

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Catholic Community

Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 21, 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@gci.net
Fr. Tony Dummer	Priest Moderator	262-4749, Option 3	tonyomi@ptialaska.net
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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@gci.net and you may send a copy to: cspinsel@acsalaska.net

Are You Going to miss Christmas?

This Christmas I want to tell you about a man who was so caught up in his own problems that he missed the opportunity to be part of one of the greatest events of all times. This man actually missed Christmas altogether.

The Bible doesn't tell us the name of this man, but we can read his story in the Gospel according to Luke. In Chapter two, verse seven tells it all: "Mary brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."

The One who brought Christmas, the One who gave us Christmas and who is Christmas, could not find a room to be born in: "*There was no room for them in the inn.*"

How sad and how searching are those familiar words.

What was a cause of this tragedy? Why was there no room for Mary and Joseph and their expected Baby, except in a stable? Bethlehem was a small town, and in those days most small towns perhaps had only one inn. The inn in Bethlehem was already filled. No other accommodation was available.

I have some sympathy for the innkeeper, except in the matter of his preoccupation. He was too busy to notice a woman about to give birth to a Baby, to a Child who would grow up to become the most famous Man in all of history, and more than a Man, the Son of God, the Messiah, the Prince of Peace.

And today too, the world has been slow to react, and is apathetic, to thousands who have perished or who have been slaughtered. The world has been either ignorant or indifferent.

That's the most startling thing about our world at this hour --- its indifference to what is happening all around the world. We seem so preoccupied with politics, the price of oil or gold, or the stock market or who will win the Super Bowl. We have so much that we are preoccupied with, our own comforts and our own desires.

I have to ask you: Are you going to make the same kind of mistake that the innkeeper did? Are you going to show Jesus to the stable compartment in your life?

I am asking you now, at this Christmastime --- well Advent-time ---to let Jesus be born in the central place of your heart and life. I am asking you to let His presence flood your heart and fill your home this Christmas Season.

Jesus can come into your life and change it from top to bottom. He can transform your home. He can give you a new love for your spouse and your children. He can help settle those tensions in your home and those problems in your work and business.

Best of all, He offers you forgiveness and gift of eternal life

May God bless you this Holiday Season and keep you safe.

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A LOOK AHEAD:

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 — May be picked up after January 14th liturgy.

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.

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

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.

Christmas Eve Children's Mass:

shall begin @ 4:30pm with preludes; Mass at 5pm.

Please bring Baby Jesus from crèche sets from home to be blessed during Mass.

Midnight Mass:

Will have prelude music from 11:30—midnight with Mass

Christmas Day, 10am:

The Legend of the Poinsettia

I first heard the Mexican legend of the poinsettia, about a little girl who offers weeds to the Christ Child as her gift for Christmas, over thirty years ago.

I was touched by it as only Christmas can touch me. I knew that one day I wanted to write down the story or write a poem about it.

This Mexican wildflower is known by many names in Mexico: *flor de fuego* (fire flower), and *flor de la Nochebuena* (flower of the Holy Night), the name I finally used in my poem.

The poinsettia found its way to the United States through Dr. Joel Roberts Poinsett, who served as our nation's minister to Mexico from 1825 to 1830. He was fascinated with its beauty and called the plant "painted leaves," because the part often thought of as the flower actually consists of leaves surrounding a smaller flower portion. He took cuttings home with him to South Carolina when he returned from Mexico in 1830.

The Christmas plant, which we call poinsettia after Dr. Poinsett, found its way into our own Christmas traditions, and nothing seems to say "Merry Christmas" better than a beautiful red and green poinsettia.

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Calendar for December 22 – December 28, 2008, with Daily Readings

December 22, Monday: Noon Mass	December 23, Tuesday: Noon Mass	December 24, Wednesday: Noon Mass	December 25, Thursday: Christmas Mass: 10am	December 26, Friday: Noon Mass	December 27, Saturday: 5pm Mass	December 28, Sunday: 9:00am, 11:30am Masses
Morning prayer, 7:30am Choir Practice for Children's Mass, 6:30pm	Morning prayer, 7:30am RCIA, 7pm Decorating/cleaning church: 10am	See Schedule for Christmas Masses in the highlighted area elsewhere in this bulletin	Morning prayer, 7:30am No Eucharistic Adoration		Reconciliation 4:00pm	
1 Samuel 1:24-28 1 Samuel 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd Luke 1:46-56	Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24 Psalm 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 & 14 Luke 1:57-66	2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 Psalm 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 & 29 Luke 1:67-79	Isaiah 9:1-6 (14ABC) Psalm 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14	Acts of the Apostles 6:8-10; 7:54-59 Psalm 31:3cd-4, 6 & 8ab, 16bc & 17 Matthew 10:17-22	1 John 1:1-4 Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 John 20:1a & 2-8	Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3 (178) Psalm 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9 Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19 Luke 2:22-40

Saturday, December 27, 2008, 5:00pm

Eucharistic Ministers: Joe Deveaux, Jane Fellman, Jim Fellman, Kate Forrest, John Pothast

Lectors: 1st. Reading: Carolyn Cannava; 2nd reading: Sheilah-Margaret Pothast

Altar Server: Grey Hansen

Sunday, December 28, 2008, 9:00pm

Eucharistic Ministers: Stephanie Cox, Connie Dunn, Ron O'Lena, Meg Zerbinos, Alex Zerbinos

Lectors: 1st. Reading: Monty Murray; 2nd reading: Tamara Slone

Altar Server: Jacob O'Lena

Sunday, December 28, 2008, 11:30pm

Eucharistic Ministers: Dave Carey, Myrna Cowan, Connie Gatling, Cindy Kircher, Shirley Twohy

Lectors: 1st. Reading: Pat Cowan; 2nd reading: Karl Kircher

Altar Server: Robert Johnson

Mop & Bucket 12/22—12/27: Rob Quelland Family **Collection Counters:** 12/25, Jacquie Moxey, Connie Gatling
12/28, Joyce & Paul Fischer

No Strings Attached

Mary's reply to God's messenger was immediate and it was total. She didn't ask for more time as we sometimes do. St. Augustine himself became a Christian at a certain point in time, but it was only years after his conversion that he was willing to change the way he lived.

Every time we give our "yes" to God's call we also, in our own unique way, make Jesus more present in our world. This is the deeper meaning of Christmas. It's not just a time for sentimental remembering of what has been. It is a present feast filled with creative energy and generous love.

People at this time of the year often ask the question, "Are you ready for Christmas?" Of course, what they mean is ---have you put up the tree, bought all of your gifts, planned out the Christmas dinner. But on a deeper level, it means much more. Are we giving ourselves completely in love to God and to God's people? Is there any area in which we are holding back, keeping something for ourselves, not wanting to surrender totally to the Lord Jesus? Is our selfishness and smallness hiding Christ from others? Whenever someone asks us this question this coming week, perhaps we could think of the deeper meaning behind those words, "Are you ready for Christmas?"

Maybe part of our Christmas preparation might consist in looking more closely at the goodness we have brought into our world. To whom or what has the Lord called us to be present? How have we become the face of love and kindness for others? As we look at those parts of our lives, we need to thank God for the grace we have been given to be strong for others in their weakness and their need. God has put us into the lives of certain others so that we could show them the face of Christ. May we have the strength and perseverance we need to continue to bring kindness and comfort to others.

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Norma Daniels, one of our parishioners remains in critical condition at Providence after an accident this week. Please pray for her and her family. You may check her status @ www.thestatus.com; Daniels patient, name and password: early-tumble.


Cards may be sent to Room 228, Providence Alaska Medical Center, 3200 Providence Drive, P.O. Box 196604, Anchorage, Alaska 99508-6604.

In the foyer, there are baskets containing the calendars for the new year and a Christmas or oplatek wafer. It is a custom to break the wafer before the Christmas eve dinner and exchange with others as a symbol of forgiveness — see large sheet for more information.

Fourth Week of Advent

Blessing of a Christmas Tree

Loving God,
we ask you to bless this tree.
You created every kind of tree,
conifers, seed, and fruit-bearing trees,
providing us with food, shelter, and beauty.
May our tree's evergreen branches
remind us of your ever-present love for us.
On the tree of the cross
your Son won for us eternal life.
May these boughs, hung with ornaments,
remind us to be living branches,
bearing the fruit of good works.
You sent your Holy Spirit
to be our counselor, comforter, and guide.
May the lights on this tree
remind us of the Spirit's presence,
shining in our hearts. Amen.



Jesse Tree Symbols for this week represent:

- 1] Angels, Hebrews 1:1-14
- 2] Zachariah & Elizabeth, Luke 1:5-25
- 3] Virgin Mary, Luke 1:26-38
- 4] John the Baptist, Luke 1:57-80
- 5] Joseph of Nazareth, Matthew 1:18-35
- 6] Symbol of Bethlehem, Matthew 2:1-23
Luke 2:1-20