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The Holy Father's Prayer Intentions For This Month

General Intention:

That the victims of natural disasters may receive the spiritual and material comfort they need to rebuild their lives.

Mission Intention:

That the dedication of Christians to peace may bear witness to the name of Christ before all men and women of good will.

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Disciple

A monthly resource for adult Catholics of
the Diocese of Scranton

Volume 5, Issue 1

January 2012

Breaking Open the Word—Notes on the Sunday Gospels

Jan. 1 (Lk. 2:16-21)

In today's Gospel we hear about the circumcision of Jesus, which shows us that He is a member of Israel, God's covenant people. We also see that, like John the Baptist (Lk. 1:59-60), Jesus is given His name at His circumcision. In the new covenant, children become members of God's family through the sacrament of baptism.

Jan. 8 (Mt. 2:1-12)

In today's Gospel we hear about the arrival of the Magi or Wise Men. "They are probably astrologers from Persia (modern day Iran), which explains their interest in the extraordinary star they have seen. In Matthew's Gospel they are the first Gentiles to recognize the kingship of Jesus." Herod considers himself to be the king of the Jews, which is why their visit so upsets him.

Jan. 15 (Jn. 1:35-42)

In today's Gospel we see John the Baptist explicitly calling Jesus the "Lamb of God." The life of Jesus shows parallels between Himself and the lamb used to celebrate the Passover. Both the Passover lamb and Jesus are unblemished (Jesus has no sin), their blood is shed for salvation from death, Jesus enters Jerusalem on the same day that the Passover lambs are herded into the city and He dies at the same time of day that those lambs are being slaughtered, neither the lamb nor Jesus' bones are broken, the Passover lamb is consumed as is Jesus (the Eucharist).

Jan. 22 (Mk. 1:14-20)

In today's Gospel we see the calling of the first disciples. What is striking is the immediacy of the disciples response—they leave their family and liveli-

hood without a second thought. One prominent theologian has said about this, "Just as the sons of Zebedee left their father and the family's paid employees behind in order to follow Jesus, so the Christian who remains in the world has to let go of much that seems indispensable to him, if he is serious about following Jesus."

Jan. 29 (Mk. 1:21-28)

In today's Gospel we see that there is something about the way Jesus teaches that makes an impression upon people—the *authoritative nature of His words*. This quality of His teaching will be commented on again in Matthew's Gospel (especially the Sermon on the Mount). Jesus is different from the scribes because they *comment* on the law, but Jesus speaks as one who is the *source* of the law. In other words, He speaks like God.

Faith Foundations—Basics of Catholic Christian Belief

The Liturgy

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

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

What is the center of the liturgical season?

The center of the liturgical season is Sunday which is the foundation and kernel of the entire liturgical year and has its culmination in the annual celebration of Easter, the feast of feasts.

What is the function of the liturgical year?

In the liturgical year the Church celebrates the whole mystery of Christ from His Incarnation to His return in glory. On set days the Church venerates with special love the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. The Church also keeps the memorials of saints who lived for Christ, who suffered with Him, and who love with Him in glory.

What is the Liturgy of the Hours?

The Liturgy of the Hours, which is the public and common prayer of the Church, is the prayer of Christ with His Body, the Church. Through the Liturgy of the Hours the mystery of Christ, which we celebrate in the Eucharist, sanctifies and transforms the whole of each day. It is composed mainly of psalms, other biblical texts, and readings from the Fathers and spiritual masters.

(continued on next page)

Faith Foundations...Continued

Does the Church need places in order to celebrate the liturgy?

The worship “in spirit and truth” (Jn. 4:24) of the New Covenant is not tied exclusively to any place because Christ is the true temple of God. Through Him Christians and the whole Church become temples of the living God by the action of the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, the people of God in their earthly condition need places in which the community can gather to celebrate the liturgy.

What are sacred buildings?

They are the house of God, a symbol of the Church that lives in that place as well as of the heavenly Jerusalem. Above all they are places of prayer in which the Church celebrates the Eucharist and worships Christ who is truly present in the tabernacle.

What are the privileged places inside sacred buildings?

They are: the altar, the tabernacle, the place where the sacred Chrism and other holy oils are kept, the chair of the

bishop (cathedra) or the chair of the priest, the ambo, the baptismal font, and the confessional.

Is everything immutable in the liturgy?

In the liturgy, particularly in the sacraments, there are unchangeable elements because they are of divine institution. The Church is the faithful guardian of them. There are also, however, elements subject to change which the church has the power and on occasion also the duty to adapt to the cultures of diverse peoples.



“[Sacred buildings] are places of prayer in which the Church celebrates the Eucharist....”

Faith and Media—Reading and Viewing Recommendations

Book of the Month:

***The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde**

This novel would be a fascinating read for a book club, as I think it would spur some interesting conversations about how sin affects us and whether or not we, as a society, focus on the exterior life to the detriment of the interior life. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is the only novel ever written by Oscar Wilde, who was famous as a playwright. The title character

is gifted with incredible physical beauty and leads a life devoid of supernatural aims focusing, instead, on seeking pleasure no matter what the cost. While he maintains his physical beauty, a portrait of himself that hangs in his house begins to change and reveal the true nature of his soul. The Ignatius Press edition features helpful footnotes and articles of literary criticism.

Film of the Month:

The Adjustment Bureau

This film could be a springboard for a mature conversation on what Catholic Christians believe about free will and Divine Providence as it delves into whether or not humans are truly free. When the main characters of the film “go off script” mysterious figures (never called “angels”) who work for a cosmic Boss (never called “God”) intercede to put things back in order, even if the individuals don’t want that to happen. In comparison, the Catholic view is much richer.



Left: *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Ignatius Press)

Right: *The Adjustment Bureau* (Universal)

Catholic Calendar—Upcoming Opportunities for Adult Faith Formation

Day of Reflection

“Letting God Act During Lent: The Sunday Scriptures of Lent 2012”

Presented by

Rev. James Price, C.P.

Wednesday, February 22, 2012

9:30a.m.-2:30p.m.

Fatima Renewal Center, Dalton

Cost: \$30 (includes lunch)

To register, please call the Fatima Renewal Center at

563-8500

Continuing Education

“Living the Eucharist”

(Paulist Evangelization Ministries)

Presented by

Rev. James Price, C.P.

Six consecutive Tuesdays be-

ginning February 21, from 6:00-7:30p.m.

Diocesan Center, Scranton

Cost: \$30 (includes workbook)

To register, please call 207-2213, ext. 1133.

[A session for teens will also be held at St. Joseph Oblate

Seminary, Pittston]

“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