

§ Reflection on the Gospel >

Have you been at an infant baptism in recent years as a parent, godparent, relative, or friend of the family? It can be an quite an experience. In these days of burgeoning mega-churches, the number of children being baptized at a single ceremony can six, ten, even twenty! Add for each child the parents, godparents, siblings, family and friends and you have quite a throng. Often this group can become quite noisy and distracting.

Even the rubrics recognize this reality and suggest that the children “go to a separate place where they remain until the end of the liturgy of the word.” The majority of those at the ceremony may have little idea, given all the symbolism, about what exactly is happening or why.

If you find yourself amongst those who are lacking in understanding, here are a dew basics to make the next baptism you attend more understandable and meaningful. Baptism is the Greek word for immersing or bathing in water. So the heart of the baptismal rite is the pouring of water on the child’s head or the immersing in water of the child while the bishop, priest or deacon who is baptizing says that he is doing so “in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Immediately thereafter comes the anointing of the child’s head with sacred chrism, the greatest symbol of the Holy Spirit. This chrism is perfumed olive oil consecrated each Holy Week by the local bishop, and it represents the Spirit’s symbolic presence.

The ceremony itself has aspects of a journey, just as life is a journey. From the entrance into the church, to the procession to the baptismal font, to the baptism to the lighting of the candle, each part of the ceremony represents the portions of the journey.

This Sunday is dedicated to the Baptism of the Lord and we recognize its importance for being the inaugural ceremony of the public ministry of Jesus. St. Matthew’s Gospel ends with Jesus telling his followers to Baptize. In the Acts of the Apostles from the very first days of the Church, people became members through the rite of baptism, which forgave any sins they may have committed and filled them with the Holy Spirit.

We should also celebrate today the fact of our own baptism, noting from the words of the baptismal rite itself some of the wonderful things that happened to us that day and which should continue to shape our spiritual lives. Through baptism we were: made a child of God; freed from original sin; indwelt by the Holy Spirit; welcomed into God’s holy people; made a temple of God’s glory; rescued from the kingdom of darkness; made a sharer in God’s divine life; and enlightened by Christ.

Today thank God, and your parents as well, for having received this greatest of graces, this first of many spiritual blessings. As God the Father said of Jesus at his baptism, so God says of all who are baptized: “You are my beloved; with you I am well pleased.”



Stewardship Report:



Revenue

Christmas Collection to Date: 24,478.69

December 28: 6,915.05
Faith Direct: 1,609.25
Total Offertory: 8,824.30
Poor Box: 538.09
Every Penny Counts Box: 40.68

Number of Adult Envelopes: 152; Number of Children’s Envelopes: 0; Number of Faith Direct donors: 36 Number of Registered Households: 655

January 4: 9,902.17
Faith Direct: 1,609.25
Total Offertory: 11,511.42
Poor Box: 300.50
Every Penny Counts Box: 78.52
New Year’s Day: 3,758.00
Building Fund: 2,913.46

Number of Adult Envelopes: 229; Number of Children’s Envelopes: 11; Number of Faith Direct donors: 36 Number of Registered Households: 655

NEW OFFERTORY ENVELOPES: For 2009, we are changing to a new offertory envelope distribution system. Instead of quarterly mailings, the entire year of envelopes will be distributed at once. The new annual packs of offertory envelopes for 2009 are now available. **THEY WILL NOT BE MAILED.** The change in distribution this year is a cost-cutting measure intended to save processing fees, postage and staff time throughout the coming year. Thank you for your assistance in this effort. **PLEASE NOTE:** We aware that there were problems in the transmittal of our data to the envelope company and that there are several envelope sets that were not printed. If you find that your name or number is missing, please contact Tara in the Rectory so she can order a set for you. Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience and thank you for your patience.

Annual End of Year Contribution Statements: During the next few weeks our business office will begin to prepare contribution statements for the year 2008 (for regular envelope users/Faith Direct contributors). The parish is not obligated under the law to send these statements but rather it is done as a courtesy to our parishioners in gratitude for their faithful sacrifices of treasure and to assist them as they prepare their 2008 tax return. Contribution statements will be mailed sometime toward the end of January or the beginning of February. Statements will only be mailed to parishioners who contributed more than \$250 to the parish over the past year. Others may request a statement, should you need one, from the business office. We strive for accuracy in our recordkeeping but occasionally through human or technical errors we may make mistakes. If there are discrepancies in your statement, please call Mrs. Leslie O’Leary in the business office. Your canceled checks will greatly assist us in correcting our records! Please be sure that we have your most current address on file in our database so that we can get your statement to you in a timely fashion. If you have changed addresses or are not sure what address we have on file, please contact Tara in the rectory at 301-459-4814 or email her at tguevara@stmatthias.org. *Thank you to everyone who takes the time to use your offertory envelopes or Faith Direct and for your weekly sacrifice of treasure to our Lord.*



**My Gift to the
Father E. Albert Hughes
Scholarship Fund
Helping our parish children afford
a quality Catholic education**

New Offertory Envelope This Year!: Please look for the Father Hughes Scholarship offering envelope in your offertory packs and in the back of the church. Your contributions help to continue the tradition of giving scholarships to our parish youth to enable their families to provide a quality Catholic education for their children.

Faith Formation

Faith Formation classes begin this Monday, January 12th at 6:30pm

“Let the little children come to me... “ Jesus admonished His disciples in Mark 10:14 and Luke 18:16 when the disciples felt Jesus had more important things to do than to be with the children. Most of us parents here have heeded Christ’s call and made it a point to ensure the faith formation of our children despite the numerous other important activities we find on our plates. Yes, there are sporting activities, dance and instrumental music lessons, choir practices etc. but thank God, *by giving your child the opportunity to come to know his or her faith you have shown your child that which is most important; a relationship with God.*

For those of you who, for whatever reason, can not seem to find the time to ensure the faith formation of your child (this includes actual class time as well as participating in weekend liturgies) I entreat you to take a step back and ask yourself this question. **When all is said and done and our journey on earth comes to an end, how will we account for our lives? What will be the most important lesson we would have taught our children? What legacy would we have left behind for our children as they navigate the high waters of this earth?**

Confirmation Parent/Candidate Meeting: This session will meet on Monday, February 2, 2009 at 6:45 pm. At least one parent must accompany each child.

Baptism – Please call the office for prior registration. Be sure you have already registered in the parish for at least six months.

RCIA – Classes will continue as usual beginning on Tuesday, January 13, 2009 at 7:00 pm prompt.

Youth News

Youth Group has resumed its regular meeting schedule.

Looking forward in 2009: Members of our youth group have had an amazing and blessed 2008 and are looking forward to 2009. This year, plans are being put into place to allow us to finish the project we started last year: Finding His Image in Song Through Photography. We are also excited to be pursuing an internet venue such as FaceBook that will allow our youth to communicate with other members of the group and keep current on all the activities scheduled in the coming months. We hope by opening the lines of communication, that we will increase participation in our ministry and offer our youth a more positive outlet for their time and talents. Please watch for further updates!



**Mass Intentions for the
First Week in Ordinary Time**

Monday, January 12:

8:30 am Kobie Andrews (living, birthday)

Tuesday, January 13: Hilary, bishop, doctor

8:30 am Erick Guevara (living, birthday)

Wednesday, January 14:

8:30 am Dottie Gepert

Thursday, January 15:

8:30 am Frank Fragale

Friday, January 16:

8:30 am Josephine Yodichkas

Sat., January 17: Vigil– Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

3:30 pm to 4:30pm—Confessions

5:00 pm Jack Chappel

Sunday, January 18: Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:00 am Jerry Connor

9:30 am Mamie Barbera

11:30am Kay Mullany

Please Pray for: †The Sick and Homebound In Our Parish:

Phil Ates; Virgie Azarcon; Ann Benson; Leslie Berkey; Barbara Brink; Margaret Carr; Fidel dela Cuesta; Eleanor DeMarco; Lisa Farland; Dennis George; Francis Greenfield; Leslie Hand; Joseph Harrison; Charles Henry; Lena Jacobs; Father Keene; Paula Kelly; Catherine Kipp; Robyn Kirby; Laura Elaine Kiessling; Ray Krok; Nancy Maimone; Joe Makowski; Willie (Bill) Moore; Rosemarie Nardozi; Mary Nelson; David Obi; Peter O’Neill; Alice Parker; Dawn Pearson; June Provini; Rohland Reich; Joe Sico; Walter Stewart; Marian Wahle; Margaret Zanin; Ryan Zawada†Names will be placed on our prayer list for three weeks. To add a name or to request continuing prayers, contact Tara Guevara by phone at 301-459-4814 or email tguevara@stmatthias.org.

Other Items of Note

A Special THANK YOU: We would like to thank both Rendon/Hale and Gasch’s funeral homes for gifting to us the annual parish calendars. Their generous donation of the beautiful calendars is most appreciated by the parishioner of our church!

Final Day of the Vietnamese Sister’s Jubilee Celebration: The final day to visit the convent during this jubilee is Wednesday January 21st. During this grace-filled year, the Apostolic Penitentiary has granted plenary indulgences to all those who visit to our chapels on certain feast days under the usual conditions. The “usual conditions” for a plenary indulgence are sacramental Confession, Communion, prayer for the Pope’s intentions, and the absence of attachment to sin.

SCHOOL RAFFLE WINNER

**Congratulations to MRS. CHERYL RAMSEY,
our 1st Grade Teacher!**

She is the **WINNER** and **SELLER**
of this week’s winning raffle ticket.