A New Year—OPTIMISM

As we gradually move into the New Year, it is valuable to keep before us the idea of New Plans and New Resolutions that will support us in our efforts throughout the New Year. In last Sunday's homily, I spoke of the importance of understanding Jesus in a new way. The name Jesus means God Saves. How important is that truth—Our God Saves! However, He doesn’t save by clicking His Divine fingers.

He saves by being with us, being an integral part of our journey and of our life. In St. Matthew's Gospel this is very important. Jesus is Emmanuel which means “God is with us.” (Matthew 1:25) He saves by journeying with us in a personal relationship.

Throughout this New Year, I invite you to be hopeful and excited about growing your personal relationship with Jesus. See Him as the one who invites you to Eucharist. Invite Him to be an integral part of your whole life. In March, we will once again offer the Discovering Christ series which has been helpful to so many people. (details available on our website and at the church office) Consider signing up for this 7 week process. It sure can open up new opportunities for growing your relationship with Him.

A friend of mine handed me the Optimist Creed after Mass on Wednesday night. She is a member of Optimist International. I thought to myself, Wow... that just fits in with what I am writing about in this week's bulletin!

Be optimistic about your growing relationship with Him!

— Fr. Gerry

January 8, 2017
The Epiphany of the Lord
Mass Intentions

Week of January 9—January 15, 2017:

7:30 am Mon.: COMMUNION SERVICE
7:30 am Tues.: COMMUNION SERVICE
6:00 pm Wed.: COMMUNION SERVICE
7:30 am Thurs.: COMMUNION SERVICE
7:30 am Fri.: People of the Parish
5:30 pm Sat.: Christie Junquist (RIP)
8:00 am Sun.: Rose & Nicholas Valentine (RIP)
10:30 am Sun.: Edna Mangialardi (RIP)

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Sat 4:30-5:00pm or by appt.

New Announcements

*Sunday Adult Class starts again on 1/15/17* between the Sunday masses. We will be starting a new study, The Jesus of Scripture by Fr. Donald Senior. ALL ARE WELCOME! Come and grow with us!

*Children’s Liturgy and Nursery start back this Sunday at the 10:30 mass.

*The Food Pantry Ministry* needs your contributions of non-perishable food in unbreakable family size packages. The food collections go alternately to the Stewpot Food Pantry and the South Rankin Food Resource Center. More information and suggestions can be found on our website. Please place items in the basket in the back of church.

Journey to Wholeness: In Divorce and Beyond—Jan. 20-22, 2017
As with any journey into unknown territory, it is wise to have a guide and the companionship of other like minded travelers. Join us for a weekend of preparation and equipping for the journey ahead. Facilitators: Larry Brown, LPC and Cori Brown Cater, LPC from Clarity Counseling in Starkville. Begins with 6:30 supper. Donation: $200 For more information contact the Dwelling Place at 662-738-5348 or email us at dwellpl@gmail.com

*Weekly offering for Jan. 1st: $27,599 Thank You!*

Congratulations to Cory and Meredith Head on the recent birth of their son, Thomas James Head!

Blessed Mother flowers are donated by Joe & Linda Granger in memory of their sister-in-law Frannie Granger.

Prayer Intentions

Landon Lemonis
Santa Crout Ed Hayes
Tami May, friend of Ro Agosta
Marian Beall, friend of Fr. Gerry & Jennifer Henry
Iva Beth Lindsey, 2 year old cousin of Melinda Cannon

Repose of the Soul
Doris Moody, mother of Robert Moody
Bill Carollo, father of William Carollo
June Shoop, mother of Lynn Glover

Reminders

◆ Faith Formation:
- RCIA will resume this Tuesday, Jan. 10th.
- Wednesday night Religious Education classes will resume this week, January 11th.
- Sunday Religious Education and Adult Religious Education will resume next Sunday, January 15th.


We will host another Discovering Christ Session in March! This is the first session of the ChristLife series. Registration will open in January on our website. **Due to insufficient numbers we will not be holding Following Christ in January 2017. Another session will be offered later in 2017!**

*Living Everyday with Passion & Purpose led by Matthew Kelly* will be in our area on March 11th. Our parish will have tickets available soon!

Applications are now being accepted at Saint Joseph Catholic School for the 2017-2018 school year. You can pick up an application at the school or go online to our website, www.stjoebruins.com, under the Admissions tab and print out or we can mail one to you. Registration begins February 1, 2017.

SAVE the DATE: "Jeans, Jazz and Bruin Blues," Saint Joseph Catholic School’s 24th Annual Draw Down is set for February 18, 2017, 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. To sponsor or purchase tickets, visit the Saint Joseph Catholic School website at stjoebruins.com or call the school office at 601-898-4800.

Save the Date: Krewe de Cardinal Mardi Gras Carnival Ball- February 24, 2017 Old Capitol Inn Downtown Jackson 7:00 PM-11:00PM For sponsorship and ticket information please contact Chris Lombard clombard@strichardschool.org

*Altar Flowers and Blessed Mother Flowers sign-up for 2017* is now available on our website. Simply go to our website and go to the registration form tab.

**BULLETIN:** Information must be submitted in writing by note or email to the parish office no later than 12:00 noon on Wednesdays for the following weekend. When sending an email, please put “BULLETIN” in the subject line. Thank you for your cooperation!
This week, I’d like to share with you a response from Bill Stevens. Thank you, Bill for sharing your thoughts and a portion of Marie Livingston Roy’s letter. It offers much reflection on how we can all move from Maintenance to Mission.

Please continue to send me your thoughts on the following:

“If you were the person charged with writing the “Rules of Engagement in Catholic Worship” what are some of the items/conventions you would address? Please write me your responses or send an email.”

- Fr. Gerry

Father Hurley, I guess your questions, asked in the bulletin, struck a nerve with me. You were right on point in wondering why the inattention and seemingly uncaring prevails among many people during the worship service. Certainly, I cannot presume to have all the answers, but sometimes the question is more instructive than the answer.

- Would a screen above the altar, as many other churches have, help children, hearing impaired, and others follow the mass?
- Would a larger, carpeted foyer upon entering the church, help newcomers and different ethnic groups mingle, meet and feel more a part of the total parish family?
- Would it help, if occasionally, you could stop in your readings, and say a few brief words as to what the section of the mass is directed to, or the significance of the section? This tends to wake people out of their wondering minds!!
- What if we took more time when we greet each other, say two or three minutes during the service, to actually have time to meet new people, find out their names, their children, etc? Would that reenergize them to the service?

There are times one must close their/our eyes to concentrate on the words and prayers of the mass, so as not to be distracted into the Netherlands. Maybe this is natural, but we all know our interest span is very short.

I recently read a letter from Marie Livingston Roy about why someone didn’t accept the Christian faith, and I quote a portion of her letter:

“Never speak to me of church. What does the church know of my despair, the church barricaded behind its stained glass windows against the likes of me? Once, I heard your pleas for my repentance and sought a fellowship of faith within your walls.

There I saw your God reflected in your faces as you turned away….Forgiveness never came…..The healing love I sought was carefully hoarded, reserved only for your kind.

Be gone from me and speak no more of God. I’ve seen your God made manifest in you: a God with no compassion. So long as your God withholds the warmth of human touch from me, I shall remain an unbeliever.”

Pretty strong words, possibly filled with self pity, but our Church was founded on the human touch, family worship, love and compassion. When we don’t have that, it’s just a building that gathers a neighborhood together to hear words spoken without meaning. The REASON FOR THE MEETING, ie, THE MASS, gets lost in the “obligation to attend”.

Just some of my thoughts,
Bill
Church Office Hours: Tuesday — Thursday, 8 am - 4 pm / Friday 8am - 12pm

www.saintpaulcatholicchurch.com (601) 992-9547

Pastor — Fr. Gerry Hurley — pastor@saintpaulcatholicchurch.com or office@saintpaulcatholicchurch.com

Administrator — Deacon John McGregor — jmcgregor@saintpaulcatholicchurch.com

Faith Formation — Sarah O’Donnell — rel.edu@saintpaulcatholicchurch.com

Finance/Bookkeeper — Renee Carpenter — finance@saintpaulcatholicchurch.com

Grounds/Maintenance — Kevin Smith — office@saintpaulcatholicchurch.com

Learning Center — Jennifer Henry, Director — stpaullearningcenter@gmail.com

Liturgy, Prayer Requests, Births, Baptisms — Monica Walton — liturgy@saintpaulcatholicchurch.com

Music Ministry — Ed Thomas — est5271@gmail.com

Receptionist — Renee Borne — office@saintpaulcatholicchurch.com

R.C.I.A. — Rodney Hipp — adult.edu@saintpaulcatholicchurch.com

Senior Adult Ministry — Monica Walton — sradults@saintpaulcatholicchurch.com

Youth Group — Cory Head — youth@saintpaulcatholicchurch.com