

December 2006 Newsletter

S. CLEMENT'S CHURCH

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From the Rector

My dear People,

December is the month of the Incarnation. First, on the 8th, we have the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, when God's chosen vessel was brought into being. Mary was to be the instrument by which God the Son, the Word of God, was to become flesh and she was prepared for this from the beginning of her existence.

Then on the 25th, we celebrate the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, when that same Virgin brought forth Jesus her son. This child was both Son of Mary and Son of God. The Person of God the Son took humanity from Mary and was born as man. No new human being was created, but our humanity was assumed into the Godhead by union with the Son of God.

The importance of this great event is that it is from this hypostatic union, as the Fathers of the Church described it, that our salvation into eternal life comes. Because we are united with our Lord Jesus Christ through Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, we are incorporated into his supernatural Body the Church. We are no longer of the animal creation alone, but are restored to the heavenly creation for which God always intended us. And this heavenly creation will be eternal.

Because of the Incarnation, we are a new creation. Our Lord sealed that new creation by his self-sacrificing love on Calvary, and God the Father ratified the new creation by raising Christ from the dead and seating the God-Man at the right hand of his throne on high. Thus God the Son returned to his eternal position with the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, but with this difference, that now mankind was also there in heaven reigning with God.

Much of our language is metaphorical and symbolic when we contemplate these great mysteries. We can never explain them fully. What

we need, however, is not an explanation but the grace to accept the great gift of God, given us in the Birth of his Son, and then to use that gift joyfully in our daily lives. If we are convinced that God loves us infinitely and that he has an eternal destiny laid up for us, our life day by day will be transformed. We will see in everything we do the light of Christ; nothing will be insignificant, nothing unimportant. Every day will be for us a special day, a day when we can spread the love of God and further our own salvation and that of the world.

Our final destiny in glory will not be for us as individuals only. God will create "new heavens and a new earth" and nothing will be lost except sin and evil, which consist of negative forces. So when we wish one another a Merry Christmas and then later a Happy New Year, we are not simply hoping for a day or two—or even a year—of happiness, which may or may not be the case. No, we are proclaiming that because of the birth of Jesus from the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we can be merry and happy and bring joy to the world, no matter what negative forces we meet on the way.

"O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant;
O come ye, O come ye
To Bethlehem"

The angels invited the shepherds; the star invited the wise men. Let none of us ignore this invitation: "Come and worship Christ the Lord."

May your Christmas be greatly blessed.

Your rector and friend,

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Kalendar

December 2006 – *The Nativity of Our Lord.*

- 1 F FERIA. *Abs.* [All Saints Sisters of the Poor, Sr Elaine at S Anna's]
- 2 Sa S Bibiana, VM. [Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament]
- 3 Su **Advent I.** S Francis Xavier, C. [Parish]
- 4 M S Peter Chrysologus, BCD. *Feria.* S. Barbara, VM. [Guild of All Souls]
- 5 Tu FERIA. *S Sabbas, Ab.* [Increase & renewal of monastic life]
- 6 W S Nicholas, BC. *Feria.* [The poor & oppressed and those who serve them]
- 7 Th S Ambrose, BCD. *Feria.* Vigil. [Archbishop of Milan & Churches of the Ambrosian Rite]
- 8 F **Immaculate Conception BVM.** *Holy Day of Obligation. Abs.* FERIA. [Parish]
- 9 Sa Of the Octave. [Society of Mary]
- 10 Su **Advent II.** Translation of the Holy House of Loreto. *S. Melchaides, PM.* [Parish]
- 11 M S Damasus I, PM. *Of the Octave.* FERIA. [Pope Benedict XVI]
- 12 Tu OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE. *Feria.* [The Church in Mexico]
- 13 W S Lucy, VM. *Of the Octave.* FERIA. [The blind & those who care for them]
- 14 Th Of the Octave. *Feria.* [Living Rosary of Our Lady & S. Dominic]
- 15 F Octave Day of the Immaculate Conception. *Feria. Abs.* [Clients & Benefactors of the Shrine of Our Lady of Clemency]
- 16 Sa S Eusebius, BM *Feria.* [Worthy preparation for Christmas]
- 17 Su **Advent III.** [Parish]
- 18 M Expectation BVM. [Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham]
- 19 Tu FERIA. [Greater devotion in the last days of Advent]
- 20 W Vigil. *Ember Day. Fast & Partial Abs.* [Increase in Faith as we prepare for Christmas]
- 21 Th **S Thomas, Ap.** *Feria.* [The Bishop & Diocese of Pennsylvania]
- 22 F S Francis Cabrini, V. *Ember Day. Fast & Abs.* [Increase in Hope as we prepare for Christmas]
- 23 Sa Ember Day. *Fast & Part. Abs.* [Increase in Charity as we prepare for Christmas]
- 24 Su Vigil of the Nativity. *Advent IV.* [Parish]
- 25 M **Nativity of Our Lord.** *Holy Day of Obligation.* [Parish]
- 26 Tu **S Stephen, First Martyr.** *Of the Octave.* [S. Stephen's on 10th Street and S. Stephen's, Providence, Rhode Island]
- 27 W **S John, ApEv.** *Of the Octave.* [S. John's Church, Newport, R.I.]
- 28 Th **Ss Innocents, Mm.** *Of the Octave.* [Children threatened by war & vice]
- 29 F **S Thomas of Canterbury, BM.** *Of the Octave. Abs.* [Rowan, Archbishop of Canterbury & the Church of England]
- 30 Sa Of the Octave. [In Thanksgiving for the Incarnation]
- 31 Su **Within the Octave of the Nativity.** *S. Sylvester, P.C.* Of the Octave. [Parish]

Agenda:

- 8 December **Immaculate Conception B.V.M. Holy Day of Obligation.** Low Mass, 7.00 a.m.
Procession & High Mass, 7.00 p.m.
- 9 December Annual Advent Devotion, sponsored by the Catholic Societies of the Parish. All are welcome to attend. The morning will begin with recitation of the Rosary at 9.30 a.m.; Low Mass with a brief homily at 10.00, then simple refreshments and the morning will close with an Address and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.
- 11 December Requiem High Mass (*Duruflé: Requiem*) & Absolution of the Dead for the Repose of the Soul of Frank Paul Bowman, followed by interment in the Crypt Chapel, 7.00 p.m. A Reception will follow.
- 17 December Vespers will be recited in the Crypt Chapel at 1.00 p.m. All are welcome to attend.
- 19 December Monthly meeting of Vestry, 7.00 p.m. [Anchor Room]
- 24 December Vigil of the Nativity. High Mass, 11.00 a.m. No Solemn Vespers & Benediction to-day; however, First Vespers of Christmas & the Office of Compline will be recited in the Crypt Chapel at 2.00 p.m.
- 31 December Sunday in the Octave of Christmas. High Mass followed by the Te Deum & Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in thanksgiving for blessings received in 2006. No Solemn Vespers & Benediction to-day.
- 1 January 2007 Circumcision of Our Lord. High Mass, 11.00 a.m.

Christmas 2006

Christmas Eve

Sunday, 24th December

Confessions, 5 – 6 p.m. [The Rector]; 10.30 – 11.30 p.m. [The Rector, Fr Wall & Fr Sipe]

Procession & High Mass, Midnight

Christmas Day

Monday, 25th December

Low Mass of the Dawn, 8.00 a.m.

High Mass of the Day, 11.00 a.m.

Music for the Month – December 2006

3rd December, Advent I:

Ordinary: *William Byrd*, Mass for Four Voices
Motet: *Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina*, Canite Tuba
Organ: *Louis Vierne*, Divertissement
Marcel Dupré, Advent (from *Symphonie-Passion*)

8th December, Immaculate Conception:

Ordinary: *G.P. Palestrina*, Missa Maria est Assumpta
Motet: *Giovanni Croce*, Laudens exsultet gaudio
Organ: *Dietrich Buxtehude*, Magnificat Primi Toni
Marcel Dupré, Ave Maris Stella

10th December, Advent II:

Ordinary: *Francisco Guerrero*, Missa de la Batalla Escoutez
Motet: *Ralph Vaughan Williams*, O Taste and See
Organ: *Johann Sebastian Bach*, Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme
Bach, Fugue in G ('Jig Fugue')

17th December, Advent III:

Ordinary: *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*, Missa Brevis in C Major, K 115
Motet: *Orlando Gibbons*, This is the record of John
Organ: *George Frederick Handel*, Concerto in F Major
Robert Schumann, Fugue No. 4 on the name BACH

24th December, Vigil of the Nativity:

Ordinary: *Johann Fischer*, Missa 'Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland'
Motet: *Samuel Scheidt*, Nun Komm der Heiden Heiland
Organ: *Bach*, Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland
Bach, Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland

24th December, Midnight Mass:

Ordinary: *Franz Joseph Haydn*, Jugendmesse (with orchestra)
Motet: *Giovanni Gabrieli*, Hodie Christus natus est
Organ: *Marcel Dupré*, Nativité (from *Symphonie-Passion*)
Keith Chapman, Bring a torch, Jeanette Isabella

25th December, Christmas Day:

Ordinary: *Tomás Luis da Victoria*, Missa 'O Magnum Mysterium'
Motet: *Victoria*, O Magnum Mysterium
Organ: *Jean Langlais*, La Nativité
Johann Sebastian Bach, In dulci jubilo

31st December, Within the Octave of the Nativity:
Ordinary: *Thomas Tallis*, Missa 'Puer natus est nobis'
Motet: *John Sheppard*, Verbum caro factus est
Organ: *Thomas Matthews*, Prelude on 'Orientis partibus'
Arthur Wills, Carillon on 'Orientis partibus'

Notes:

Envelopes for Christmas Flower Offerings and the Special Christmas Offering are enclosed. Please return Christmas Flower offerings as soon as possible; as our wholesale flower costs have increased significantly from last year it is difficult to plan decorating without knowing availability of funds.

Ordo Kalendars for 2007 with full color photographs are currently being printed and should be available soon.

December

Month of the Incarnation.

The earth has gone back to the beginning. Her secrets are locked up. The year's tale is told. She lies at the end of the months as she lay at the beginning—still and frozen, wrapped in the swaddling clothes of frost and snow. The beginning and the ending are the same.

There seems to be neither growth nor change nor life in the iron-hard soil, powdered here and there with snow, in the bare hedges and the barren woods, in the ponds that are black under their bondage of ice. Even the sun in the heavens stands still at his winter solstice. The glory and bravery of summer are almost unimaginable—it is hard to remember the changes of the months—the kindling gleam of February, the brightness of the April garden, the whiteness of the Mary-day hedgerow, the calm, star-lit seas of August, the fruitful golden trees of September. All have ended as they began in this darkness and stillness. The year's tale is told, and the beginning and the ending are the same.

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The months end as they began—with the Child. In December we meet the Child again, the Child of January, the Child who is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord. In this Child the Christian faith begins and ends. All the doctrines of Councils, and all the learning of doctors, all the disputations of scholars, all the splendour of creeds, have their beginning and ending in the Child born of the Virgin Mary. The Christian Gospel is simply the Gospel of the Incarnation—of the New Life born of a Virgin into the world, redeeming man from his bondage to the

Law which was added because of transgressions—making him a citizen of a new and heavenly kingdom and a partaker of a new and heavenly nature—redeeming through him the rest of creation, of which he was first appointed a mediator, so that there shall be in eternity not only a new heaven but a new earth—an earth set free from the bondage of sin that held her in time, her processes redeemed for mercy, her creatures redeemed for joy.

It is this and nothing less than this that the New Life comes to accomplish—the first life having been corrupted by the enemy, and mankind having failed to fulfil his appointed purpose of restorer and healer. By virtue of the Incarnation of the Son of God, there is now a new power working in the world towards its at-onement with its maker. The Divine Humanity of our Lord, both superseding and containing ours, has already fulfilled the purposes of God for us, and through it we have union with God and are accounted his obedient sons, with power to co-operate in his eternal work.

The New Life works through the old. It uses matter in the way it was originally intended—as the vehicle and manifestation of spirit. Through Christ even the earth knows the glory of the Resurrection of her body. As long ago water gave birth to life, so now water is made the vehicle of the new birth and supernatural life—“Therefore do I hallow thee, O thou gift of water,” says the Priest at the Blessing of the Font on Holy Saturday, “by God the faithful, by God the holy, by God who in the beginning by his word divided the land from thee, by whose Spirit the waters were overshadowed.” As bread and wine

have been the bodily food of man, giving strength and joy to his flesh, preserving his body in life, so now they are made his spiritual food, giving strength and joy to his soul, preserving his body and soul unto everlasting life. By natural modes they have been assimilated by man's body and made a part of his humanity, and now by spiritual modes they are assimilated by God and made a part of his divine humanity. "Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee, and grant that we receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution . . . may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood."

The Sacraments go down to the very roots of creation—they go further down than our humanity, though our humanity is the means by which they descend, thus restoring it to its original mediatory purpose. Water, bread and wine—the elements and our own uses of the elements, inorganic and organic nature—are made the vehicles of supernatural life. Thus we are brought into a wonderful and mystical union between the earth and ourselves and the divine. Instead of remaining a creation at issue and enmity with itself, and separated from God, we become a creation working together in mutual love and co-operation in union with God. Thus is the atonement wrought between God and man and the earth.

For our redemption is not only nearer but wider than we believed, and includes not only humanity but the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain together . . . It is not only in poetry but in truth that the Priest bids nature join in his thanksgiving after every Mass. "Let us sing the song of the Three Children which they sang when

they blessed the Lord in the furnace of fire." And the Song of the Three Holy Children, redeemed from the furnace, is also the song of earth redeemed: "O let the earth bless the Lord, yea let it praise him and magnify him for ever . . . O ye mountains and hills bless ye the Lord . . . O all ye green things upon the earth bless ye the Lord . . . O ye wells bless ye the Lord . . . O ye seas and floods . . . O all ye fowls of the air . . . O all ye beasts and cattle—join to-day with the angels and with the priests of the Lord, with the servants of his sanctuary and the spirits and souls of the righteous, with all holy and humble men of heart, in singing the song of our redemption which we sing in the midst of the furnace of fire, praising and magnifying him for ever."

"The angel of the Lord came down into the oven and smote the flame of the fire out of the oven; and made the midst of the furnace as it had been a moist whistling wind. Then the three, as out of one mouth praised, glorified and blessed God in the furnace, saying: "Blessed art thou, O Lord God of our fathers, and to be praised and exalted above all for ever."

The heart of the burning fiery furnace has become Joseph of Arimathea's garden—the garden of the new earth and of the new spring, the blessed country where all the works of the Lord praise the Lord, the home of the children of men, of the holy souls and of the angels, where the risen Christ stands between the sun and moon, and greets the Church of his new creation with "Peace be unto you."

—from MIRROR OF THE MONTHS, by Sheila Kaye-Smith, The Society of SS Peter & Paul

Some Words of Wisdom

from Archbishop Michael Ramsey

(Archbishop of Canterbury 1961-74)

The Heart of Love

Amidst the vast scene of the world's problems and tragedies you may feel that your own ministry and witness seems so small, so insignificant, so concerned with the trivial. But consider—the glory of Christianity is its claim that small things really matter, and that the small group, the very few, the one man or woman or child are of infinite worth to God. Let that be your inspiration. Consider our Lord himself. Amidst a vast world with its vast empires and events and tragedies, our Lord devoted himself to a small country, to small things and to individual men and women, often giving hours of time to the few, or to the understanding of the many. You will never be nearer to Christ than in caring for the one man, the one woman, the one child. His authority will be given to you as you do this, then his joy will be yours as well.

—from *THE CHRISTIAN PRIEST TODAY*

Confession and Reconciliation

The Anglican Church allows us a wide liberty. We are free to confess our sins in prayer to God, sure that if our confession has been careful and complete the forgiveness of God comes to us. There is no doubt of that. We are also free, if we are so drawn, to confess our sins in the presence of a priest, who will give us sacramental absolution in the name, and by the authority, of Jesus Christ. Those who freely choose this latter way do so because it is thorough and at times rather painful, and they feel that both thoroughness and pain are not amiss; and there is also the joyful decisiveness of sacramental absolution. Far from being the intrusion of a priest between the soul and God, absolution makes vivid the decisiveness of divine forgiveness in word and act.

—from *BE STILL AND KNOW*

Perugino's Crucifixion *(The Gallitzi Triptych in the Washington National Gallery of Art)*

Perugino's picture of the crucifixion of Jesus is for me a great picture, because it wonderfully shows a large part of what Christianity means. Christ is seen suffering, suffering terribly: and yet in it there is triumph because love is transforming it all. We see the victory of self-giving love, of sacrifice. Nothing is, I believe, more characteristic of Christianity than the power, drawn from Jesus Christ, of bringing into the midst of suffering this outgoing love, with its note of victory, serenity, even joy. It is one of the most

marvelous things in human life, that just when we are downcast by the problem of evil, the challenge of goodness hits us in the eye and overwhelms us.

Christianity makes a twofold attack on suffering in the world. Christians hate the sight of suffering in other people and do their utmost to free them from it. They throw themselves into the care of those who suffer in every way they can: the sick, the homeless, the hungry, and those who face persecution, injustice, or abominations like torture. But sometimes when suffering comes to a person and cannot be escaped, a Christian is called upon, in the spirit of Christ, to use it, transformed by patience, love, sympathy, and power, like Perugino's picture. Someone once said that Christ fought suffering in other people as if nothing could be made of it, but when it came to him he used it as if everything could be made of it. Meanwhile let us remember, what we sometimes complacently forget, that there are many people in our world, whose suffering has been far greater than ours—the homeless, the really hungry, and those treated with injustice. Then we are stirred again to renew our caring about the sufferings of our fellow men.

—from CANTERBURY PILGRIM

The Communion of Saints

The prayer of a Christian is prayer with all the saints, and the phrase in the creed “communion of saints” tells of this. The words have a richness and simplicity that are often missed, for the original Latin *communio sanctorum* can mean both the fellowship of holy people and participation in holy things. These two understandings indeed interpenetrate, for when Christians share in the Body and Blood of Christ they share as members of one another.

The word *koinonia*—*communion* means participation, and according to New Testament writers, believers participate in the Father and the Son, and also in the holy Spirit; they participate in the Body and Holy Blood of Christ, in the sufferings of Christ, and in the lives of one another. Inevitable therefore the themes of holiness and participation interpenetrate, for the Holy Spirit, in making believers holy, lifts them out of their individual isolation, so that to share in the Spirit is to share in one another. The phrase which we translate as “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit” tells of this two-fold participation.

Deep renewal is needed today if the communion of saints is to be realized in its ancient meaning and power. The role of Mary is apparent: her role has been a great one in bringing the communion of saints into existence, for it was by divine grace and human response, divine command and human obedience, that the Incarnation happened and God's new creation began. As “God-bearer” Mary has helped in the creation of the communion of saints. As a creature with ourselves, she gives glory to her Creator and ours, to her Saviour and ours; more glorious than the cherubim and higher than the seraphim, she leads our praises to God.

It is within the reflection of Christ's glory that the prayers of all the saints continue. Within the family of saints we may ask the prayers of those who are near to the vision of God, and we may pray for all in earth or paradise or heaven. But we do not forget that the family includes those who are weak and struggling like ourselves, and those whose saintliness is very faint because the world has been reclaiming them. Our prayer looks towards the weak, as well as towards the strong; and if we are faithful it will reach both ways, since the glory of Christ is always one with the agony of his compassion. Such is the meaning of the words, “I believe in the communion of saints.”

—from BE STILL AND KNOW

