

Inside this issue:

Notes on Sunday
Gospel readings 1

Faith Foundations 1

Book and Film
Recommendations 2

Adult Faith For-
mation Opportu-
nities 2

The Holy Father's September Prayer Intentions

General Intention:

That young people may learn to use modern means of social communication for their personal growth and to better prepare themselves to serve society.

Mission Intention:

That every believer in Christ may be conscious that unity among all Christians is a condition for more effective proclamation of the Gospel.

Contact:

Brendan Murphy
Director of Family Life, Mar-
riage Preparation, and Adult
Faith Formation
(570) 207-2213, ext. 1133
Brendan-Murphy@dioceseof
scranton.org



Disciple

A monthly resource for adult Catholics of
the Diocese of Scranton

Volume 3, Issue 1

January 2010

Breaking Open the Word—Notes on the Sunday Gospels

Jan. 3 (Mt. 2:1-12)

In today's Gospel we hear about the magi. Who were these men? One biblical scholar says they were "Probably astrologers from Persia—this would explain their interest in an extraordinary 'star' (v. 2). In Matthew, the Magi are the first Gentiles to recognize the kingship of Jesus."

Jan. 10 (Lk. 3:15-16, 21-22)

Two Old Testament prophecies are echoed in today's account of Jesus' baptism: 1. Isaiah 11:2 "describes the 'Spirit of the Lord' resting upon the Davidic Messiah, enabling him to judge the poor with 'righteousness' and victoriously 'slay the wicked' (Is. 11:4). This fits Luke's portrait of Jesus as a minister to the poor and a Davidic king. 2. Isaiah 42:1 similarly portrays the 'Spirit' descending

upon the Servant of the Lord, who will minister to 'the nations' (Is. 42:6) and give sight to the 'blind' (Is. 42:7). Luke also depicts Jesus as the Servant who brings God's saving light to all nations."

Jan. 17 (Jn. 2:1-11)

In today's Gospel Mary tells the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." These are the final words of Mary in the New Testament and "ring out as her spiritual testament for all disciples of Jesus. The command to follow Jesus echoes the command to follow Joseph in Gn. 41:55. As the patriarch went on to provide bread in abundance during a time of famine, so Jesus supplies wine in abundance at a time of need."

Jan. 24 (Lk. 1:1-4, 4:14-21)

The passage Jesus reads in the synagogue is from Isaiah 61:1-2 and 58:6. "Since many during New Testament times expected the Messiah to liberate Israel from the political domination of the Romans, the townspeople mistakenly thought these passages promised their national independence."

Jan. 31 (Lk. 4:21-30)

In today's Gospel "Jesus recalls the mission of Elijah and Elisha to explain His own. These prophets lived during dark times, when God looked unfavorably upon the northern kingdom of Israel and sent blessings upon the Gentiles instead. Jesus declares that the 'acceptable year of the Lord' (v. 19) will likewise be a time of blessing, even outside of Israel."

Faith Foundations—Basics of Catholic Christian Belief

The Church

(From the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*)

The following is a brief overview of Catholic belief about the Church.

What does the word 'Church' mean?

The word 'Church' refers to the people whom God calls and gathers together from every part of the earth. They form the assembly of those who through faith and Baptism have become children of God, members of Christ, and temples of the Holy

Spirit.

What is the origin and the fulfillment of the Church?

The Church finds her origin and fulfillment in the eternal plan of God. She was prepared for in the Old Covenant with the election of Israel, the sign of the future gathering of all the nations. Founded by the words and actions of Jesus Christ, fulfilled by his redeeming death and Resurrection, the Church has been manifested as the mystery of salvation by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. She will be perfected in the glory of

heaven as the assembly of all the redeemed of the earth.

What is the mission of the Church?

The mission of the Church is to proclaim and establish the Kingdom of God begun by Jesus Christ among all peoples. The Church constitutes on earth the seed and beginning of this salvific Kingdom.

In what way is the Church a mystery?

The Church is a mystery in as much as in her visible reality there is present and active a divine spiritual reality which can
(continued on next page)

Faith Foundations...Continued

only be seen with the eyes of faith.

What does it mean to say that the Church is the universal sacrament of salvation?

This means that she is the sign and instrument both of the reconciliation and communion of all of humanity with God and of the unity of the entire human race.

Why is the Church the 'people of God'?

The Church is the 'people of God' because it pleased God to

sanctify and save men not in isolation but by making them into one people gathered together by the unity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In what way is the Church the body of Christ?

The risen Christ unites his faithful people to himself in an intimate way by means of the Holy Spirit. In this way, those who believe in Christ, in as much as they are close to him especially in the Eucharist, are united among themselves in

charity. They form one body, the Church, whose unity is experienced in the diversity of its members and its functions.

Why is the Church called the temple of the Holy Spirit?

She is so called because the Holy Spirit resides in the body which is the Church, in her Head and in her members. He also builds up the Church in charity by the Word of God, the sacraments, the virtues, and charisms.



"Founded by the words and actions of Jesus Christ...the Church has been manifested as the mystery of salvation...."

Faith and Media—Reading and Viewing Recommendations

Book of the Month:

Church and Society by Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J.

Cardinal Dulles is the only American non-bishop theologian to be named a Cardinal by the Church and this book—a collection of the McGinley lectures he delivered twice a year at Fordham University—is a great introduction to his work. A vast number of topics are addressed in his typical lucid style. Those of you seeking a resource for increasing your theological knowledge, that is both approachable and challeng-

ing, could do much worse than adding this book to your collection. Each selection is roughly 10-13 pages long and complete in itself, which makes it easy to read on a daily basis or leave, and then come back to, if need be.

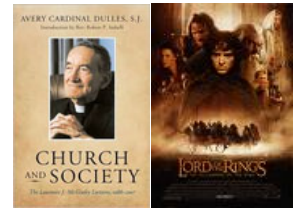
[This book is available at most physical and online new and used book retailers.]

Film of the Month:

The Lord of the Rings trilogy

The film adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's classic, *The Lord of the*

Rings is an epic story that is saturated with Catholic themes (Tolkien was influential in C.S. Lewis' conversion to Christianity). Eschewing straight up allegory, there are several Christ figures present in this excellent series of films (I won't tell you which ones, since that would take away the fun). These films are intense, but I strongly recommend that you check out the extended versions, even though you may have to break up your viewing over several days. *[Available at all movie rental stores, local libraries, and online retailers]* .



Left: Church and Society (Fordham University Press)

Right: The Lord of the Rings Trilogy (New Line)

Catholic Calendar—Upcoming Opportunities for Adult Faith Formation

Days of Reflection

Lent: A Time of Invitation

and Response

Rev. John Polednak, V.E.

February 17

Fatima Renewal Center

\$30 (includes lunch)

Jesus as Prophet, Priest, and King: Model for Catechists

Msgr. David Tressler

March 20

Fatima Renewal Center

\$20 (includes lunch)

Transformed by the Cross- Challenged by New Life

Msgr. John Esseff

April 10

Fatima Renewal Center

\$30 (includes lunch)

The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Parable of Homecoming

Rev. Philip Altavilla, V.E.

May 15

Fatima Renewal Center

\$30 (includes lunch)

Each Day of Reflection will include the celebration of Mass and the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

To register call the Fatima Renewal Center at (570)

563-8500.

"Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you..."

~1 Pt. 3:15