

✠ ANNOUNCEMENTS

DECEMBER 3, 2006 - ADVENT I - ST FRANCIS XAVIER, C

Today is the *Advent Sunday*, the opening of the holy season of penance and preparation for our Lord's Birth. The Advent Wreath is solemnly blessed during the Procession before the High Mass.

The **Blessing of Religious Articles** is available after all Masses.

The **Second Collection** is for *Our Seminary and Mission Support*.

St. Nicholas is visiting our children after all Masses this morning in Helfta Hall.

The **Visitation Society** is holding an organizational meeting at **11:00 AM** in Helfta Hall this morning. Bishop Dolan will speak at this meeting.

The beautiful **Advent Vespers** are sung at **4:45 PM** with Benediction.



ALTER CHRISTUS

The "little church" is in the vestibule this morning. The ushers are collecting alms for the **Alter Christus Confraternity** to support priests who might not otherwise receive help. Please be generous.



VIGIL OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The 7th of December is the *vigil* before the feast of the *Immaculate Conception* of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is a **day of fast and complete abstinence**. Everyone over 21 and under 59 years of age is bound to observe the fast. Every Catholic over 7 years of age is bound to observe abstinence. On days of fast only one full meal is allowed. Eating between meals is not permitted. Beverages including milk and fruit juices may be taken. On days of complete abstinence, meat and soup or gravy made from meat are not permitted. Therefore, on the Vigil of the Immaculate Conception you are allowed only one full meatless meal.



FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Friday of this week we celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a *Holy Day of Obligation*. All are bound to assist at Mass under the pain of mortal sin. The Mass schedule for the Holy Day is as follows: **6:30 & 9:00 AM**, and **5:45 PM**. Because it is a Holy Day, the

Abstinence is dispensed. You *may* eat meat this week on *Friday* but *not* on *Thursday*.



CALLING THE CRAFTY

It's only two weeks before our Sunday, December 17th, Christmas Craft Sale. How are your projects coming? You are welcome to drop off items at the church office, or call Connie Kamphaus 513-892-1469 for more information.

We are also planning a Christmas Bake Sale for the same Sunday morning. Please mark your calendar, and plan on sharing some of your Christmas goodies with us to make this a great fundraising booster.



POINSETTIA MEMORIAL

We are welcoming contributions to defray the cost of the Christmas flowers. We typically use between 100 - 120 plants to decorate the church. If you wish to make your donation in memory of a loved one, please fill out the special Poinsettia Offering envelope available in the vestibule and pews. To have your loved one included in the special Christmas memorial, please turn your envelope in no later than December 18th.

CHRISTMAS MASS NOVENA

Remember your loved ones in our Christmas Novena of Masses which begins Christmas Day—the perfect gift! Envelopes may be found in the vestibule and the Gift Shop. Fill them out and return them to the Church Office or the collection basket. Envelopes must be turned in no later than December 19th.

USHERS

7:30 AM John Wiesman, Kent Maki, Joe Andreotta, Tom Kamphaus
9:00 AM Jim Gebel, Richard Smith, Dale Wilker, Bernie Brueggemann
11:30 AM Bob Uhlenbrock, Kirby Bischel, Dennis Hille, John French
5:45 PM John Seyfried

DECEMBER 10, 2006

SERVICES

•WED 12/06 6:30 LOW: C. & T. Simpson
•FRI 12/08 6:30 LOW: C. & T. Simpson
9:00 AM HIGH: MC: J. Lotarski; AC1: Sam Cozzens, AC2: Seth Cozzens; TH: A. Lotarski; TORCH: B. Lotarski, F. Puglielli, A. Richesson, N. Puglielli

DECEMBER 4 - DECEMBER 10, 2006

5:45 LOW & EXPO: Briggs, Bayer, Ritze, Keaveney
•SAT 12/09 9:00 AM HIGH: Keaveney and Briggs
•SUN 12/10 7:30 AM LOW: D. & S. Brueggemann
9:00 AM HIGH: MC: Tom Simpson; AC: T. Simpson & R. Hill; TH: D. Poepelman; TORCH: Poepelman & Eilerms / or Team A: Schoolboys
11:30 AM LOW: S. & S. Cozzens
5:45 PM LOW: G. Miller

Collection Report

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2006 \$3949.00

*Thank you for your generosity!
Remember St. Gertrude's in your will!*



Requiescat in Pace
Please pray for the repose of the soul of Fr. Lawrence Bray, a well known Catholic priest, who died this past week. *Requiescat in Pace. Amen.*

I APOLOGIZE...

for the incorrect Mass time for November 30th in last Sunday's bulletin. Some lack of proofing combined with a technical glitch led to a real inconvenience for a number of souls, for which I beg your pardon. Should anyone be able to help with last minute weekend proofing...please let me know!

BISHOP DOLAN



2006 COLLECTION ENVELOPES

The 2006 Collection envelopes are available in the vestibule. Please pick up your envelopes today.

NOVENA PRAYER FOR ADVENT

Hail and blessed be the hour and moment, in which the Son of God was born of the Most Pure Virgin Mary, at midnight in Bethlehem, in piercing cold. At that hour, vouchsafe O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother. Amen.

(Traditionally said 15 times a day from St. Andrew's Day until Christmas.)



ADVENT

It's not too late to visit our Gift Shop to get ready for this season of getting ready. Advent Wreaths, as well as good spiritual reading are available. Be sure to prepare an Advent Wreath (three purple and one pink candle) for your family dining table or shrine. Consider saying the Sunday Collect each Saturday evening when you light a new candle.



LUMEN CHRISTI

For the next fortnight the Sanctuary Lamp will burn before the Blessed Sacrament for:

FALLEN AWAY FRIENDS & FAMILY

C. SIMPSON FAMILY

✠ ANNOUNCEMENTS (CONT'D.)

✠ NEXT SUNDAY

Next Sunday is the Second Sunday of the Month. The **Legion of Decency Pledge** will take place at all Masses.

Set your missal: December 10th.

Second Sunday in Advent. with the commemorations of Within the Octave of the Immaculate Conception and St Melchiades, PM. **PREF:** Trinity.

✠ HOLY HELPER VOLUNTEERS

Saturday, December 9th: Katie Bischak, Regina Gilliam and Beth Brueggemann.

CHURCH DECORATING

Saturday, December 16th, all members of the parish are invited to come and help with decorating the church (both inside and outside) for Christmas. The more help we have the quicker we will finish. We plan to begin around **9:00 AM.** A **Chili luncheon** will be provided to

all the workers. If you can come, please call Sister 513-703-1330 or the Church Office 513-645-4212 and let us know.

✠ UPCOMING EVENTS

December 16th: Church Decorating for Christmas - Everyone is invited to come and help.

January 5th: Opening of 40 Hours Devotion

✠ OUR DECEMBER DECEASED

Jerome Gerrard, Charles Higdon, Alice Corbin, Frank Alban, Jr., George Greene, Eleanor Cekada, Rosemary Breitenstein, Regina Budde, Floyd Rimer, Jr., Larry Oancea, Henry Golembeski, James P.

Looney, James Dour, Mary Irene Osborn, Palmera Soria, Albert D. Kinnett, Mary Genevieve Bell.



ADVENT CUSTOMS

By *SISTER MARY LAETITIA, R.S.M.*

Advent is the season of lovely expectancy, of holy anticipation, and of intense longing. Especially in the home where the children learn to prepare for the Christ Child's birthday, Advent can be made the most tenderly beautiful season of the year.

In studying the literature of the Church we find that the Advent prayers dramatize joyfully the real meaning of preparation for the great feast. With this thought in mind we will explain through these pages the many customs of the Church which we can observe in the home or in the school to keep this Birthday a vibrant, living expectancy among young and old.

ADVENT WREATH

One of the most popular of the ancient customs is the Advent wreath. It is made of evergreens bound to a wire circle. Originally taken from the pagan fire wheel, it represents the cycle of years from Adam to Christ. It bears four candles spaced evenly, one for each week. The wreath is usually suspended from the ceiling by four purple ribbons, but it may be laid on the dining room table or on an end table with the candle kept burning during the evening meal; some families like to set it up in the children's room.

(Continued on back)



NATURE'S SOLITARY BOAST

The Immaculate Conception

When Pius IX solemnly proclaimed the Immaculate Conception in 1854, he affirmed that the Virgin Mother of God possesses a "plenitude of innocence and sanctity." The Church somehow always knew that Mary's holiness surpassed that of other saints. What required clarification was the truth that this grace flows from a special divine prerogative accorded only to Mary. From the first moment of her conception, Mary is preserved from the stain of original sin. As the poet exclaims, "Tainted Nature's solitary boast!" Among men, one woman alone remains "Full of Grace." Why did the Church wait until the nineteenth century to confirm the unique holiness that belongs to the Mother of the Redeemer? The typically modern fascination for progress reached new heights during this period. The modern world, preoccupied as it is with evolutions, requires reminding of the permanent character of God's gifts. So do we. What better way to announce the durable, abiding character of divine grace than to hold up Mary's Immaculate Conception? In 1858, Our Lady confirmed the Church's wisdom. When she appeared to Saint Bernadette at Lourdes, Mary said simply, "I am the Immaculate Conception." *Deo gratias!*

—THE MAGNIFICAT

A PRAYER TO MARY IMMACULATE

O Virgin Immaculate, thou who by a singular privilege of grace wast preserved from original sin, look in pity upon our separated brethren, who are nevertheless thy children, and call them back to the center of unity. Not a few of them, although separated from the Church, have kept a certain veneration for thee; and do thou, generous as thou art, reward them for it, by obtaining for them the grace of conversion.

Thou was conqueror of the infernal serpent from the first instant of thy existence; renew even now, for it is now more necessary than ever before, thine ancient triumphs; glorify thy divine Son, bring back to Him the sheep that have strayed from the one fold and place them once more under the guidance of the universal Shepherd who holds the place of thy Son on earth; let it be thy glory, O Virgin who destroyest all heresies to restore unity and peace to all Christian people. Amen.

OUR GOAL

100%

75%

50%

25%



NOVEMBER RECTORY FUND FIGURES

November Monthly goal \$5000.00

Please remember, this is an on-going appeal to your generosity so that we may complete the rectory without incurring an expensive debt.

Your support is needed and appreciated!

✠ THE CALENDAR

✠ BISHOP'S CORNER



MON	12/04/06	ST PETER CHRYSOLOGUS, BPCD ST BARBARA, VM 11:30 AM High Mass <i>Pro-Life (Rosary Confraternity)</i> 4:15-6:00 PM Knights of the Sacred Heart (Sharon Woods Park) St. Angela Merici Girls' Group (Sharonville Library) 5:00 PM Low Mass †Tony Perrine (Bishop Dolan)
TUES	12/05/06	FERIAL DAY - ST SABBAS, AB 11:30 AM Requiem High Mass <i>Purgatorial Society</i>
WED	12/06/06	ST NICHOLAS, BPC 11:30 AM High Mass †Rosemary Nolan (Barb Steinmetz) 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal
THUR	12/07/06	ST AMBROSE, BPCD - Vigil of the Immaculate Conception - FAST & ABSTINENCE FIRST THURSDAY 11:30 AM High Mass, Opening of Immaculate Conception Novena <i>Sanctification of Priests (Alter Christus)</i>
FRI	12/08/06	IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BVM, PATRONESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA - HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION Immaculate Conception Novena II 6:30 AM Low Mass †Rosemary & Clifford Breitenstein (Tom & Connie Kamphaus) 8:30 AM Confessions 9:00 AM High Mass <i>For Favor Granted-To Honor OL of Lourdes & St. Bernadette (Tim Hopkins)</i> 5:15 PM Confessions & Rosary 5:45 PM Low Mass, Sacred Heart Novena, Benediction, Confessions <i>Conversion of Family & Friends (Anita Swinney)</i>
SAT	12/09/06	WITHIN THE OCTAVE Immaculate Conception Novena III 8:45 AM Confessions 9:00 AM High Mass, Confessions <i>Special Intention (H.O. & Becky Hinton)</i> 4:30 PM Confessions
SUN	12/10/06	ADVENT II - WITHIN THE OCTAVE - ST MELCHIADES, PM - OL OF LORETTO Immaculate Conception Novena IV 7:30 AM Low Mass †Jeannine Ladd-Birthday Remembrance (Soli & Ladd Family) 9:00 AM High Mass †Louise Cyr (The Duff Family) 11:30 AM Low Mass <i>Fallen Away Members of the Landry Family (Mother, Joan Landry)</i> 5:45 PM Low Mass <i>For the People of St. Gertrudes</i>

This important and beautiful Advent Sunday finds me happy to be home with you between two trips. This past week was a busy one at our seminary, with classes, conferences, and many conversations. Once we all get off to a good Advent, I will be getting myself off to far off Argentina with all of my "ordination gear" packed up as another priest is to be ordained for God's holy Church. For the faithful in Argentina this is a first, and is bound to be a great blessing, joy, and encouragement. Please pray for a safe trip and God's protection for this so important undertaking. I will return on December 12th, a day dear to us all as we honor the Empress of the Americas, Our Lady of Guadalupe.

This past week we celebrated the second anniversary of Fr. Saavedra's ordination, and the first—on St. Gertrude's Day—of our Fr. McGuire, who is helping Bishop Sanborn in so many ways now as a priest, both at the seminary and the local school in Brooksville, Florida.

Fr. Cekada has been busy this past week, as he always is, with the innumerable details of a church so big as St. Gertrude, everything from tires to roofs to paychecks. In his "spare time" our gifted author is answering those so-called "traditionalists" who are still trying to get Catholics to accept the invalid Novus Ordo "ordination of Bishops."

And you? I am sure you are busy preparing for Christmas, but I hope you will see beyond the shopping and socializing of this season to prepare at least a little room for Jesus, in your heart, and in your home.

A Blessed Advent!

—Bishop Dolan

*The angel comes as forerunner
to the dwelling place of chastity,
in order to prepare the royal court
for the King, the temple of God,
and the marriage chamber
for the heavenly Bridegroom...
Mary offers faithful service;
pregnant, yet a Virgin;
a Virgin, yet a Mother.*

—ST. PETER CHRYSOLOGUS



✠ THE VISIT OF ST. NICHOLAS

The tradition of children receiving sweets and tiny presents from Saint Nicholas on the eve of December 6 arose by the sixteenth century in pre-Reformation Catholic Europe, with children putting their shoes on the window sill in the hope that the fourth-century bishop would fill them with gifts in Germany and Austria. The "visit" from Saint Nicholas sometimes comes not while the children are sleeping, but instead earlier in the evening. He arrives at the door, clothed as a bishop, carrying a crosier and a heavy book said to contain an account of each child's conduct, recorded by their guardian angels. After admonishing the children, he gives them their gifts, and concludes by urging the whole family to prepare themselves for Christmas. The current American tradition of Saint Nicholas "visiting" on Christmas Eve has a ninth-century precedent in a legend that on Christmas Eve the Byzantine monk Saint Joseph the Hymnographer, having spent the night in prayer, was visited in a vision by Saint Nicholas.

—MAGNIFICAT

FROM MARY'S CHILDHOOD

By FATHER JACOB OF SERUG

From her childhood, Mary stood firm in
 unblemished uprightness;
 she walked in the way without offenses.
 Her original nature was preserved with a will for
 good things
 because there were always tokens of virginity
 in her body
 and holy things in her soul.
 This deed which took place in her gave me power
 to speak these things concerning her ineffable
 beauty.
 Because she became Mother of the Son of God,
 I saw and firmly believed
 that she is the only woman in the world who is
 entirely pure.
 From when she knew to distinguish good from evil,
 she stood firm in purity of heart and in
 integrity of thoughts.
 She did not turn aside from the justice which is in
 the Law,
 and neither carnal nor bodily desire disturbed
 her.
 From her childhood, impulses of holiness stirred
 within her,
 and in her excellence, she increased them with
 great care.
 The Lord was always set before her eyes;
 on Him she was gazing, so that she might be
 enlightened by Him, and delighted in Him.
 Because He saw how pure she was and limpid her
 soul,
 He wanted to dwell in her since she was free
 from evils.
 Since a woman like her had never been seen,
 an amazing work was done in her which is the
 greatest of all.
 A daughter of men was sought among women;
 she was chosen who was the fairest of all.
 The holy Father wanted to make a mother for His
 Son,
 but He did not allow that she be His mother
 because of His choice.
 Maiden, full of beauty hidden in her and around
 her,
 and pure of heart that she might see the
 mysteries which had come to pass in her.
 This is beauty, when one is beautiful of one's own
 accord;
 glorious graces of perfection are in her will.
 However great be the beauty of something from
 God,

it is not acclaimed if freedom is not present.
 The sun is beautiful but it is not praised by
 spectators,
 because it is known that its will does not give it
 light.
 Whoever is beautiful of his own accord and
 possesses beauty,
 on this account he is truly acclaimed if he is
 beautiful.
 Even God loves beauty which is from the will;
 He praises a good will whenever this has
 pleased Him.
 Now this Virgin whom, behold, we speak of her
 story
 by means of her good will, she was pleasing
 and was chosen.
 He was descending to become man by the
 daughter of man;
 because she was pleasing, she was chosen that
 He might be from her.

Father Jacob of Serug (†833) was a bishop born in Curtem on the Euphrates, and composed more than seven hundred homilies.



ADVENT CUSTOMS (Cont'd.)

The little ones enjoy helping to make the wreath, which can be fashioned from several bunches of laurel leaves bound to a metal barrel hoop; the laurel, being significant of triumph, reminds us of Christ's victory over sin. One may use fragrant pine or whatever other greens are on hand. Some wreaths are kept fresh in plastic snow; to others a star is lighted for prayers. The advent wreath is especially proper to the home, where the children as well as the parents take their turn in lighting the candle.

The ceremony for use of the Advent wreath is so simple that it may be practiced in the home or the school. If in school, the pastor, the principal, and the class officers take the places of parents and children. It consists primarily of the collects for the Sundays of Advent.

On the first Sunday, after the family has gathered for the blessing of the wreath, the father begins:

~~(This first part is repeated each week)~~

Father: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

Father: O God, by Whose word all things are sanctified, pour forth Thy blessings upon this wreath, and grant that we who use it may prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ, and may receive from Thee abundant graces, through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen. *(Father sprinkles the wreath with holy water.)*

FIRST WEEK

Father: Stir up thy might, we beg Thee, O Lord, and come so that we may escape through Thy protection and be saved by Thy help from the dangers that threaten us because of our sins, Who livest and reignest forever and ever.

All: Amen. *(One candle is lighted by the youngest child and left burning during the meal.)*

(Continued next Sunday)