

The Finish Line (Advent/Christmas 2018)

A Note from our Pastor, Father Jim Benz

A great seasonal thought for us Catholics to consider from our Mormon brothers and sisters in Salt Lake City:

It was a busy night at the inn, two thousand years ago in Bethlehem—so busy, in fact, that when Mary and Joseph arrived, there was no room for them. And so the couple was forced to seek refuge in a lowly stable. There the baby Jesus was born, attended by humble animals and simple shepherds. Surely the King of Kings should have had more comfortable surroundings. But He didn't, and perhaps there is a lesson in that for all of us. Our lives today can often feel as busy as the crowded inn at Bethlehem, with many priorities competing for space. Ironically, this seems to be particularly true at Christmastime. It's helpful to remember that the first Christmas was a silent night, a holy night, away from the busyness of the inn.

Where can we find such a peaceful, hallowed place today? For some it may be a home where family and friends are gathered; for others, the solitude of nature or the serenity of a rising or sinking sun. Others may find it in a chapel, echoing with sacred music. Or it may not be a place at all but rather a sacred moment of prayerful soul-searching. In truth, the spirit of Christmas comes not from our physical surroundings but from within. Religious leader Thomas S. Monson has said: "The spirit of Christmas is the spirit of love and of generosity and of goodness. It illuminates the picture window of the soul, and we look out upon the world's busy life and become more interested in people than in things."

When the spirit of Christmas shines on our picture window, what do we see? Is our attention drawn by the flashy and superficial, or do we notice the simple and sacred? Yes, life can feel crowded, but whenever we make room for the King of Kings, somehow our hearts seem to expand, and we find ourselves welcoming into our lives more and more of those in need around us. This is, in part, the miracle of Christmas.

(Music and the Spoken Word: "The Picture Window of the Soul"--Sunday, December 18, 2016)

May our celebration of Christmas illuminate the picture windows of our souls throughout this new year!

OUR HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

- Our **celebration of Christmas** is as follows:

Christmas Vigil Mass at 5:00 PM on Christmas Eve, with Christmas music sung at 4:30 PM

Christmas Late Night Mass at 10:30 PM with Christmas music sung by our choir at 10:00 PM,

Christmas Day at 7:30 AM and 9:30 AM--Sorry, no 11:30 AM Mass on Christmas Day.

- Our **Communal Penance Service** will be on Tuesday, **December 4**, at 7:00 PM. **Please come!**
- In addition to this Penance Service and to our normally scheduled time for this sacrament on **Mondays from 4:30 to 5:30 PM and Saturdays from 4:00 to 4:45 PM**, there will also be confessions on Monday, **December 17**, from 4:00 to 5:30 PM and from 7:00 PM until all are finished and Saturday, **December 22**, from 10:00 until 11:00 AM.
- Our celebration of **New Year's Day** (the **Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God**) is as follows: on Monday, December 31st, Mass at 6:00 PM and on Tuesday, **January 1st**, at 7:30 and 9:30 AM.

OF SPECIAL NOTE THIS WINTER—Please mark your calendars:

1) A Five Day Parish Mission with Fr. Simeon Gallagher, OFM. Cap. February 9-14, 7:00-8:30 PM.

Please mark your calendars for this event. Learn more about Fr. Simeon by doing a search of his name. He led the Archdiocesan priests' retreat last year and is a great speaker. You will not be disappointed!

2) "That Man is You!" continues until December 8 resumes January 5 through March 30. **TMIY** is for every man in the parish and is aimed to help men address today's issues in family life through the light of faith. You are welcome to join us each Saturday morning from 6:30 to 7:45 AM in the Parish Hall. Breakfast is included. For more, contact Pat Lepski, 314-406-8755 or patrick_lepski@hotmail.com.

3) Small Church Communities: St. Cletus will again conduct Small Church sessions **during the Lenten season** beginning March 4 through April 13. Prior leaders will be contacted and signups will be conducted the weekends of February 16/17 and 23/24. Additional information will be published in the bulletins. If you would like to join a group, start a new group or have any questions, please contact Sam Bryne at 636-925-2294 or at sjohnbryne@aol.com.

4) Again, Fr. Mark Whitman is leading a weekly Bible study on the upcoming Sunday's readings on Wednesdays in the Duchesne Room from 10:00-11:30 AM. All are welcome!

St. Cletus' 3rd annual **Advent by Candlelight** will be Sunday, December 9, 5:30-7:30pm, in our gym. This evening will help us as women of grace to be more centered in Christ spiritually and unlock our treasure as we approach Advent and Christmas. \$5 per person. RSVP: Darla Schoolfield, 636-352-5563

The **Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study** will begin its second semester on the study of Revelation on Monday, January 28, 2019. Please join us as we discover the glory that awaits us in this hope filled book of the New Testament. For more information, call Jan Dubray at 636-795-2615.

Stephan Ministry: Stephen Ministers care! If you are going through a difficult time in your life, and would like the confidential companionship of someone who will listen, support and encourage, please call us at 636-255-1739.

IT'S TRIVIA TIME! Mark your calendars now for **January 26** when St. Cletus will host our 24th **Annual Trivia Night**. Make your plans to fill a table of 8. **The price remains the same at \$160**, and you can register via email at saintcletustrivia@gmail.com. **Please note:** If you pay in full in advance and provide a phone number or email address, we will give you your table number prior to trivia night. **No more waiting in line! A good time will be had by all.** If you would like to volunteer to help our trivia night run smoothly, please use the email to let us know!

The **Men's Club** is open to all men of the parish over 21; our meetings are the **2nd Wednesday each month**, with social hour starting at **6:30 PM**, dinner and meeting at **7:00 PM**.

- **Men's Club Christmas Party, December 12**, at the K of C Hall on Westbury Drive. Social hour at **6:30 PM** with dinner and meeting to follow. The cost: \$15 which includes the \$3 annual dues.
- **CYC Basketball** starts in **January**. St Cletus will host **basketball tournaments**. For more info or if you'd like to help, contact Brad Bryan at 314-324-4863

Suppers 8: A new round of Suppers 8 has just started and is in progress. Suppers 8 is a great way to meet and share meals with fellow parishioners hosted in each other's homes. If you were interested in joining the Spring/Summer round, or have questions, contact Steve or Sue Schutz at 314-973-8707.

St. Cletus LifeTeen Youth Ministry: We are entering the winter time, and it's getting cold, but the youth ministry activities are just heating up. The winter/spring semester is a very busy time with the Pro-Life March in Washington D.C. and the annual Luke 18 Retreat.

- **Life Teen Mass** at 11:30am every Sunday with **Life nights** every Sunday from 7:00 to 9:00 PM.
 - Tuesday night pray and play is off for the winter until April. We will still gather on Tuesday nights but not in the gym. Look for details to come.
 - **Pro-Life March:** January 16-20, 2019. Also **Luke 18:** March 23-25
- Any questions/suggestions, contact Bob Hamer at **314-623-5258** or bhamer@saintcletus.org.

Saint Cletus Schools (Day-School and PSR): Many wonderful events have been celebrated over the last few months, and many more are to follow:

- **Our parish's eighth graders** (Day School and PSR) began preparation in September to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. These teens will participate in group service projects, special activities, and retreat along with their Confirmation studies. They will be confirmed on April 3 by Archbishop Carlson.
- Our **second graders will celebrate their First Reconciliation** on November 27. May God Bless you all! Now we prepare for the Sacrament of Holy Communion to be received May 4.
- It's hard to believe that **registration for St. Cletus Preschool and Day School the 2018-2019** school year will begin in February. **Registration for our 2018-2019 Parish School of Religion** will also begin in February. Parents whose children attend public school must have them participate in a formal program of *continuous* religious education in those years before sacrament preparation can begin.
- The **Preschool and Day School will hold Open Houses** on January 27 & February 10 from 10:00 AM –1:30 PM and Wednesday evening January 30 from 6:30–8:00 PM. We look forward to welcoming you.
- **For information about our Preschool and Day School, please contact Rosann Doherty (636-946-7756). For information regarding PSR, please contact Laura Henderson (636-255-1717).**

Children's Liturgy of the Word: Sessions are held during **9:30 Mass**. All children **K-3rd graders** are invited. For info or if you'd like to help, contact Barb Sullivan at 636-723-7955 or sullivan5275@sbcglobal.net.

St. Cletus Sunday Pre-School would like to welcome **children ages 3 to 5** to join us as we learn about the love of our God through Bible stories, songs, crafts and games. We meet in the school building from September through May **during the 9:30 AM Mass**. Would you get more out of Mass if your little one was with us? Contact **Erin McMillian at 615-424-3405** for information.

The Quilters at St. Cletus meet every Wednesday from 8:30-2:00pm in the parish hall. Finished quilts are given to the St Vincent De Paul Society for the Quilt Social in November. We welcome experienced quilters and wannabees. Contact Pat Strittmatter at 630-272-8351 or Pat Jett at 314-704-0950 if you are interested in joining us.

Legion of Mary: This is a spiritually oriented organization with a **weekly prayer meeting** (Thursdays at 6:30), sponsorship of events **promoting Marian devotion**, and **works of evangelization** within the parish. Please contact Jeff Buchholz (636-486-6920) for more information.

St. Cletus Respect Life Apostolate meets on the **third Wednesday** each month at 6:30 pm

- **Annual Memorial Mass and Prayer Vigil**, January 26, 10:00 Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis. Please join Archbishop Carlson to pray for an end to abortion, healing and forgiveness for those involved in abortion and increased respect for all human life and for a Rosary Procession to Planned Parenthood then returning to the Cathedral for Benediction. Call RLA for more information, 314-792-7555
- **Archbishop Robert J. Carlson Fund** assists families financially with the costs associated with adoption. For more information, call the Office of Natural Family Planning at 314-997-7576
- **Project Rachel and Project Joseph** Do you live with the pain of an abortion? Do you still feel anger, guilt, or sadness even though the abortion was years ago? You may think your actions could never be understood and certainly not able to be forgiven. Healing and forgiveness are possible through Project Rachel (for women), and Project Joseph (for men). Trained counselors can help you experience Christ's peace. Call 314-792-7565 or email stlprojectrachel@archstl.org or stlprojectjoseph@archstl.org
- **"The First Gift"** The donation of your child's umbilical cord blood offers new hope to those in need of a stem cell transplant and is collected so there is no risk to either mother or baby. If interested in being a cord blood donor, contact the St. Louis Cord Blood Bank at **314-268-2787** or www.slcb.org

PTO News: On **December 8**, we will host **Breakfast with Santa** in our gym. This is a fun day for children, their parents, and our parish family. **Raffle tickets for the gift baskets** will be sold after Masses with the drawings held at the Breakfast. You do not need to be present to win. We encourage all parishioners to use the Support The Program (**STP**) certificates which are sold after all Masses. In December, STP orders may be dropped off before Mass. Then filled orders can be picked up at after Mass at the STP table. STPs also now have an online purchasing option, email ptostp@saintcletus.org for more info. If you have not yet participated in this program, please consider it. Just by simply getting STP gift cards for your monthly groceries (or maybe as Christmas gifts?) will help our school tremendously

Peace & Justice Ministry meets monthly on the **3rd Monday at 6:30 PM**. All are welcome!

- **Bridge Bread:** A program to provide opportunities for the disadvantaged. Delicious bread and rolls made by Bridge Bread bakers will be available on **January 19-20** and **February 16-17**. For more info, contact **Willie & Shirley Mergenmeier** at 785-844-3197
- **El Salvador Mission:** Cletus students will be creating Christmas Cards for El Salvador children for the **11th mission trip** scheduled **January 5-12, 2019**. For more info, call **Ann Roussel** at 314-378-6413
- **Sharing our Table Of Plenty (STOP)** supplying Joachim & Ann Care Services **Street Outreach for homeless** during February, 2019. For more info, contact **Bill Weisrock** 918-527-8738
- **Season of Creation** In support of Pope Francis' encyclical *Care of Creation* St. Cletus will be **replacing styrofoam in 2019** with more environmentally friendly items. For ideas on recycling, reducing and composting contact **Pam Brown** at 636-734-2321

We need GREETERS for 5:00pm and 11:30 Masses: Making parishioners and guests feel welcomed at weekly Mass is important. To help, please contact Mike/Julie Boschert at boschfam@sbcglobal.net or 636-795-6076. Simply be fifteen minutes early to Mass and smile while greeting folks as they arrive. It is more fulfilling for the greeters and puts a lot of smiles on people's faces. Try it – you'll like it!!

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Reminders

- Our **Job Search Ministry**: Contact Mike Sepe at m.sepe@sbcglobal.net for assistance with resume reviews, job search planning and counseling. He is happy to meet on an as-needed basis.
- Our **Nursing Home Ministry** supports Mass/Communion service at Frontier Nursing Home every Thursday at 9:45. Service begins at 10:15. For more info call Diane Judge (314-807-6236).
- Our **Cancer Support Group** welcomes spouses, caregivers, those with cancer and in remission. For info, call Tony Petti (636-443-2380). Our next meeting will be Wednesday, January 9.
- **Singles Again**: This regional ministry meets here at St. Cletus to help the separated, divorced, and widowed to heal and to move on in a healthy way. For more info, call Lee Schellert at 636-946-7782.
- **Bereavement Ministry**: Support and prayers for those experiencing the death of a loved one. If you have a need to share with someone or need more information, call Martha Baronovic (636-947-3431).
- Our parish offers **Eucharistic Adoration** in our Adoration Chapel from Mondays 7:30 AM through Saturdays 7:30 AM. For more info, call Jennifer Iffrig (636-940-9858) or Jan DuBray (636-947-4654).
- Our **Room at the Inn** volunteers, in cooperation with an area-wide group, provide meals and shelter for up to 10 persons one night each month. Contact Mary Howle (636-734-2119) or mary.howle@att.net.
- Our **St. Vincent De Paul Society** meets every third Tuesday at 7:00 PM. The members help the poor and needy within our parish boundaries. All are welcome.
- Our **Senior Cletes** senior citizens group meets every third Tuesday at noon in the Parish Hall. Call Betty McMichael (636-946-5566) for more information.
- Our **Funeral Lunch Ministry**'s mission is to comfort & support grieving parishioners and their families. If interested, call Janet Haislip (636-724-3225).
- **Prayer Groups**: **Centering Prayer** (Tuesdays, 9:00-10:30 AM), **Our Lady's** (2nd and 4th Mondays, 9:15-11:30 AM), and **Men's Bible Study** (Mondays, 5:30-6:30 PM).
- **Deacon Ken Potzman**, board certified in general and mental healthcare, is happy to meet with anyone struggling with health issues, grief/loss, or low self-esteem free of charge. Call him at 314-251-6470.