

January 2006 Newsletter

S. CLEMENT'S CHURCH

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A Christmas Message from the Rector

My dear People,

For me, the whole message of Christmas is summed up in S John's text: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

We all know the lovely stories of the birth of Our Lord in the manger at Bethlehem, the coming of the shepherds and the wise men; but what makes them more than mere tales is that the person who lay in that manger was the Son of God.

Because of his love for mankind, God was determined to show us how to conquer sin and live with his eternal life. We were in a mess and God came to show us the way out of it.

We all know that in human situations it is useless to stand on the sidelines and tell someone in difficulties "Well, you got yourself into the mess; you'll have to get yourself out." What is needed is for us to roll up our sleeves and help out (and our just *being* there can be the greatest comfort). That is just what God did in his Son Jesus.

He came himself into the same ordinary world in which we live. He taught certain things, but his

main message was given by the way he lived. He lived every day open to what his Father wanted him to do, and that was always the same—to love his fellow men no matter what it cost.

And we know what it did cost—his death on the Cross. Someone has said that even over the cradle in Bethlehem there lies the shadow of the Cross. This is symbolised by the story of Herod killing the children of Judah. In spite of this, we are full of joy at the Birth of this baby even though we know he will die on the Cross, because even death could not defeat God's plan. This same Jesus Christ rose from the dead and is now with us in a far closer way than he could be even to the shepherds of Bethlehem.

So let us praise God for his love and goodness towards us and let us take the love of Jesus into every corner of this world, which needs that love so desperately.

Affectionately, your Rector

Kalendar

January 2006 – *The Holy Name.*

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| 1 | Su | Circumcision of Our Lord. [Parish] |
| 2 | M | Holy Name of Jesus. <i>Octave day of S Stephen, First M.</i> [For guidance in the New Year] |
| 3 | Tu | Octave Day of S John, Ap.Ev. [S. John's, Norristown] |
| 4 | W | Octave Day of Ss Innocents, Mm. [Children threatened by violence or vice] |
| 5 | Th | Vigil of the Epiphany. <i>S. Telesphorus, M</i> [Preparation for the Epiphany] |
| 6 | F | Epiphany of Our Lord. [Parish] |
| 7 | Sa | Of the Octave. [Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament] |
| 8 | Su | Holy Family. [Parish] |
| 9 | M | Of the Octave. [Christian families] |
| 10 | Tu | Of the Octave. [The Society of Mary] |
| 11 | W | Of the Octave. <i>S Hyginus, M.</i> [The Living Rosary of Our Lady & S Dominic] |
| 12 | Th | Of the Octave. [Guild of All Souls] |
| 13 | F | Octave Day of the Epiphany. <i>Abs.</i> [Foreign Missions] |
| 14 | Sa | S Ninian, BC. <i>S Hilary, BCD.</i> [The Church in Scotland] |
| 15 | Su | Epiphany II. S Paul the First Hermit, C. <i>S Maurus, Ab.</i> [Parish] |
| 16 | M | S Marcellus I, PM. [Those who serve the poor] |
| 17 | Tu | S Antony, Ab. [Br Steven & the Community of the Resurrection] |
| 18 | W | Chair of S Peter, Ap at Rome. <i>S Prisca, VM.</i> [Pope Benedict XVI & The Roman Church] |
| 19 | Th | S Elizabeth Seton, V. <i>Ss Marius & His Companions., Mm.</i> [Rowan, Archbishop of Canterbury & the Anglican Communion] |
| 20 | F | S John Neumann, BC. <i>Ss Fabian, P & Sebastian, Mm. Abs.</i> [The Archbishop of Philadelphia] |
| 21 | Sa | S Agnes, VM. [All Saints' Sisters of the Poor] |
| 22 | Su | Epiphany III. <i>Ss Vincent & Anastasius, Mm.</i> [Parish] |
| 23 | M | S Raymond of Penafort, C. <i>S Emerentiana, VM.</i> [More frequent use of the Sacrament of Penance] |
| 24 | Tu | S Timothy, BM. [S. Timothy's, Roxborough] |
| 25 | W | Conversion of S Paul, Ap. [Catholic Reunion] |
| 26 | Th | S Polycarp, BM. [The Church in Turkey] |
| 27 | F | S John Chrysostom, BCD. <i>Abs.</i> [Oppressed Christians in the Middle East] |
| 28 | Sa | S Peter Nolasco, C. <i>Second of S Agnes, VM.</i> [Bartholomew I & The Orthodox Church] |
| 29 | Su | Epiphany IV. S Francis de Sales, BCD. [Parish] |
| 30 | M | King Charles the Martyr. <i>S Martina, VM.</i> [Christian kings & rulers] |
| 31 | Tu | S John Bosco, C. [The Bishop & Diocese of Pennsylvania] |

Agenda:

- 6 January **Epiphany of Our Lord.** Low Mass, 7.00 a.m. Procession with Blessing of Gold, Frankincense Myrrh and Chalk & High Mass, 7.00 p.m. The Rector has invited those present to an Epiphany Party in the Clergy House.
- 7 January Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament Devotions in conjunction with the 10.00 a.m. Low Mass.
- 21 January Guild of All Souls Devotions in conjunction with the 10.00 a.m. Low Mass.
- 24 January Monthly meeting of Vestry, 7.00 p.m. [Anchor Room]
- 28 January Society of Mary Devotions in conjunction with the 10.00 a.m. Low Mass.
- 2 February **Candlemas.** Low Mass, 12.10 p.m. Candlemas Ceremonies with Blessing of Candles, Procession & High Mass, 7.00 p.m.

Music for the Month – January 2006

1st January, Circumcision of Our Lord:

Ordinary: *Hans Leo Hassler*, Missa Secunda

Motet: *Pietro Vinci*, Mirabile Mysterium

Organ: *Johann Sebastian Bach*, The Old Year now hath passed away
Bach, In Thee is gladness

6th January, Epiphany of Our Lord:

Ordinary: *Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina*, Missa 'Hodie Christus natus est'

Motet: *Orlandus Lassus*, Omnes de Saba

Organ: *Maurice Duruflé*, Prelude on the Introit for the Epiphany
Duruflé, Fugue on the Hour Chime at Soissons Cathedral

8th January, Holy Family:

Ordinary: *George Malcolm*, Missa ad Præsepe

Motet: *Richard Shephard*, The Birds

Organ: *Thomas Matthews*, Prelude on 'Orientis Partibus'
Arthur Wills, Carillon on 'Orientis Partibus'

15th January, Epiphany II:

Ordinary: *Ralph Vaughan Williams*, Mass in G Minor

Motet: *Vaughan Williams*, O taste and see

Organ: *Percy Whitlock*, Fidelis (from Four Extemporizations)
Whitlock, Final

22nd January, Epiphany III:

Ordinary: *Orlandus Lassus*, Missa 'Vinum Bonum'

Motet: *Francisco Guerrero*, O sacrum convivium

Organ: *César Franck*, Cantabile
Franck, Final

29th January, Epiphany IV:

Ordinary: *Plainsong*, Kyrie

Antonio Gabrieli, Mass for Three Choirs

Motet: *Gabrieli*, Jubilate Deo

Organ: *Louis Vierne*, Dédicace (From Pièces de fantaisie)
Vierne, Carillon du Longport

A Thank You from New Orleans:

**St. Patrick's Church
724 Camp Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130**

15th December 2005

Dear Friends,

On behalf of all of the members of St. Patrick's parish, I would like to thank you most sincerely for your gracious generosity to our parish and to the people of our city. Your contribution has provided crucial support for the work of our parish in many ministries to the needy and dispossessed of our stricken city. Because of the widespread devastation to our city and enormous number of persons affected, together with significant damage to so many churches and schools, the very shape of the Archdiocese of New Orleans has been considerably altered. St. Patrick's Church, having been spared serious damage, has been placed in a fortunate position in the massive effort to minister to those in the Greater New Orleans area.

More than a quarter of a million people have returned to the Greater New Orleans area since September, with many more planning to return in January. Many of our families have been unfortunately separated because of employment opportunities and educational facilities elsewhere. Now, during this holiday season, the Church, more than ever, is proving to be a secure and stable foundation of community, support, normalcy and solace both for those who have already been able to return and also for those who are returning for the holidays.

As civic and economic life begin slowly to return to our city, the sacramental life of our Church continues to be fully maintained and even to grow. The number of baptisms, confessions and marriages in our parish has increased, during the past month, over pre-Katrina levels. The same is also true of participation both in our six Sunday Masses and in our two daily Masses. Parishioners and non-parishioners alike have frequently commented that returning to Mass at St. Patrick's downtown is one of the things that they have especially looked forward to during their enforced exile from the city.

As the whole of the Christian world celebrates the season of Advent, we at St. Patrick's Church are remembering in a special way all of you, living in other parts of our country, but, nevertheless, brothers and sisters in Christ, who have shared with us your good prayers and your material support, and, therefore, who have helped to prepare the way for others to receive again

the new life and hope which was born for us all in Bethlehem. In His holy Name, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Wishing you a very blessed Christmas and happy New Year, I am

Sincerely yours in Jesus and Mary,

The Rev'd Stanley P. Klores
Pastor

[N.B. – The proceeds of the free-will offering from the H.B. Smith Cornet Band concert on 6th November, \$327.00, were remitted to St. Patrick's. Fr Stanley Klores was scheduled to be one of our guest speakers on Sunday, 8th January but because of his responsibilities in New Orleans, is unable to come. We hope to reschedule his visit for later in the year.]

Keys to Parish Growth

Daily Prayer

by the Rev'd John Alexander, Rector, S Stephen's Church, Providence, Rhode Island

In this series, I have been endeavoring to demonstrate the necessity of reclaiming the practices intrinsic to our Anglo-Catholic identity if we are to grow as a parish. Two months ago, I reiterated our tradition's insistence upon the solemn obligation to attend Mass every Sunday unless prevented by grave cause. Last month, I highlighted the importance of the daily Mass as an indispensable component of our mission and outreach.

Regardless of how many or how few weekday Masses we are able to attend, however, all Christians have the duty of praying daily. If we neglect this duty as a parish, we have no reason to expect God to bless us with growth. We must do our part, if we expect God to do his.

As a priest, my work for the parish entails many different tasks and activities throughout the day, from talking with parishioners in my office, to planning the coming Sunday's services, to visiting people in hospitals and nursing homes. But of late I have become more and more aware that one of the most important things I can do for the parish—perhaps even the one thing that is really indispensable—is to keep on saying my prayers.

Contrary to popular belief, the purpose of prayer is not primarily to meet our own needs or to facilitate our own spiritual growth. Yes, prayer *can* be enormously rewarding; and those who persevere in prayer *will* grow spiritually. But the necessary perseverance can only come from approaching prayer as a *duty* to which we are committed by our baptism and confirmation. That way, we will keep on praying even when we feel as if we're not making any progress and aren't getting anything out of it for ourselves. The only

motivation that will enable us to persevere in prayer is the realization that (a) prayer is the work of the Church, that (b) we are members of the Church, and therefore that (c) we have an obligation to assume our share of responsibility for the Church's work.

Years ago, I knew a priest who, in response to the request, "Father, please pray for me," used to answer, "Yes, I will pray for you; but only if you pray for you too." His point was that so many lay people seem to expect the clergy to do their praying for them. And I suspect that one reason is that many lay people feel that they really don't know how to pray. How then do we learn to pray?

Some lay people and priests have the gift for spiritual direction, the ministry of helping others learn how to pray. If you feel unsure of how to go about praying, consider seeking spiritual direction from such a person. The best spiritual directors realize that there is no "one size fits all" approach to prayer. There are as many different ways to pray as there are praying individuals. The challenge is to find the method or combination of methods that works best for you, and that is what a good spiritual director can help you do.

For some of us—and this probably includes many priests—the Prayer Book Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer provide an indispensable structure for daily prayer. Others use anthologies or primers, such as the *Oxford Book of Prayers* or the *S Augustine's Prayerbook*. Others prefer the free form, conversational approach known as *colloquy*. Others pray the Rosary. Others use various techniques of reading and meditating upon Scripture (*lectio divina*). Others repeat the Jesus Prayer or a single word or phrase as a means of

inducing the silent prayer known as contemplation. Many use a combination of some or all of these methods.

Regardless of method, however, the indispensable foundation of a healthy spiritual life is setting aside a specific time and place for regular prayer—ideally *every day*. The traditional name for such a routine is a “rule.” Figuring out the best rule of prayer may require some trial and error. But then, once it has been discovered, the crucial thing is to stick to it, and to keep coming back to it even after the inevitable lapses.

It helps to keep a written list of those for whom one is praying. Some people maintain a prayer journal for this purpose. One useful idea is to take the Sunday *Kalendar* home with you, for it includes our parish intercession lists of people who have asked for our prayers, as well as the anniversaries of the departed. As a parish community we should be praying for these people daily in our homes as well as at Mass.

Prayer is necessary for discernment. Over the years, as people have come to me for pastoral counsel on difficult personal issues and decisions, one of the questions that I have learned to ask is, “Have you prayed about this?” While I can and do attempt to offer the best advice and guidance I can, it’s even more important to encourage people to pray about their situation and seek God’s advice and guidance.

The same principle holds true in our life together as a parish. Recently, I was reading the vestry minutes of another Anglo-Catholic parish. The minutes recorded that when someone brought forward a certain proposal for a change to the service schedule, the rector and vestry decided to postpone any decision until they could spend the month until the next meeting praying about it.

Then, the following month’s minutes notes that the idea was rejected, “after much prayer and reflection.” Whether the final decision was for the best, I don’t know, but that rector and vestry certainly went about it the right way.

Within our parish, many people have good ideas for tasks, policies, and programs that they think that we should undertake. Unfortunately, with our limited time, resources, and personnel, we simply cannot act on every good idea that is put forward. So, perhaps the question that we need to be asking each other is, “Have you prayed about this?”

Of course, not every idea that comes to us in prayer necessarily represents God’s will for the parish. Our capacity for self-deception is great; and we can often mistake our own ideas and wishes—or worse—for the voice of God. (This is another reason why spiritual direction is important.) In the end, those entrusted with final responsibility for the community’s decision-making must evaluate all such proposals objectively on their own merits.

Nevertheless, if we were all to make a conscientious effort to pray daily and seek God’s guidance for the parish, we would greatly increase our openness to what God is really calling us to do. And those decisions that emerged by the consensus of such a praying community would stand a far greater chance of reflecting God’s will for us.

Such, then, is the challenge before us. We cannot hope to grow as a parish unless we become a praying community. And to become such a community, every parishioner needs to set aside some time every day for personal prayer. We need to pray daily for our parish, its clergy, its people, and its mission. Our future depends on it.

Keys to Parish Growth

Sunday Mass Attendance

Another in the Series of articles by Fr John Alexander, Rector of S Stephen's, Providence, Rhode Island

This month, we continue the series on parish growth by discussing the first essential practice: consistent attendance at Sunday Mass. I want to suggest that we need to recover the old-fashioned concept of obligation in relation to our Sunday Mass attendance.

I owe much of my understanding of the Sunday obligation to a priest by the name of Homer Rogers who lived and served in the Diocese of Dallas, Texas, until his death in 1980. I never met him, but he taught the basics of the Catholic faith to a whole generation, including several priests who subsequently taught me. After his death, his catechetical lectures were transcribed from tape and published in book form; and in this article I will cite them at length.

Fr Rogers was never one to mince words, and he presented the Sunday obligation in uncompromising terms:

It has been held for 2,000 years that to miss Mass on Sunday unnecessarily is a grave and serious sin. The Church expects those who are baptized and confirmed to be present at the offering of the Holy Sacrifice fifty two Sundays out of the year.

Sunday Mass attendance is one of the core practices that constitute Christian identity. To underscore this point, Fr Rogers imagined the following dialogue in the early Church, when Christians were hauled up in front of the Roman magistrate:

He asked them, 'Are you Christians?' And they replied, 'Yes.' And he said, 'Have you attended the Eucharist?' The answer was, 'We told you we are Christians. It's the Eucharist that constitutes a Christian.'

For those people being tried for their lives before the Roman magistrate, denying that they had been

to Mass was tantamount to denying their Christianity.

For this reason, the Church has always regarded needlessly missing Mass on Sunday as a major breach of faith: "In the early centuries of the Church, to miss Mass on Sunday was regarded as having repudiated one's Christian profession. You just didn't bother to come back, unless you came back by way of confession and received absolution."

Sunday Mass attendance expresses our love for both God and neighbour. Those who say that they can be religious without going to church are really saying that they love God but not their neighbour:

Each one of you is probably the best Christian somebody knows, and God has placed His reputation in your hands. There are people who will look at you and either find encouragement from you to commitment and dedication and discipline and adoration and worship and service and loyalty—or they will look at you and find encouragement to self-indulgence and self-serving. And just your presence at Mass on Sunday, the fact that you're there, that yes, it is worth it. I guarantee you, everybody in church this next Sunday morning will have had an attack on his faith some time in the last month or six weeks. You know it's true, because it's true of you. One of the things that keeps your resolve at a high level is the fact that the other people in church who are there steadfastly, regularly, Sunday after Sunday, usually in pretty much the same pews, are making a statement to everyone else in the congregation that yes, it's worth it. It's important.

Historically, the Church has recognized three valid excuses for missing Mass on Sunday. The first valid excuse is sickness. “A good rule of thumb is that if you’re sick enough that on a Tuesday you wouldn’t go to work or to school, you’re probably sick enough so that you needn’t go to church.”

The second valid excuse for missing Mass is being in a place where there is no Mass to attend—that is, where the nearest Mass is too far away for reasonable travel given the available means of transportation. Here, though, Fr Rogers noted that what is considered a reasonable distance to travel varies from place to place:

There are places in the mountains of the northern Philippines where Episcopalians will travel on foot all Saturday afternoon, a distance of maybe eighteen or twenty miles through the jungle to get to the nearest town where a Mass is being celebrated. They will spend the night, go to Mass, have lunch, and spend all Sunday afternoon walking back home. They will do this fifty-two weekends of the year. That’s devotion.

The third valid excuse for missing Mass is called “the conflict of a notable work of charity.” For example, someone at home is seriously ill and needs to be looked after. Or you pass an automobile accident when you’re driving to church and you stop to render assistance even though doing so means that you will miss Mass. This exemption extends also to people who must unavoidably work on Sundays—but Christians in this situation should find another day and time to attend Mass during the week.

Consistent Sunday Mass attendance is the solemn duty of every baptized Christian. Yet I fear that we have become far too casual and lax in our observance of this obligation. As a priest, I find myself dismayed by the trivial reasons that parishioners give—often without any apparent trace of embarrassment—for failing to come to church on Sunday.

So, let me say it now, for the record. Having to entertain out-of-town houseguests is not a valid excuse for missing Sunday Mass. Nor is having

stayed up late on Saturday night. Nor is having to travel to a social engagement on Sunday afternoon. In all these situations, the obligation to attend Sunday Mass takes precedence.

I realize that fulfillment of the Sunday obligation in today’s secular society involves substantial sacrifices. My sons, for example, are growing up in the knowledge that sports leagues that require Sunday morning practices or games as a condition of participation are simply not an option for them. It’s just a matter of priorities.

I also realize that St Stephen’s parishioners live complex lives that involve much weekend travel. If one finds oneself out-of-town on a Sunday morning, one should make every effort to find a church where one can attend Mass locally. Indeed, some parishioners are in the habit of bringing me back copies of the Sunday bulletin from the out of town churches they attend on a weekend away, and I am always interested in reading them.

It stretches the imagination, however, to think that all the parishioners who don’t show up on a given Sunday morning are either working, out of town, or too sick to come to Mass. It follows that when the majority of parishioners make the commitment to come to Sunday Mass every week without fail, our attendance will increase dramatically.

Rising attendance will in turn boost morale. We shall grow in the depth of our commitment as a community. A fuller church will make a better impression on visitors. Newcomers will be able to count on seeing the same people Sunday after Sunday and will thus have more of an opportunity to build relationships and develop friendships. In short, the first step towards parish growth is to reclaim the Catholic discipline of unfailing Sunday Mass attendance; and it is up to each of us to take that step for the sake of our common life.

Source of citations: Fr Homer F Rogers, *The Romance of Orthodoxy* (Dallas, Texas: 1989, 519-525)

