

THE CHRONICLE

Grace and Saint Peter's Church
Baltimore's Traditional Anglo-Catholic Parish

December 2008

From the Rector

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and hearken, for he brings
Glad tidings of the King of Kings.

Charles Coffin, 1736

Dear friends in Christ,

Advent, for me, calls to mind applesauce cupcakes, cheese straws, fruitcakes, and Christmas cookies, all those smells and tastes which remain with me from my childhood. My mother was an ardent baker as well as a churchman, and Advent was truly a time to prepare for Christmas, both materially and spiritually. We always had an Advent wreath for family prayers before dinner and she always seemed to be baking. Advent is meant to be a time to get ready for Christmas.

In the early church in Rome the Advent season was but a scant week long to prepare for Christmas. The feast itself had been established in Rome about the fourth century as a kind of Christianization of the pagan celebration of the victorious sun. The Church of Rome saw in the natural occurrence of the winter solstice a sign of the risen Christ conquering sin and death. Thus the Church began the celebration of the Nativity of the Son of God on December 25th.

The Church in Gaul began to prepare for Christmas with a liturgy that was Lenten in tone and began on the feast of St. Martin of Tours, November 11th. This season was forty days in length and was meant to mirror Lent.

The eventual combination of these two forms of Advent began our present cycle of four Advent Sundays leading up to Christmas. Prayer and fasting before Christmas were assumed to be a good preparation. Advent took on the character of a little Lent. It is good that we not forget this when we find ourselves in the midst of Christmas shopping. Even with the reform of the liturgy, the *Gloria in Excelsis* is not sung and until recently weddings were discouraged during this season.

I think that a good preparation for the birth of the Messiah is one that uses the readings of the daily office and the Eucharist as a focus for our Advent prayer life. Prayer is of paramount importance during this busy season in that it nurtures our faith and allows us to smile at ourselves and at others. Fasting teaches us the importance of restraint during a season when the world is rarely restrained. The Sacrament of Penance reminds us that we must forgive to be forgiven. You may find it helpful to have an Advent wreath at home. Say your prayers each day as you light the appropriate candle.

Each of the Advent Sundays carries a distinct theme. Watch carefully and attentively each Sunday for a progression from the Second Coming of Christ to His first. The Advent season will do its job of preparation if you will but take the time to let it. Attend Mass often but most certainly each Sunday. Remember that all Sundays are days of obligation, not time to be out buying Christmas Trees or other things.

This year we use the readings for the year B of the three-year lectionary cycle. These readings are centered in the Gospel according to St. Mark, with additions from the Gospel according to St. John. As Advent Sunday occurred on November 30th, the second Sunday of Advent is our first Sunday in December and brings us to St. John the Baptist as herald of the Lord.

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is on Monday, December 8th. Mass will be celebrated at 8:45 a.m., 12:00 Noon, and High Mass at 6:00 p.m. A dinner will take place after High Mass. Remember that this feast is a Holy Day of Obligation. It is a liturgical reminder that God's love for mankind knows no bounds and is truly timeless. Our guest preacher will be the Chaplain of the All Saints Sisters of the Poor in Catonsville, Maryland. Father Warren Tanghe, SSC was a fellow classmate of mine at the General Seminary.

The Traditional Mass of the Vigil of Christmas will be at 12:00 Noon on December 24th, and the Family Mass of the Vigil at 6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve is the first of our liturgical celebrations of the Feast. The story of the birth of Christ is told by St. Matthew. The Mass of Midnight begins with a Solemn Procession to the Crèche at 11:00 p.m. followed by High Mass. The music will be Mozart and the Gospel, St. Luke. Our choir will be accompanied by strings. At 7:45 a.m. on Christmas Day, Matins will be said, followed by the Mass of the Dawn when the shepherds will arrive in the words of St. Luke's Gospel. At 10:00 a.m. on Christmas the Mass of the Day will be said. The Gospel is from St. John, who unfolds the mystery of the Incarnation.

Remember that Pat Hom and the stewardship committee are counting on you for a pledge for the coming year. If you are behind this year, please catch up. Robert Zimmerman and the Christmas helpers need your help with flower memorials for Christmas. Likewise, John Marks and the choir need your help with music memorials. Grace and St. Peter's ministry depends on your support. Good preparation for Christmas means good stewardship of time, talents, and treasure.

I remain faithfully your priest,

Frederick S. Thomas
Rector

From Father Speer

Dear Friends of Grace and Saint Peter's,

Two thousand years ago, Christ Jesus Our Lord sent out the longest standing invitation in all of history: Do this in remembrance of me. At Grace and Saint Peter's we keep this invitation open. Mass is scheduled every day of the year at the altars of our parish church. The schedule is posted on the outside bulletin board, in the Chronicle, and in every Sunday bulletin. Please make sure that there is someone in addition to the priest attending each and every scheduled Mass.

It is a primary mark of a Catholic parish to offer Mass every day. It is a mark of our parishioners to answer the invitation with a regular Yes. Attendance at weekday mass once per week is a sure means by which to deepen our spiritual lives and come closer to Christ Jesus Our Lord who says, Do this in remembrance of me.

Father Speer
Priest Associate

December Music

7 December - Advent II

Missa super Dixit Maria - *Hans Leo Hassler*
Ecce Concipiet - *Jakob Handl*
A Tender Shoot - *Otto Goldschmidt*

8 December - Immaculate Conception BVM

6:00 p.m. – Procession and High Mass

Missa super Dixit Maria - *Hans Leo Hassler*
Dixit Maria ad Angelum - *Hans Leo Hassler*
Adam Lay Ybounden - *Boris Ord*

14 December - Advent III

The Short Service - *Adrian Batten*
Rejoice in the Lord Alway - *Anonymous*
Lord, We Beseech Thee - *Adrian Batten*

21 December - Advent IV

Mass in C - *Baldassarre Galuppi*
Dixit Maria ad Angelum - *Hans Leo Hassler*
Ave Maria - *Igor Stravinsky*

24 December - Christmas Eve

10:30 p.m. – Choral and Instrumental Prelude
11:00 p.m. – Procession to the Crèche and High Mass
Missa Brevis in D Major - *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*
Ein kind ist uns geboren - *Heinrich Schütz*
Cantique de Noël - *Adolphe Adam*

28 December – The Holy Innocents

Communion Service in D Major - *Leo Sowerby*
The Coventry Carol - *Anonymous*
Lullay Myn Lyking - *Gustav Holst*

Stewardship: Why We Give

By a parishioner

“Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I thee” (Acts 3:6). So said St Peter to the man at the gate of the Temple who asked him for alms. It might be well for us to have an attitude similar to St Peter’s during this time when the church asks us to consider stewardship. We might not have much silver and gold, but what we do have, we should give. With this in mind, I filled out a pledge card for the first time this year at the annual parish meeting. I did this not because I have suddenly come into vast wealth – in fact the opposite is true. Many of us are struggling to make ends meet, or at least somehow feel the impact of the economic crisis currently facing much of the world. My pledge is not large; in fact, it is quite modest compared to some others. But I felt it was important, indeed necessary, to give something of what little I had to support the work of this beloved parish church of ours. But why?

We have heard in recent weeks a few very fine stewardship talks at Sunday High Mass. The reasons given so eloquently by our fellow parishioners (our traditional liturgy, our fidelity to the Catholic Faith, our superb musical offerings, and our various ministries) are all quite true. But there is another reason. Why do we give? We give because God has given Himself to us in the gift of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. We offer our time, talent, and treasure – our whole life – because He offered Himself for us on the Cross. We give back to God the best we can give in liturgy, music, faithfulness – and our time, talent, and treasure – because God has given His Son to be made flesh and dwell among us. Let us remember these things as we think and pray about stewardship, that with St Peter we can say truthfully, “Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I thee.”

December Mass Intentions

December is the Month of the Holy Nativity

1 ST ANDREW, Ap. M (transferred)	Eugene, Our Bishop
2 Monthly Requiem	The Faithful Departed
3 St Francis Xavier, C	The Society of Jesus
4 St Peter Chrysologus, BCD	Pope Benedict
5 Feria	A faithful Advent
6 St Nicholas, BC (Vigil)	The gift of Faith
7 ADVENT II	Our Parish Family
8 IMMACULATE CONCEPTION BVM	Marian devotion
9 Of the Octave	John, Our Bishop
10 Translation of the Holy House of Loreto	Holiness of life
11 Of the Octave	Apostolic zeal
12 Our Lady of Guadalupe	The Church in Mexico
13 St Lucy, VM	The Church in Italy & Sweden
14 ADVENT III	Our Parish Family
15 Octave Day	Growth in the Catholic Faith
16 Feria	Amendment of life
17 Ember Day	Preparation for the Christ Child
18 Feria	The Spiritual life
19 Ember Day	Vocations to the priesthood
20 Ember Day (Vigil)	For the clergy
21 ADVENT IV	Our Parish Family
22 ST THOMAS, Ap.M (transferred)	St. Thomas Church, 5 th Avenue, New York & St. Thomas Church, Garrison Forest, MD
23 Feria	A Holy Advent
24 Vigil (CHRISTMAS EVE)	Faithfulness to our Incarnate Lord
25 CHRISTMAS DAY	Our Parish Family
26 ST STEPHEN, Protomartyr	St. Stephen's Church, Erwin, NC
27 ST JOHN Ap. Ev.	St. John's Church, Norristown, PA
28 THE HOLY INNOCENTS	Children at risk
29 ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY, BM	The Church of England
30 Octave	The All Saints Sisters, Catonsville, MD
31 St Sylvester, PC	The Holy See

Daily Mass Schedule

Sunday

7:45 a.m. Matins & Low Mass

10:00 a.m. High Mass

5:00 p.m. Evensong

Monday

6:00 p.m. Low Mass

Tuesday

12:00 Noon Low Mass and Holy Unction

Wednesday

6:00 p.m. Low Mass

Thursday

6:00 p.m. Low Mass

Friday

8:45 a.m. Sung Mass

6:00 p.m. Low Mass

Saturday

12:00 Noon Low Mass

Grace and Saint Peter's Church

The Rev'd Frederick S. Thomas, SSC, Rector

707 Park Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21201

401-539-1395

www.graceandstpeter.org