

Holy Family
Cathedral News

December 2008

Tulsa, Oklahoma

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Photo: Cathy Nelson

Dear Parishioners of Holy Family Cathedral:

Advent is here and we are in the midst of preparing for Christmas; the celebration of God’s great desire to prove His love for us. In these times of financial and national peril it is reassuring to know that there is “someone out there” who indeed cares for us, someone who is willing not only to live for us but ultimately to die for us as well. One of the many comments from our RCIA candidates and catechumens is just that. Through this program they have come to realize that they are not alone and that their existence is not an accident. They are cared for and loved by God. So during this Advent Season my most sincere hope is that we all come to realize this same thing. God does truly care for us. When we pray during this Season, “Come Lord Jesus”, let us pray that He comes ever more powerfully in our hearts and minds.

Our parish drive to help pay for our house of worship is moving along very well when we consider all of the present circumstances. We will have by the time you read this over 230 pledges to our goal. We have close to \$200,000 dollars collected and \$366,496.20 in pledges. Our goal to save the Tri-Spired Gem is \$500,000. Maybe by the end of the Christmas season we will have topped our spire and reached our goal.

May you have a graced and blessed Advent and a truly spiritual and profound Christmas Season.

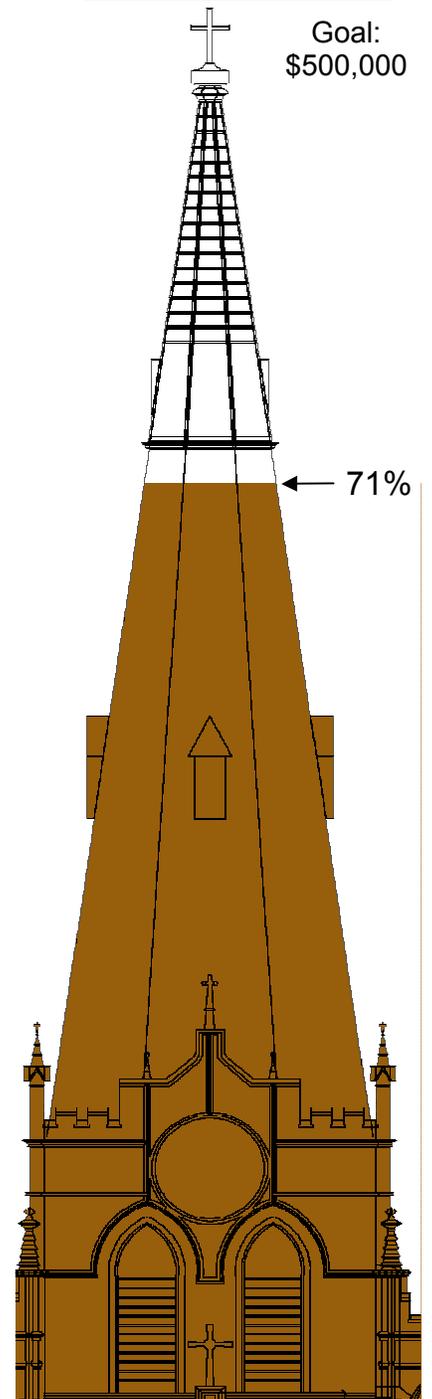
Sincerely in the Holy Family,

Msgr. Gregory A. Gier

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Rector

Identification Statement

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Dear Parishioners and Friends of HFCS:

It is hard to believe that Thanksgiving is almost here. As I prepared to write this letter I reflected on how quickly the school year has gone. However, when I looked back at all that has happened in the last month I realized that time is flying because there is never a dull moment at Holy Family Cathedral School. Having an active schedule is something we enjoy here at our school. I am so proud that most of our activities are geared towards helping and recognizing others. Whether it is Jude House collecting canned food for Catholic Charities or Seton House collecting coats for the needy, Holy Family is always looking for ways to help others.



THE KINDERGARTEN CLASS ENJOYS A THANKSGIVING FEAST.

Another part of our busy schedule included school families taking part in the 40 Days for Life Campaign, as well as the Walk for Life/Run for Adoption event. Of course, we always enjoy an entertaining evening and thus had great success in our annual Trivia Night. Our students are transitioning from the end of volleyball and football to the start of basketball. All of our many activities make for a very busy schedule for our families. However, as we prepare for the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday we hopefully take a moment to slow down and thank God for all that he provides.

On behalf of the school, I can say that we are so thankful for our wonderful school families and parishioners who make our school such a success. At Holy Family we reflect on the gifts God has given us daily and we recognize the great gift we receive in our community. We hope that

Sincerely,

Jay Luetkemeyer
The Holy Family Cathedral School



CHANGES IN THE 10 A.M. MASS FOR ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

From Apostolic times, Catholic worship has had to balance two seemingly irreconcilable facets of our religious experience, what we might call the "already" and the "not yet."

Christ has already conquered sin and death, but that victory has not yet been perfectly achieved in our own life. Our Lord has already established the Kingdom of the Father on earth; yet we pray each day, "Thy Kingdom come." This comes into fuller focus when we worship. Christ has already reconciled the whole world by dying and rising so that we can now worship the Father in spirit and in truth. However, our worship of the Father is incomplete unless we love our neighbor and serve the poor. This is what Christ commands and what we will be judged on. In Christ, our worship and our obedience is already perfectly established - yet we are still moving toward that perfect love. Until then, we must worship in and through Christ's obedience, trusting that we are united to Him in his self-offering to the Father.

All in all, this era of mankind's history is a peculiar in-between time, poised as it is between the Resurrection and the second coming. The dawn of redemption has already broken, but the sun - Christ Himself - has not yet risen in the sky. Thus our

whole religious experience, especially the liturgy, is characterized as "already," but "not yet."

When we say that this is an "in-between time," we infer that there is a past and a future connected to our present, and this is particularly evident in our worship of the Father since we are engaged in all three levels - the past, the present and the future - simultaneously at Mass.

When we go to Mass on Sunday, it is the present moment - the strictly liturgical level - which is most familiar to us. We hear the words and see the ritual actions of the Mass, and we offer our whole selves - in that present moment - to the Father. But we can make this offering only because the present liturgical action makes effectively present the historical "once-and-for-all" sacrifice of Jesus. It is not a new sacrifice or another sacrifice which we offer to the Father at Mass, but the perfect sacrifice of Christ on Calvary, and we can do this on earth because in Heaven, Our Lord Himself is constantly offering to the Father the sacrifice of his perfect love and obedience on the cross.

Because the historical sacrifice of Christ on the cross is offered eternally in heaven, the Mass is capable of making that one sacrifice present in the here-and-now moment.



But both the past (Calvary) and the present (the Mass) anticipate and reveal the third level, the future parousia, when Christ will return to fulfill his promise. The Mass we celebrate today allows us to truly participate in both the historic events of the original Triduum (the first Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter) and in their future fulfillment at the end of time. Thus we offer the Mass in an in-between time as our worship is characterized by being already perfect, but not yet complete.

This is also why in Christian worship we step out of our ordinary sense of time and leave our ordinary world to enter into sacred time and pray in a sacred space. We participate in the heavenly liturgy, but our participation is mediated through earthly signs as revealed to us by our Redeemer. This requires that we constantly turn to Christ.

In the Mass, we turn to Christ by orienting ourselves to him both spiritually and physically. Spiritually we turn toward Christ by constantly waiting for Him to return. This is why, for example, when the Gospel is proclaimed each Sunday, we stand in readiness to hear Him. We keep a constant vigil, awaiting his return. Physically we turn to Christ by orienting ourselves "toward the east," the direction from which Christ will return. By praying in an eastward direction, we make evident our spiritual orientation of waiting for his return. We keep vigil for Him in a spiritual way by turning physically to face Christ Who will return.

Pope Benedict XVI has emphasized that until just recently the Church has maintained an unbroken tradition of having the celebrant at Mass and the people offering the Sacrifice with him, all face in the same direction, either to the natural east or to a liturgical east, which was centered in the crucifix over the altar. This worship is called "ad orientam," which simply means "toward the east." Even in those churches where the architecture of the building oriented the people to the west, when they came to the Eucharistic prayer, the congregation would turn around and pray toward the east, even if this meant that the celebrant and the altar were behind them!

Unfortunately, this tradition of facing the same direction was broken in the late 1960s when it became popular for priests to celebrate Mass facing the people. As ancient as the practice had been, apparently it was neither understood nor appreciated.

Overnight, the ancient practice of the Church was dismissed as absurd (as if the priest had been celebrating Mass to the wall) or irrelevant (as if he had turned his back to people in a gesture of disrespect).

In the past 40 years since the priest and people first turned to face one another over the altar, the negative effects of the practice have gradually become clearer. First of all, it puts an undue emphasis on the personality of the priest, since the celebrant is unavoidably the point of reference for the celebration. We look at him, listen to him and understand our participation at Mass as being involved in what he is doing. With such a dynamic it is natural for the congregation to expect the celebrant to be creative and spontaneous, even though creativity and spontaneity are inimical to the proper celebration of a received Catholic liturgy.

Secondly, when the priest is turned to the congregation, he and they form a self-enclosed circle. The parish no longer looks out in the same direction as the priest, so that everyone faces the future. Instead the celebrant and the people are closed in upon themselves. This is why Catholics today tend to understand their baptismal calling only in terms of ministering to one another and not in terms of evangelizing society.

But now there is a significant (and growing) enthusiasm in the Church to restore the venerable custom. Pope Benedict himself has urged us to draw upon the ancient liturgical practice of the Church



to foster a deeper and more authentic Catholic worship.

This is why Bishop Slattery will celebrate the 10 a.m. Mass ad orientam (that is, facing the same direction as the people) during Advent and Christmastime. The Mass will still be in English, and you will still be able to follow along in all the prayers of the Mass. The other weekend Masses at the Cathedral will not be affected by this limited restoration of this ancient custom.

"I hope that this common posture of the Church at prayer will help you to experience the transcendent truth of the Mass in a new and timeless way," said Bishop Slattery, who explained that this posture is particularly apt for Advent when the Church celebrates Christ's triple coming: his first in Bethlehem, his present coming at Mass and his future coming at the end of time. "I pray that this restored practice will help us understand that at Mass we participate in the authentic worship which Christ offers to His Father by being 'obedient unto death.' " (Philippians 2:8)



BY JANIE THOMAS



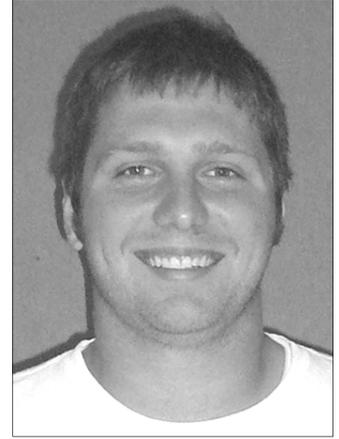
JUSTIN KILLION

The RCIA classes are now past the inquiry stage and have progressed into commitment. These people have been learning what the Catholic Church teaches, how it is structured and what being Catholic means. They have found this teaching to not only make sense, but to fire up their sense of “truth”. Their understanding of the life-changing expectations has grown and they have answered the call to continued study. We have a few true catechumens who have never been baptized and have little Christian background. Most of our class consists of those from Protestant traditions who looked behind the doors and found the Catholic foundations of Christianity. This combination of Apostolic traditions and firm biblical teaching that has endured from the beginning answers their questions.

The time leading up to the Rite of Acceptance on November 23rd was full of reflection as we worked at finding sponsors for each inquirer. Some wonderful

people in our parish agreed to be sponsors and are taking the time to get to know the candidates and catechumens, helping them understand the Catholic life. This includes everything from learning to follow the Mass to prayer life, religious education of children, meeting other parishioners and finding out about parish organizations and activities. It’s kind of like having a friend with inside knowledge, and it is important for these new members to get to know folks outside of our little RCIA team.

We have begun reserving several rows each Sunday at the 10:00 Mass for these catechumens and candidates. This makes them visible to the congregation, who are called to pray for their success. We will continue this at the 10 am Mass until they enter the Church at Easter. From this vantage point they will see the reverence we have for the Eucharist, and learn our customs for participating in the Mass.



TYLER SCARBROUGH



MALEISA KILLION



MIKE TERRAL



RICHARD KING



SARAH OWENS



NICOLE PFEIFER



STEFFANI YOUNG



Notes from the Knightstand

BY MARTIN REIDY

*I ask myself
What can it be
This manger Child
Can do for me?*

*So forlorn
And wanting fed
Wrapped in tatters
On a straw built bed.*

*I look about
To those around
Ne'er-do-wells
Are only found.*

*A wearied father
Beaten down
Exhausted mother
In a soiled gown.*

*A mule, an ass
A sheep or two*

*A shepherd's dog
In the milieu!*

*I was told
I'd find a king—
This poor, pathetic
Little Thing?*

*He has no legions,
Flags or heralds—
And He is destined
To save the world?*

*I close my cloak
To the chill of night
As I ponder
This perplexing sight*

*Am I the fool—
Or privileged one
To gaze upon
What God has done?*

Soon we come to Christmas Day bringing to a close the joyous and hopeful season of Advent - the awaited coming of Christ fulfilled at the Christ Mass. It is a time of gathering together friends, families, and things undone. Gathering together again will be the Knights of the Council at Eddy's on Monday, Dec. 15 to celebrate the Christmas season. And speaking of things undone the Council extends an accolade to B.D. Tidmore for his efforts in organizing the 24 hour vigil at the abortion center in October and to

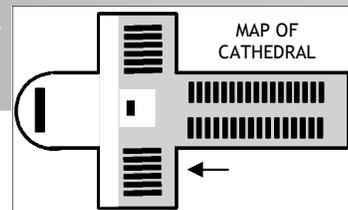
all who participated. To this end, a Mass was offered in your honor Nov. 25. A tip of the chapeau also goes to all who participated in the Turkey Drive. A "Thank You, kindly" Mass was said on your behalf Dec. 7. We hope that one and all will stop by for a pancake breakfast, still \$4, on the 21st.

So this brings to an end the ever exciting year of 2008. The Council extends to everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Pax.

Saints in the Windows: *Michael the Archangel*

The pair of windows depicting Michael and Satan are in the clerestory above the south transept.



One of the windows that gets the most attention is the "dragon window." Many visitors wonder why a church would feature a dragon in a stained glass window. It is the one depicting Satan's defeat by Saint Michael the Archangel.

This is the fourth pair of windows in the church. The other pairs show Jesus' parents, His grandparents, and Gabriel and Mary at the Annunciation.

In these windows we see Satan, depicted as a dragon, lying before Michael in a posture of defeat. Saint Michael is wearing armor and carries a flaming sword. The dragon's tail curls into Michael's window. The archangel stands on the tail symbolizing the triumph of Heaven over Hell.

Saint Michael is the patron saint of firefighters, police, emergency medical technicians, and soldiers. Many Catholics pray the prayer to Saint Michael, reprinted below:

*Saint Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle; be our
protection against the
wickedness and snares of the
devil. May God rebuke him,
we humbly pray: and do
thou, O Prince of the
heavenly host, by the power
of God, cast into hell Satan
and all evil spirits who
wander through the world
seeking the ruin of souls.
Amen.*

