

PASTOR'S COLUMN

The Favors of God

Father Donald Haggerty

It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. (Mk 1:9)

When we recall that John is offering a “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Mk 1:4), we may be puzzled why our Lord consents to undergo the ritual. Could this be a semblance of playacting? Why should Jesus make a gesture of symbolic repentance that contradicts his actual sinlessness as the Son of God? On the other hand, let us remember that while Jesus has no sin himself, he is willing to be considered a sinner on the cross. In this regard the baptism of Jesus at the Jordan is inseparable from the crucifixion. The immersion in the Jordan’s waters becomes, three years later, the dreadful immolation of the cross.

There is a thought to consider in this regard. When an adult convert is baptized into the Catholic Church, we can expect that such a person has been moved at some point by the sight of a crucifix and the realization that the man nailed there is God in the flesh. In the prison facility where I offer Mass on Saturday nights, I have known a seventy-eight year old man, formerly Jewish, who was baptized after some months in the jail. His wife of fifty-four years had been suffering from terminal cancer. One night, using an old 1950’s gun, he shot her to end her misery. He called 911 and, with the police operator on the phone, pulled the trigger four times to end his own life. But the gun malfunctioned each time. The operator interrupted, “Do you think maybe God is trying to tell you something?” In time this man had his own encounter with a crucifix, and perhaps in that hour he was given the full answer to the operator’s question.

The favors of God are indeed unfathomable. Let us remember that his mercy is often prepared for us through some expression of the humility of God, as we see in Jesus accepting baptism from John.

(Taken from Praying with Saint Mark’s Gospel Magnificat)

Father help me to see in your Son’s humility at the Jordan River an invitation to deepen humility in my own life, acknowledging always my need for your mercy.

Readings for the week of January 16 through January 21, 2012:

Monday: 1 Sm 15:16-23 Ps 50:8-9,16-17,21,23 Mk 2:18-22
 Tuesday: 1 Sm 16:1-13 Ps 89:20-22,27-28 Mk 2:23-28
 Wednesday: 1 Sm 17:32-33,37,40-51 Ps 144:1-2,9-10 Mk 3:1-6
 Thursday: 1 Sm 18:6-9;19:1-7 Ps 56:2-3,9-14 Mk 3:7-12
 Friday: 1 Sm 24:3-21 Ps 57:2-4,6,11 Mk 3:13-19
 Saturday: 2 Sm 1:1-4,11-12,19,23-27 Ps 80:2-3,5-7
 Mk 3:20-21

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, January 14, 2012

5:00 p.m. †Robert Blouw by Diana Blouw

Sunday, January 15, 2012 ~ 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

9:00 a.m. Sts. Simon, Jude & Anthony in thanksgiving

11:00 a.m. For the intentions of the Thomas Radlinski Family

5:00 p.m. †Rose Duprey by Margaret Wagner & Family

Tuesday, January 17, 2012

8:00 a.m. †Michael McCourt by Mary Postellon

Wednesday, January 18, 2012

8:00 a.m. Intentions of this Parish community

Thursday, January 19, 2012

8:00 a.m. Intentions of this Parish community

Friday, January 20, 2012

8:00 a.m. Intentions of this Parish community

Saturday, January 21, 2012

5:00 p.m. †Kevin Jonathan Clegg by his loving family

Sunday, January 22, 2012 ~ 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

9:00 a.m. †Thomas Skowronski by Sandra Koprowski & sisters

11:00 a.m. †Arthur Allwood by Joan & Bill Derr

5:00 p.m. Intentions of this Parish community

Scripture Readings for:

Sunday, January 22, 2012 ~ 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jon 3:1-5,10 Ps 25:4-9 1 Cor 7:29-31 Mk 1:14-20

Let us pray for one another with one mind and heart to the Lord our God**Neighborhood 0**

Bob & Donna Huebner

Robert Shaver

Neighborhood 1

Tom Bahns Norman Czerniak

Neighborhood 2

Frank Gerke

Neighborhood 4

Cecelia Bennetts Eugene Nawrocki

Joan Rademacher

Neighborhood 5

Pauline Hafke

Geneva Ritsema

Neighborhood 6

Karen Ann Smith

Neighborhood 7

Tammy Hickey

Neighborhood 8

Bartholomew Atkins

Neighborhood 9

Ted Cipponeri

Pauline Parent

Neighborhood 13

Conrad Balazs

Joan Hawley

Neighborhood 15

Sophia Blaser

Evelyn Kehoe

John Edelyn

Helen Ranta

Neighborhood 16

Ann Syrba

Neighborhood 17

Sherry Gaines

Neighborhood 20

Kevin & Kyle Friar

Ed Stein

Neighborhood 22

Lisa Kane

Don Rexford

Neighborhood 23

Michelle Groh

Neighborhood 24

Jim Babcock

Esther Brown

Tom Fitzgerald

Joseph Najar

Neighborhood 26

Gary Maher

Ronald Parini

Andrew Polaschik

Neighborhood 33

Albert Kolski

Carolyn Sheeran

Neighborhood 35

Sophie Anderson

Benny Herman

Neighborhood 36

Michael Chatterson

Neighborhood 37

Darren White

Others to remember:

Robert Ash

Angie Wilson

Sandy Potter

Baby Parker Grace

Robert Dean

April Scheen

Mary Drake

Diane Camminga

Daniel Ferguson

Lyndsey Freiburger

Gordan Grant

Bill Louwers

Doug Meyers

Jim Szyperski

William Redmond

Leocadia Jaworski

Keep Christ present throughout the year by listening to your local Catholic radio station, **Holy Family Radio**, AM 1140, or listen live at HolyFamilyRadio.net. Catholic radio is on the air in West MI thanks to the support of our listeners and our business underwriters.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Do you ever feel that you aren't getting as much as you wish you were out of the Mass? After hearing this lament, not only from some of our youth, but also at times from adults, I have been wondering how this can be remedied. We list a variety of reasons for the disconnect, for our lack of enthusiasm. The reasons vary somewhat; "It's the same every week. It's not engaging, the homilies are too long, we don't understand them, it doesn't seem relevant to me and where I am right now. The music is so..."liturgical". It feels like I'm just going through the motions—I don't *feel* anything. " What I have come to understand, in talking to people of faith, is that we sometimes forget that we don't come to the Mass only to "get something out of it". We come to the Mass to offer ourselves to God; an unworthy sacrifice, made worthy by his sacrifice. We come to the Mass to praise the Almighty God, who made us and offers us everlasting life. We come in response to the request of the Most High God, to dwell within us through the Eucharist. We come so that we may be sent forth bringing with us, His healing presence to the world.

I am humbled and awestruck by the beautiful and ancient woman who apparently understands little, if any, English. She sits in the pew ahead of me and to my right. Her withered brown hands, surprisingly large for her small frame, hold a well-worn missal--Vietnamese translation. She follows along with the Mass in her native language, even as the songs, the readings, the prayers and the homily are conducted in a mixture of English and "English with an accent". Her expression never falters, the light of faith, bright in her eyes, her reverence and awareness of each movement of the celebration obvious in her stance. At the sign of peace, she holds out her beautiful hand and smiles. I wonder, what is this woman "getting out of" the Mass...I realize she is making herself present, offering herself, responding to the invitation and the request. She will receive God. What more can anyone ask.

Let us be reminded that our Mass is so much more than what we see. We come for the visible, we do our best to celebrate well; but we come, too, for the *invisible*, that which Christ Himself brings to the celebration, that which we can only access by being fully present and ready to receive it. Thanks be to God for this amazing gift. By God's grace may we come to understand it and appreciate it ever more fully.

HIGH SCHOOL

All High School students interested in assisting with the Middle School Retreat, February 24-26, please attend our first leaders meeting in the BAC on January 21 from 12:30pm-3:30pm. Subsequent meetings will be held at the same time on Sundays, Jan 29, Feb 5, 12, 19. If you wish, please call Mary Evett for more information.

Mission Trip: Deadline of Feb 1, to register for the July 8-13, 2012 trip is fast approaching. We are offering an information meeting on January 18 at 5:30pm in the BAC. This will be especially helpful **for first time students and parents** who would like **more information** prior to registration. If you are interested but unable to make this meeting, please contact Mary.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mark your calendars watch for details! **Middle School Retreat** is coming up! Feb. 24-26! Faith & Fun on January 26th has been canceled. Lock-In for Jan. 27th! Watch for information.

FAITH FORMATION

Prayer Service for Parents Who Have Lost A Child Friday, January 20th @ 7pm

Parents who have suffered the loss of a child are invited to participate in a prayer service designed to offer blessing and consolation as they remember those who are now with God.

Mark Your Calendars!

Couples Retreat:

Saturday, February 4, 6 PM to 9 PM

This retreat is an evening of dining, reflection and conversation that focuses marriage as a sacrament. Couples will have the opportunity to mingle with friends, share an intimate dinner and embark on a journey that will reaffirm the vows that they made. Please sign up in the Gathering Area, space is limited.

Servers Needed for the Couples Retreat

High School and Middle School students are invited to help serve at the Couples Retreat on February 4th, from 5-9:30 pm. Please sign up during Faith Formation classes or call the Parish Office to volunteer.

Annual Men's Retreat at St. Lazare Retreat House-

February 10, 2012

Attention men of St. Mary Magdalen! It is time to make your reservation to spend a quiet, restful and holy weekend at St. Lazare Retreat House in Spring Lake. The theme of the retreat this year is, "Living an Authentic Christian Life". Each person is assigned a private room and meals are provided. Please call Molly Wisdom at 455-9310 ext. 12 for cost and reservation information. If you would like to check out the retreat house and weekend schedule, you can visit www.stlazareretreat.org. Space is limited so please don't delay in reserving your spot for a rejuvenating weekend!

St. Mary Magdalen Middle School Retreat 2012

February 25th-27th

Registration Forms are Available!

All Middle School students are invited to join us for our annual Middle School Retreat. The weekend will be filled with prayer, music, games, fun and reflection. The High School Leaders will begin working soon, to provide a great weekend experience that will allow retreatants to spend time in a faith-filled and fun environment. Registration forms along with PHAT House information can be found in the Gathering Area. Please contact Molly or Mary at the Parish Office for more information.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

There is still time to enter your chili in the SMM **Chili Cook-off**. Everyone is invited next Saturday after Mass to judge the chilies that have been made. There is a \$1 charge to eat all the chili you want. You will be given 1 ticket that you will use to vote for your favorite chili. Call the office if you would like to enter your favorite chili recipe.



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Our next **'Over 55'** lunch will be Thursday, January 26. We will eat at 12 noon, but you can come at 11:30 to chat with friends. Please RSVP to the office by Tuesday, January 24 so we have enough for everyone to eat.

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The Men's Group will meet on Tuesday, January 24 in Room 3. All men of the parish are invited to come and find out what is being planned for the men of the parish.

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The Wine & Cheese Party will be February 18. Once again we will have the pasta bar along with a variety of appetizers and delicious desserts. Cost is still \$20/pp in advance and \$25/pp at the door. Please get your tickets early so we can plan accordingly. This is an evening that you don't want to miss.

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Stewardship Thought: "Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, 'What are you looking for?'" -John 1:38 What are you looking for? It is a question Jesus asks each of us. Are we wasting our time looking for the material pleasures of the world? Or are our hearts really longing for something deeper that can be found only by spending time with God?

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Catholic Charities West Michigan's 14th annual Soup's On for All!, a fundraiser for God's Kitchen food and pantry programs, will be celebrated at the B.O.B. in downtown Grand Rapids from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm Monday, January 23, 2012. For information about tickets and event details please call Mary Ruth Scholz at (616) 551-5659 or visit the Soup's On web site at www.soupsonforall.org.

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God's Kitchen is in need of Meals on Wheels drivers to deliver meals to homebound individuals in the Grand Rapids area. Delivery days are Monday, Wednesday and Friday and meals are ready at 10:30am--each route takes about an hour. Drivers can work once per week, every other week or be a back-up driver. If you are interested in helping, or for more information, please contact Vickie Delands-Kochans at vdelands@ccwestmi.org or 616.551.5666.

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Catholic Charities West Michigan's Pregnancy Counseling and Support Program is designed to assist individuals, couples and their families to make decisions, solve problems, set goals and utilize appropriate resources. This voluntary free program counsels expectant parents who have concerns related to their pregnancy or choice to parent. Please call toll free 1-866-271-6796 for more information.

FINANCIAL NEWS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Contributions</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Over (Under)</u>
Jan. 8, 2012	\$ 12,869	\$ 14,120	(\$ 1,251)
Year to Date	\$ 376,850	\$ 395,360	(\$ 18,510)

382 envelopes used

Now that we have just passed the halfway point of our fiscal year (or "halftime" as we football-heads call it), it might be good to take a quick look at where we're at.

	<u>YTD (as of 12/31/11)</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Revenue	\$ 370,478	\$387,595	(\$17,117)
Expenses	<u>336,919</u>	<u>353,270</u>	(16,351)
Margin	\$ 33,559	\$ 34,325	(\$ 766)

Basically, what this shows is that while our revenues have fallen short of what we would like to see, as a staff we have responded to this by keeping an even closer watch on our expenditures and becoming more efficient with our resources, while still ministering to the needs of our parish. And while we encourage you all to continue to support our parish community in ALL ways, as your gifts of time and treasure permit, we will continue to strive to be good stewards of that support.

PARISH STAFF

Pastoral Staff:

Ruth Bush:	Coordinator of Christian Services, x16 rbush@stmmagdalen.org
Mary Evett	Coordinator of Youth & Young Adult Ministry, x15 mevett@stmmagdalen.org
Jenna Fowle	Director of Music Ministry, x25 music@stmmagdalen.org
Molly Wisdom	Coordinator of Faith Formation, x12 mollyw@stmmagdalen.org

Administrative Staff:

Joe Hakeem	Business Manager, jhakeem@stmmagdalen.org , x14
Nancy Baum	Parish Secretary, nbaum@stmmagdalen.org , x10
Sharon Mascarenhas:	Admin. Assistant, smascarenhas@stmmagdalen.org

Maintenance Staff: Bobby Jackson Jr., Supervisor & Brenda Bush

Pastoral Support Staff:

Deacons	Mike Dordan & Michael Wood
Sacristans	Wayne Ball, Joseph Nguyen
Music Ministry	Dave Doppel
Nursery	Lisa Jackson ~ boblisajackson@comcast.net

Pastoral Council:

Bob Dodde	Laurie Emelander	Patricia Guzzo
Pamela Kosten	Kim Levesque	Daniel Moomey
Mark O'Gorman	Luisa Ortiz	Tom Richer
Tom Roos	Ronald Stephan	Josh Theisen (Youth Rep)

Finance Council:

Matthew Bielecki	Brent Hawkins	Lynie Huynh
Tom Nawrocki	Becky Vetter	Cathy Wells

Stewardship: Mike Bush Monica Dean Chris Loerch

Parish Registration: Contact the Parish Office for information, 455-9310.

Sacrament of Marriage: Call the Parish Office at least 6 months in advance.

Sacrament of Baptism: Please call the Parish Office to register for Baptism Prep.

PARISH NEWS

WOMEN'S GUILD will meet at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, January 19 at Russo's Italian Restaurant, 6209 S Division Ave. We will be discussing upcoming activities and other matters. All women of the parish are welcome.

MANY THANKS to all who helped put up our Christmas decorations and who helped to take them down. It is quite a large task and with many hands the work goes quickly and with a lot more fun. Blessings,

Deacon Mike Dordan

Immaculate Heart of Mary School will host a **Winter Carnival** on January 28, 2012 from 6:30 to 9 p.m. in the School Gym, 1951 Plymouth SE (corner of Plymouth & Burton). Free Admission.

REMINDER: If East Kentwood Schools close because of bad weather, our evening activities will also be canceled. Please watch your local TV stations for word on cancelations, or check our website at www.stmmagdalen.org.

THIS WEEK IN THE PARISH

Sunday, January 15, 2012

Noon-2pm Reconciliation/1st Eucharist Sacramental Prep class

Tuesday, January 17, 2012

7:00 p.m. Pastoral Council Meeting in Rectory

Wednesday, January 18, 2012

4 p.m. Children's Choir practice

5:15 p.m. FF Supper

6:15 p.m. Faith Formation Classes resume

Thursday, January 19, 2012

3 p.m. Middle School Retreat Meeting

5:30 p.m. Bell Choir practice

6:30 p.m. Adult Choir practice

Friday, January 20, 2012

7:00 p.m. Prayer Service for Loss

Saturday, January 21, 2012

9:30 a.m. Language School in Family Center

6-9pm CHILI COOK-OFF in Family Center

Sunday, January 22, 2012 ~ Baptism Weekend

12-2 pm HS Leader Mtg for MS Retreat

If you haven't read the Youth Ministry column, please do so. It is very good information for all of us, not just our youth!