

GREETINGS FROM FR. SCOTT December 21, 2014 Fourth Sunday of Advent

Moms and dads are so excited about the birth of a child they can't wait to send out birth announcements with the baby's name, a picture, the baby's gender, how much it weighs, and the exact time it was born. It would be ridiculous to send out a birth announcement before the baby was born because we do not have all the details.

The Angel Gabriel came to Mary and told her many details about her baby before it was born: the baby's gender, name, and mission. Mary could have sent out a birth announcement before Jesus was born. She chose not to because she was afraid of what her friends would think. The Angel Gabriel told her not to be afraid because God would be with her. And God was with Mary and something very special happened to her.

In our lives, we all have special encounters with God. The Holy Spirit might be telling us we need to make a change. We may have a feeling or a voice telling us to become a priest, deacon, or religious brother or sister. Experiencing a tragic death in our family may bring us closer to God. If we are open to the Holy Spirit and listen to God, something special will happen to us, too.

When I felt my call to the priesthood, I was afraid to tell my family, my friends, and even admit it to myself. I told Sr. Kathleen and Fr. Moore, and that was it! It took me over a year to tell my family. Something special was happening to me and only a couple of people knew about it. I could definitely sympathize with Mary and Joseph. When something special happens to us, we may also be afraid. We may not want to tell the whole world. We don't want people to think we are weird or strange.

The night Jesus was born I suppose most people around Bethlehem thought it was business as usual. Nothing special seemed to be happening. There was probably a big crowd in town, possibly gossiping about the poor unlucky woman who had to have her baby in a stable.

At first, only Mary and Joseph knew what was special about their baby, and they believed what God was telling them. Then, Mary told her Cousin Elizabeth and Elizabeth believed. Slowly, others began to know about this special event, like the shepherds, the three Kings, and the innkeeper. Some people may have heard but did not believe. Mary deserves a lot of credit for believing what God told her. She could have said, "That's impossible. I just dreamed it." Next time something special happens to you, remember Mary. Remember her struggle. Remember her strong faith. Remember her patience. Remember her fear. Most of all, remember the joy and peace she experienced after she listened to God and said yes.

STEWARDSHIP

Dec. 14, 2014	\$7,104.95	Online \$1,245.00
Last Year	\$5,576.85	Online \$3,810.00
Retirement Fund	\$231.60	
St. Bernard—Raising Church	\$2,250.00	
Flower Memorials	\$1,112.00	

Daily Mass Readings

Monday Dec. 22

1 Sm 1:24-28 (Ps) 1 Sm 2:1, 4-7, 8a-d Lk 1:46-56

Tuesday Dec. 23

Mal 3:1-4, 23-24 Ps 25:4-5b, 8-10, 14 Lk 1:57-66

Wed.-Thurs. Dec. 24-25 (Christmas Eve, Midnight Mass, & Christmas Day)

Is 9:1-6 Ps 96:1-3, 11-13 Ti 2:11-14 Lk 2:1-14

Friday Dec. 26

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59 Ps 31:3cd-4, 6-8b, 16bc, 17 Mt 10:17-22

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday	Dec. 20
5:00pm	+ Michael & Margaret Lajcsak
Sunday	Dec. 21
9:00am	For the People of the Parish
11:30am	+ Vern Adkins
Monday	Dec. 22
9:00am	Blessings for Wells Family
Tuesday	Dec. 23
9:00am	Blessings for Myriam Wells
Wednesday	Dec. 24
9:00am	
Thursday	Dec. 25
9:00am	
Friday	Dec. 26
9:00am	Blessings for Maxcy Family



FAITH FORMATION

Faith Formation and Confirmation classes meet weekly. Faith Formation classes will not meet December 21-January 4. Classes resume January 11.

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation 2015 students should be meeting with their sponsors and completing their 6 *Conversations* booklet.

MIDDLE SCHOOL GOOGLE QUESTION

What saint, feast day on December 21, is depicted with a lamb?



COMING EVENTS

DECEMBER

- 21 Knights Breakfast
- 24 Christmas Eve Mass 4pm
Christmas Eve Mass 9pm
Midnight Mass (at Midnight)
- 25 Christmas Day Mass 10am
- 27 Youth Mass 5pm
- 29 Centering Prayer 6:30pm
- 31 Vigil Mass Mary, Holy Mother of God 5:30pm

JANUARY

- 1 Mass Mary, Holy Mother of God 10am
Rosary 7pm
- 2 Homeschool Activity Social Hall 10am-Noon

CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIAL ENVELOPES

This is the final weekend for Christmas flower donations.

RETROUVAILLE

Couples interested in strengthening a drifting marriage are invited to a weekend retreat February 13-15, 2015 in Anchorage. Call 907-863-8000 www.HelpOurMarriage.com

MASS INTENTIONS

Please check on the bulletin boards and on-line for our updated policy.

ADULT CATECHISM

We will not have an adult catechism session on Sunday, December 28th. The program will continue on January 25th at 10am.

CHRISTMAS OFFICE

The office will be closed December 24-26. The office will be closed at Noon on December 31—January 2.

OUR LADY OF THE VALLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Classical education at OLV: 11) Technologies provide us access to sources of knowledge otherwise unavailable. The liberating answer to children's immersion in technology is a more responsible use of technology. 12) Curriculum objectives stage by stage: Each discipline has its role to play in building a specific set of objectives at different stages: Lower Grammar Stage/ Kindergarten: The Cradle of Civilization Years/Egypt First grade: The Greek years. Second grade: The Roman years. Upper Grammar Stage/Third grade: The Medieval years. Fourth grade: The Modern years. Fifth grade: The American years. Logic Stage/Sixth grade: The Ancient years. Seventh grade: The Christendom years. Eighth grade: The New World years. More to come next week!

ST. BERNARD—TALKEETNA

St. Bernard Catholic Church in Talkeetna needs financial help to raise matching funds for the raising of their church, which was damaged in the recent floods. Please make out checks to St. Bernard Catholic Church with notation "Raising of Church/matching grant" or use On-line Giving (see our website).

SACRED HEART FINANCIAL REVIEW

The parish received a generous gift from Bishop Attie II that will help balance our current budget. However, our collections have been a bit lower than last year at this time, so please pray about your contribution. Below are several ideas to consider:

1. Donating 10% of monthly net income
2. Using On-line Giving (safe and reliable)
3. Adding an end of year tax donation

A Financial Summary will be available in the bulletin later in January 2015.

FOOD BANK

Rice, Sugar, Flour,
Tomato Sauce, Pasta,
Cereal, Oats,
Grocery Bags
Please write checks to

Mat-Su Food Bank
357-3769

BL.THEODORE RHOMZA BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Byzantine mission (an outreach of St Nicholas of Myra—Anchorage) meets Sundays at Sacred Heart at 4pm. The Byzantine Catholic Church is in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church but uses the Byzantine liturgical rite in the Eastern Slav-ic style. Contact Fr. Michael Sidun at 907-277-6731 or www.ak-byz-cath.org.

ACTS RETREAT WEEKEND

Registration forms and information for the 2015 Women's and Men's ACTS Retreats are available on the bulletin boards and the office. An ACTS Retreat is a weekend of spiritual renewal and revitalization.