 163. A special thank you to Amandra Cobb, Dana Spring, and Ximena Gonzales for packing 38 of those boxes and writing letters for each of those children. They also helped at Samaritan Air packing cartons with shoe boxes.

Journey to Bethlehem: WE ARRIVED EARLY!!! TOGETHER WE TRAVELED 6093.8 MILES!!! Thank you for joining our journey; we could not have done it without everyone's help.

The Truesdell Family would like to thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers over the past few weeks.

A Resource — The website for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) contains a quick computer access to the text of daily readings, and also has that text in downloadable audio. The address is: <http://www.usccb.org/nab/>

Saturday, December 20, 2008		Sunday, December 21, 2008	
5:00pm	9:00am	11:30am	
Eucharistic Ministers:			
Joe Deveaux	Stephanie Cox	Dave Carey	
Jane Fellman	Connie Dunn	Myrna Cowan	
Jim Fellman	Ron O'Lena	Connie Gatling	
Kate Forrest	Meg Zerbinos	Cindy Kircher	
John Pothast	Alex Zerbinos	Shirley Twohy	
Lectors:			
1st reading:	1st reading:	1st reading:	
Carolyn Cannava	Monty Murray	Pat Cowan	
2nd reading:	2nd reading:	2nd reading:	
Sheilah-Margaret Pothast	Tamara Slone	Karl Kircher	
Altar Servers:			
Hannah Pothast	Kyle Shassetz	Willa Forrest	
Mop & Bucket: 12/15 — 12/20, Doug Oglesbee family			
Collection Counters: 12/21, Shirley & Paul Zobeck			