



Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Merry Christmas! I pray that the joy of the Savior's birth is yours this Christmas as we celebrate the wonderful mystery of the Son of God becoming man. It's worth asking ourselves a few questions around this great mystery: Did it really happen? Why did it happen? And what does it mean for us?

To the first question, "Did it really happen?", we answer with deep faith, "Yes!" This is one of the things that made Christianity seem unbelievable to pagans in the first century: why would God himself stoop down to take on the lowliness of human flesh? If Christians were looking to make their faith a little more attractive to others they wouldn't have done it this way. But God's ways are different than our own and the witness of Scripture and the Church is that He really did take on the lowliness of our human nature. Even more amazing is that He would die on the Cross for us - this would become an even greater stumbling block to many, but more on that at Easter...

To the second question, "Why?" we can answer with the beautiful verse from the Gospel of John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life." So the answer is love. The Son of God humbled himself to share in human life because of love. (And not share in it as a rich king, or powerful ruler, but as one of the common, lowly people.) So love motivates him to come and be with us, and yet more: He humbled himself even to death, death on a cross.

Finally, what does this mean for us? It means we are loved. Loved beyond anything we could ever imagine or even desire. It means we have a value and a purpose far exceeding what we could ever dream of. It means that God is with us in the mess of life. It means He hasn't abandoned us, or stood waiting at a distance for us to finally get our act together. He came to us because He loves us and isn't afraid of the mess of our sin. Not afraid to take the burden and weight of our sins upon himself, dying so that we could live.

All of this is what we mean by the "Good News". Maybe you've never really heard it this way, or maybe you've heard it but don't believe that it applies to you. So let me tell you that this Good News is real. And that it applies to you and your life.

As I wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas let me close with the words of the angel to the shepherds: "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

Rev. Erik Arnold

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

January 1, 2012
Mary, Mother of God
Numbers 6:22-27
Psalm 67:2-3,5,6,8
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:16-21



MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

Saturday, December 24 (Christmas Eve)

8:15am All Souls
4:00pm Brogan Ruppert ✠
4:00pm Marguerite McGrone ✠
6:00pm Int. of the Kim Family
8:00pm Frank Hodgson ✠

Sunday, December 25 (Christmas Day)

12am Midnight Patricia Chairs ✠
9:00am Jay Seering ✠

Monday, December 26 (St. Stephen)

8:15am Ann Kanh Lam ✠

Tuesday, December 27 (St. John, apostle)

8:15am John Bach ✠

Wednesday, December 28 (Holy Innocents)

8:15am Peter Tung Nguyen ✠

Thursday, December 29 (St. Thomas Becket)

8:15am Int. of Kim Family

Friday, December 30 (Holy Family)

8:15am Agnes Thu Nguyen ✠

Saturday, Dec. 31 (St. Sylvester, New Year's Eve)

8:15am William Brooks ✠
4:30pm Mary and Anthony Matlosz ✠

Sunday, January 1 (Mary Mother of God)

12am Midnight Lupe Baysek ✠
7:30am For The People
9:00am Rita Mortensen ✠
11:00am Harry Detweiler ✠
4:30am Joe Meyer ✠

"What good is it that Christ was born 2,000 years ago if he is not born now in your heart? ...Lord, we do far too much celebrating your actual coming. I believe in God, but do I believe in God-in-me? I believe in God in heaven, but do I believe in God-on-earth? I believe in God out there, but do I believe in God-with us? Lord, be born in my heart. Come alive in me this Christmas! Amen."

—Meister Eckhart



*May the peace of Christ
rule in your hearts
and the fullness of his
message live within you.*

CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS RAFFLE WINNER

Congratulations **Odupe Oresgun!**

You are this year winner of the CDA Restaurant Raffle.

We are pleased a parishioner and member of the St. Vincent the Paul Society is the recipient of the restaurant certificates. Our raffle

was a success thanks to all of you who participated.

We will be able to help various charities locally and nationally with the money we raised.

God Bless you all! —**Marta Minadeo , CDA Regent**



BIBLE STUDY—FIRST CORINTHIANS

Join us Thursday evenings from 7-8:30pm, beginning January 12, 2012, for an exciting 11-week study of St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians. The conflicts of the early Christians in Corinth were in many ways similar to our struggles today as Christians. With divisions, immorality, persecution, and other trials of the faithful, the message of St. Paul to the Corinthians is a much-needed message for our own times.

Fr. Arnold will present a teaching each night, combined with questions and answers and small-group reflection. The study is written by Dr. Tim Gray, a well-known and highly-regarded Catholic scholar and author.

Study begins January 12 and ends March 22, 2012.

Registration cost: \$25/person. All are welcome! Please join us for this great study on the life of the early Church and what we can learn and apply from St. Paul’s words to the Corinthians!

You may register online at **www.olphparish.org**

If you have any questions please contact Mairzie Mulholland at mmulholland@archbalt.org or 410-747-0131.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We’re looking for volunteers to help with childcare at our monthly Festivals of Praise. If you are available to help out from 7-9pm on the 2nd Friday of any month, please contact Matt Malone at **mattc.malone@gmail.com**.

We’re looking for anyone from high school age to adults to help in this important ministry to families of young children looking to pray together.

*Please include these people and their families in your prayers
that they may experience Christ’s comfort and healing.*

Tom Amos
Pamela Arnett
John Austraw
Rob Baldwin
Connie Baran
Lucy Bodner
Diane Buckley
Kaelynn Collazo
MaryJo DeFillipo
Scott Demler
Dan Delean
David Delean
Margaret Delean
Patricia Donadio
Mike Doshim
Robert Dovalovsky
William Dovalovsky, Jr.

Janet Feldman
Jayne Fleischer
Richard Flynn
Carol Freese
Thomas French
Lewis Goode
Joe Holland
Mary Grace Howard
Chuck Hutzell
Michelle Janson
Ally Jarkiewicz
Emily Kerstetter
Joanne Kerstetter
Brianna King
Fred Lourenso
Josephine Lucas
Claire Lydard

Diane Lydic
Tricia McGinnis
Lucy McKenna
Joseph Murray
Ella Newmiller
Nathan Niessner
Mary O’Neill
Will Potter
Sara Ann Ring
Rosemarie Rippel
June Rosemary
Sally Ross
Ephel Sandford
Bill Schone
Sheila Schone
James Sharp
Mary Ann Sharp

Jack Simpson
Ardellia Smith
Julia Smith
Bill Snyder
Mary Stevens
Linda Uliana
Lauretta Vaccarino
Nicolas Vogt (*injured in Afghanistan*)
Ed Ward
Jon Web
Richard Weinroth
Robert Welsh, Jr.
Robert Welsh, Sr.
Clyde Wenzel
Sophia Wheeler
Caitlyn Zabko
Kyla Zeilinger

We need your help! We are trying to keep this prayer list updated.

If you or your loved one is on the mend, please notify the Parish Office at 410-747-4334.



ATTENTION PARENTS!

Do you have children who have never attended Religious Education and don't know where to begin? "Catch Up" classes, for children and youth, are being formed to begin in January. Children and youth, from third to seventh grade are welcome to attend. Please contact Judy Gruel at jgruel@archbalt.org or 410-747-0131 to discuss your child's needs.

ADULT CONFIRMATION CLASS TO BEGIN IN JANUARY!

Are you a practicing Catholic, but have never been confirmed? Call Judy Gruel at 410-747-0131 or email at jgruel@archbalt.org to sign up for our class. Meetings will take place on a flexible schedule. Confirmation for adults will take place at the Basilica in early March.

**PARENTS NEW TO THE AREA OR
NEW TO OLPH—WELCOME!**

Have your children missed Sacrament Preparation because you were relocating? Contact Judy Gruel, our Director of Religious Education, at jgruel@archbalt.org, to see how your children can prepare for the Sacraments and receive the goodness of God's grace.

SNOW TUBING!

Join OLPH Youth Ministry as we head off to Avalanche Express Snow Tubing!! All teens in Middle and High School are invited to join us for snow tubing Saturday, January 7th from 2:30-9:30pm. Cost is \$40 or \$44 per person (depending on the package you choose). Space is limited so be sure to turn in your payment and permission form ASAP. *Adult chaperones are needed as well!!* For more information contact Matt Malone at mattc.malone@gmail.com or 410-747-0131.

OLPH FAMILY DINNER NIGHT

Mark your calendars now for our next OLPH Parish Family Dinner Night (our Parish Christmas Dinner!) on **Friday, January 6th from 5 to 8pm.** *Hope to see you there!*



MILITARY FAMILIES

We have not forgotten your loved one serving overseas. We are ready, willing and able to pray for his or her safe return. If you need assistance in the home, let us know. We will see that he or she is properly welcomed back to the parish.

We look forward to saying "Welcome Home." Call John Vaccarino (410) 465-0971 or email ijohnvaccarino@aol.com for additional information

EVENTS OUTSIDE OF THE PARISH:

TRAIN GARDEN SHRINE OF ST. ANTHONY

Br. Gerry's Christmas train garden is back! Every Sunday of December and January, except Christmas and New Year's Day, Br. Gerry's trains will be running from 3:00 to 5:00pm in the Manor House. Br. Gerry Seipp, OFM Conv., one of the Franciscan Friars at the Shrine of St. Anthony, loves trains! He has been collecting trains and train accessories since he was a child growing up in East Baltimore. His Christmas train garden has been collected and added to over the past decade. Bring your family and friends to the Manor House and enjoy an old-fashioned train garden and the chance to talk trains with Br. Gerry! This event is free!

**MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND LITURGICAL ITEMS
SOUGHT FOR HAITI**

The Missions Office of the Archdiocese is looking for all types of musical instruments in good working condition for the music program at the new James M. Stine High school in St. Marc, Haiti. We are also looking for a monstrance and a thurible for the Diocese of Gonaives, Haiti. Anyone that wishes to donate any items should contact the Missions Office at 410-547-5498 or email missions@archbalt.org. Thank you for your generosity!

SARAH'S HOPE—VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Sarah's Hope, a women and children homeless shelter run by St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore, needs volunteers to teach courses in life skills and parenting. Sessions are two hours each week for three or four weeks, and can be held at flexible times. Curriculum and training is provided for volunteer teachers. Teachers should have experience with teaching, psychology, nursing, child care, or working with low income families, but other qualifications will also be considered. For more information, contact Danielle Rankin at 410-396-2204/2205 or danielle.rankin@vincentbaltimore.org.

MARCH FOR LIFE 2012

Please join your fellow parishioners on *Monday, January 23, 2012* for the 39th March for Life, as we travel by bus to Washington, D.C. and join with others to have our voices heard on behalf of the voiceless! Please contact Sue Smith (410-750-7577) to get on the list for a seat (first come, first served basis).

SAVE THE DATE:

Men's Cornerstone Retreat to be held from Friday evening March 2nd through Saturday March 3rd. A Cornerstone weekend is simply ordinary men sharing stories and experiences of trying to live the Gospel amidst the challenges of the modern world. The cost is \$75. If you are interested, please contact Roch Kallmyer at 443-285-9395 or roch@comcast.net.

Christmas

GETTING TO KNOW OUR CATHOLIC SAINTS: *St. Thomas Becket (December 29)*



*Courtesy of:
Google images*

St. Thomas Becket's dramatic life story has become familiar, especially through T.S. Eliot's play *Murder in the Cathedral*. By the age of 36, Becket had managed to work his way up to the second most important position in England. The young king, Henry II, valued his loyalty and friendship. Thomas served Henry loyally, while taking care not to go against his upright conscience. Henry grew increasingly bold in his efforts to gain power, especially over the Church. When the Archbishop of Canterbury died, the king managed to have his friend and chancellor chosen to replace him.

Reluctantly, Thomas submitted, warning Henry that conflicts would surely arise. Upon ordination, Thomas, who had joined in entertainment with the King began to live increasingly austerely. Refusing to violate justice at the king's request, Thomas tried to resign; the Pope refused him. The Archbishop remained secluded in a French monastery for over a year, but pressure from the King forced him to return. Finally, on December 29th, four knights thought that they would please the King by removing the "turbulent priest". An eye-witness account describes the saint's valor, as he was struck down by sword blows in the cathedral. Outrage at the martyrdom was instant and universal. The assailants fled, ultimately being sent to serve in the Holy Land as penance; the King allowed himself to be scourged on the saint's tomb in reparation for his fault.

PARISH OFFICE AND OLPH SCHOOL SCHEDULE

The parish office will be closed tomorrow, Monday, December 26th, in observance of Christmas.

The office will reopen on Tuesday, December 27th. The parish office will also be closed on Monday, January 2nd and will reopen on Tuesday, January 3rd at 9am.

OLPH School will be closed for Christmas Break from December 22 through January 1st.

School will resume on Monday, January 2nd.