

BAPTISM OF THE LORD



The Pastor's New Year Invitation

In St. Matthew's Gospel, Jesus instructs us to "Go forth and make disciples.... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...and behold, I am with you always..."(Mt 28:19-20).

This Lenten season, Holy Trinity Parish is initiating **Disciples in Mission**, a three-year Lenten community experience, designed to draw us closer to Jesus, to carry His message of love into the world by our deeds as well as words, and to strengthen our commitment of service to both our God and each other. Additionally, through our prayerful participation, we can grow in holiness: grow closer to Jesus and to each other as we renew our faith. **Disciples in Mission** is an opportunity to bring Christ's presence consciously into all parts of our lives and to learn more about our rich Catholic faith.

Over the next few weeks you will hear and read more about **Disciples in Mission**. Briefly, it is a Gospel-based program designed by the Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association (PCNEA). Over 2000 Parishes in 34 Dioceses have shared this inspirational spiritual growth experience, to learn about God's Word and be more comfortable sharing it.

Disciples in Mission participants share in six, weekly, ninety-minute-long, small group meetings through Lent. Groups of from seven to 10 people will meet at various times and in different locations throughout the Parish area and will be facilitated by parishioners who have received special training to do so. In addition, participants will receive Disciples in Mission guide booklets to assist them on their journey.

The small group meetings are based on the Lenten Sunday readings. They offer thanksgiving and praise to God, they help us to share our faith, and they provide a time of fellowship with other Christian brothers and sisters. **Everyone in the Parish – people of all ages – are invited to be part of the Disciples in Mission program.** Small groups for teenagers are already being formed in the Faith Formation classes at the Ashland campus. **Disciples in Mission** will also provide fun activities for families to share at home. As you become more informed about the program, please prayerfully consider your participation in this special way to observe the Lenten season.

So, how do you get involved? **On the weekends of January 24 and 31, "Sign up Sundays"** will be held at all Masses at each campus. When you register for **Disciples in Mission** you will be invited to specify times and locations most convenient for you, and every effort will be made to direct you to a group meeting at a time and a location in the Parish area that is convenient to you. Members of the **Disciples in Mission** Parish Leadership Team will be on hand to answer questions and assist you in signing up. If you have questions, or want additional information, please do not hesitate to approach me, or members of the Leadership Team. Members of this team are Alan and Ginny Arsenault, Ken and Joan Bergstrom, Peter and Kathryn Drexel, Tony Fitzherbert, Dave Gravel, Elena Worrall and myself.

I look forward to your active participation in **Disciples in Mission**. You will learn much more about this opportunity to grow your faith in the next few weeks.

In Jesus' Name,

Father Leo

VERY IMPORTANT NOTICE!

Those who have agreed to become small group facilitators for the **Disciples in Mission Lenten Program**, will be attending a training session on Thursday, January 14, from 6:30PM to 9:30 PM, at St. Agnes Hall. For more information, please contact Tony Fitzherbert at 536-2188.

Disciples in Mission Team leaders

Alan Arsenault	744-8045	Alan.Arsenault@hp.com
Ginny Arsenault	same	ginarsenault@aol.com
Joan Bergstrom	536-3604	bbits2@yahoo.com
Ken Bergstrom	same	bbits@roadrunner.com
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Elena Worrall	744-0105	eworrall@daveworrall.org
Fr. Leo LeBlanc	536-4700	stmatt@roadrunner.com

RESCHEDULED

Knights of Columbus BREAKFAST

Sunday, January 10

St. Matthew Hall
7:30 AM-9:30 AM



Annual St. Agnes Feast Day Dinner

Please join us on Saturday, Jan. 23, after the 5:45 Mass in the St. Agnes Parish Hall for our Annual St. Agnes Feast Day Dinner. The Women of St. Agnes will be preparing the dinner, but if anyone would like to contribute a dessert that would be wonderful. Please sign up on the sheet in the back of the church. Hope to see you there!! Any questions, please call Elena Worrall 744-0105.



The Care Net Pregnancy Center in

Plymouth would like to thank our friends at St. Matthew Church for giving so generously this Christmas! Our many needy families were truly blessed by your generous giving. A special thank you goes

to the Norwoods for once again putting it all together for us. Thank you and God bless you all!



Operation Helping Hands

NH Catholic Charities is seeking volunteers, 10-15 people, the week of May 22 to May 29 to participate in Operation Helping Hands in New Orleans, LA. The focus of the week is to help needy homeowners to clean up their neighborhoods and restore their homes. Volunteers must travel at their own expense. Simple meals and basic accommodations will be provided. For more information or to reserve a space, please call the Laconia office, Leonard Campbell, 528-3035



QUESTION OF THE WEEK

In what concrete ways can you further Christian discipleship in those you are close to?



Baptism of the Lord

God's self-disclosures: Theophanies

From Christmas to the weeks immediately following, our Scriptures and Liturgy provide a special series of theophanies, God's self-disclosures or revelations.

Certainly Christmas needs no elaboration. Then there was the revelation of Jesus as a member of the Holy Family, the Solemnity of Mary, where she treasured all the astounding events about her child and family in her heart. Epiphany, a form of revelation or shining forth, provided the occasion for Jesus' being recognized by the Gentiles, in the person of the Magi with their lavish gifts.

Today the Baptism of the Lord, rounding out the Christmas Season, has Jesus moving from infancy to adulthood, from welcome to mission. Jesus' baptism marks the threshold of public life, when he experienced the unconditional acceptance of the Father and a fresh awareness of the Holy Spirit.

It is instructive that at his baptism, Jesus is at prayer, the posture in which all Christians are to find themselves regularly before the revelation and empowerment of God. In Luke's Gospel, all important events in Christ's life begin in prayer, not only by way of example but as a conduit for God's activity.

We too, who have been baptized, should see in this act of acceptance by the Father and Son, and in the conferral of the Holy Spirit, not a banner or trophy, but a personal theophany to "commission" us, send us on mission together with other disciples to make the love of God known in the name of Jesus.

BULLETIN CONNECTION

The place of Jesus' baptism at Bethany across the Jordan has the remains of five churches, one built on top of another. In the early centuries of the Christian era those to be baptized walked down to an area where the waters of the Jordan flowed through four pillars, dividing the water into a cross. Many of the newly baptized etched a cross into the stone of the baptistery walls, signifying their desire to be like Jesus. Indeed, in baptism we do become like Jesus. We become God's beloved sons and daughters who are called to manifest God's love to the world. Christ was shown to be the beloved Son by his love for others. If we want to follow him, we have to do more than wear a cross around our neck (or carve one into the baptistery wall). We, too, have to manifest God's love.



Deacon Mike's Bible study meets Wednesday evenings at St. Agnes Hall in Ashland from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM. We are examining and discussing the Gospel of Luke. Please join us and bring your bible.



Epiphany Proclamation (part 2)

As explained last week, many of the important feasts of the Church year move, based upon the date that Easter is set. This year, Easter Sunday is April 4, and based on that date, here are the holy days of obligation and movable feasts for 2010:

- Mary, Mother of God - **Friday, January 1**, Holy day of Obligation
- Ash Wednesday - **Wednesday, February 17**
- Palm Sunday - **Sunday, March 28**
- Holy Thursday - **Thursday, April 1**
- Good Friday - **Friday, April 2**
- Holy Saturday - **Saturday, April 3**
- Easter Sunday - **Sunday, April 4**
- Divine Mercy Sunday - **Sunday, April 11**
- Ascension - **Thursday, May 13**, Holy Day of Obligation
- Pentecost Sunday - **Sunday, May 23**
- Trinity Sunday - **Sunday, May 30**
- Corpus Christi - **Sunday, June 6**
- Assumption of Mary - **Sunday, August 15**
- All Saints Day - **Monday, November 1**
- First Sunday of Advent - **Sunday, November 28**
- Immaculate Conception - **Wednesday, December 8**, Holy Day of Obligation
- Christmas - **Saturday, December 25**, Holy Day of Obligation

RITE OF ENROLLMENT Bristol Confirmation II students, with their sponsors, will participate in the Rite of Enrollment on Sunday, January 17, 2010 during 9:30 Mass at Our Lady of Grace Chapel. They will declare before their parish family that they desire to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Please keep these candidates in your prayers as they journey to reception of the sacrament.

There will be a second collection next weekend for the Seminarian Education Fund to help educate those who are responding to God's call. The gifts you make go directly to help pay for the seminarians' education and formation. Please continue your financial support and pray as a parish family for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

Statements of parish contributions in 2009 are available for those who used the envelope system. Please call Marilyn at the Bristol parish office, 744-2700 or email stimothy@metrocast.net. Statements can be sent via email (quicker & less costly!). Please provide email address.

