

✦ *Magnificat Newsletter* ✦

Volume 7 Issue 1

Holy Rosary Catholic School Spiritual Life

Advent 2004



Advent is the first season of the liturgical year in the Catholic Church. It is an opportunity we have to remind us of a few of the basic truths our faith has taught us. In addition, it is our responsibility to share these truths with our children. It is a time to not only teach about spiritual preparation, but to *begin* traditions in our home. Traditions keep a family close. They are part of the glue that binds us together. Advent traditions coordinate the family's spiritual efforts and develop a generosity to others and God. It's never too late to start a tradition. Here are a few ideas you may want to incorporate into your celebration, or use as a springboard for some new ones of your own.

** At the beginning of Advent, place an empty stable in a visible place in your home. Gradually add pieces of the nativity during the season. Put baby Jesus in the manger on Christmas morning.

** Create a "Blessing Bowl". Once a week, family members will write a reason that each of the other members was a blessing to them during the previous week. These are put in the bowl, and kept there until Christmas morning when they are read aloud. Pack the blessings and the container away with all your Christmas items. On the first day of Advent the following year, read them again to put everyone in the spirit to start again!

** Make an Advent chain. Write a kind deed or gesture a family member made that day on a strip of construction paper. Add another strip/deed each day as it forms a chain. By Christmas morning you'll have a beautiful and loving decoration for your tree.

** Put an empty manger in a prominent place in your home. As family members do good deeds, or bring kindness to others, have them place a piece of straw in the manger. On Christmas Day, Jesus will have a soft and warm bed to lie in.

** Instead of reading the classical "T'was the Night Before Christmas" to your children before they go to sleep on Christmas Eve, here's an alternative written by Sister Mary Thomas about the "Night Before the First Christmas":

T'was the night before Christmas and all through the town
St. Joseph was searching, walking up roads and down.
Our Lady was waiting, so meek and so mild.
While Joseph was seeking a place for the Child.

The children were nestled, each snug in his bed,
And the grownups wouldn't bother. There's no room, they said.
When even the innkeeper sent them away
and Joseph was wondering where they would stay.

He thought of the cave in the side of the hill
Let's go there," said Mary. It's silent and still."
The moon on the breast of the new fallen snow
Made a pathway of light for their tired feet to go.

And there in the cave in a cradle of hay
The Saviour was born on that first Christmas Day.
The Father was watching in heaven above
And sent for His angels, His courtiers of love.

More rapid than eagles God's bright angels came,
Rejoicing and eager as each heard his name.
"Come Powers, come Cherubs, come Virtues and
Raphael,
Come Thrones and Dominions, come Michael and
Gabriel.

"Now fly to the earth where my poor people live,
Announce the glad tidings My Son Comes to give."
The Shepherds were watching their flocks on the night
And saw in the heavens an unearthly light.

The angels assured them they'd nothing to fear.
"It's Christmas," they said. "The Saviour is here!"
They hastened to find Him, and stood at the door,
Till Mary invited them in to adore.

Then softly they left Him, the Babe in the hay,
And rejoiced with great joy on that first Christmas Day.
Mary heard them exclaim as they walked up the hill,
"Glory to God in the highest; Peace to men of good will."

He was swaddled in bands from His head to His feet,
And never did shepherds see a Baby so sweet!
He spoke not a word but the shepherds all knew.
He was telling them secrets and blessing them too.



May the blessings of this season be with all of you this year.

~Debbie Heid, 2nd Grade Teacher

During the liturgical season of Advent, the Church reflects on the hope we have for that day when the plan of God will be completed. We long for the day when Christ will come again in glory. Isaiah gives voice to the desires of God's people when he writes:

Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
The calf and the young lion shall browse together,
With a little child to guide them (Isaiah 11:6)

The Spiritual Life Committee has asked some children to guide our own reflections during the season of anticipation. These sixth grade students offer to you their reflections on the joyful mysteries of the rosary, hoping that their meditations will help you enter more prayerfully into this season of Advent.

~Chad Riley, Upper School Religion Teacher



The First Joyful Mystery, The Annunciation

Hail Mary full of grace...the rosary prayed worldwide holds a special place in many hearts. The beads, prayers, and mysteries associated with the rosary are sometimes taken for granted. Many people have heard of the Joyful mysteries but seldom do they actually reflect on what they mean. Jesus brought about these mysteries, so we should respect them like we respect him.

Of the four mysteries, the Joyful mysteries are the most celebratory. The Annunciation is one of the events in Mary's life we celebrate in praying the rosary. The Annunciation is when Mary was told that she would have a child and name him Jesus. Mary believed in Gabriel with all of her heart. Thus, she would be the mother of God. This showed Mary's great faith in God.

The Annunciation is important to me because it shows what great faith and loyalty Mary had to God. This helps me by reminding me to believe no matter what troubles I encounter. Mary did. Life got tough for her after it was revealed she was carrying the Savior of the world. Joseph was ashamed of her. Mary however, believed in God and found the faith to go on through him. I do this today when I face uncertain times. This mystery also reminds me of a Bible passage. In Luke 17:5-6 Jesus talks about having faith. He says, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this

mulberry tree, be uprooted and planed in the sea and it would obey you.” Mary portrays this kind of faith when Gabriel comes. The unquestioning way Mary accepts the call of God is how we should follow our faith, hence, forming a stronger bond with God.

The Annunciation is a very important part of the Christian community. This mystery is the first in the sequence of Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious. Therefore, without the Annunciation, the complete story of Jesus would be skewed. In conclusion, all mysteries are important, however, and should have an important place in our minds, hearts, and lives.

~Julie Eckelbarger



The Second Joyful Mystery, The Visitation

Mary went through a lot to visit her cousin, Elizabeth. When Mary found out she was going to have a baby, she went to visit Elizabeth. Mary might not have felt so well, but she still went. When Mary arrived and Elizabeth saw her, the babe in Elizabeth's womb jumped for joy, and Elizabeth was filled with happiness. So we can see, it would have been easier for Mary to stay home and prepared to have her baby, but she went through a lot to share Jesus with Elizabeth, which made Elizabeth very happy.

Following Mary's example, we should listen to what God says, and tell others about him, which will make them happy. Even when it is not convenient for us, we should tell others about him, so they can feel the joy Elizabeth had when Mary visited her. We should tell others about Jesus whenever we can!

~Kris G.



The Third Joyful Mystery, The Nativity

My favorite story in the Bible is the birth of Jesus. God chose two unique people to be the parents of Jesus. Joseph, a carpenter from Nazareth, and Mary, who was engaged to Joseph at the time, were chosen to be the parents of a son sent by the Lord to save his people from their sins. God did not pick two popular people. Not wealthy people. Just normal everyday people were chosen for this honor.

Soon after they were married, a census count by the Emperor required everyone to return to their home towns. Mary was about to give birth. They could not find a place to stay. A man was kind enough to let them use his stable where his animals were kept. When baby Jesus was born, Mary placed Jesus in a manger where he was kept warm by hay.

I do not think God could have picked a better place to have Jesus. For the man who would be the Savior of us all to have such a poor welcome shows me that God placed his own child with animals to teach us that every living thing is important. Many guests welcomed baby Jesus. Shepherds and wise men came to visit the new king of Jews. The new king of Jews would become the savior not only of Jews but of us all. For this reason I love the story of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Savior of us all.

~Mitch Pagel



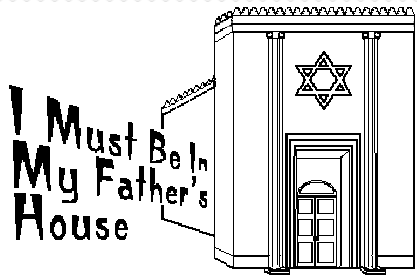
The Fourth Joyful Mystery, The Presentation

When Jesus was presented in the temple, he was only a little baby. The presentation back then is related to our baptism. When he was presented in the temple, he was accepting the Jewish faith. Jesus was presented to Simeon, a priest. Simeon was promised that he would see the Messiah before death.

The presentation of Jesus is important to me because after he was presented he may have been talked about all over Nazareth. When they saw him they were amazed and astonished. Some people bowed when they saw him. People would record the moments that they met him and put it on scrolls afterward.

The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple fulfilled God's promise as recorded in Scriptures. When Simeon saw Jesus he took him into his arms and blessed God by saying, "Now master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and Glory for your people, Israel." The presentation in the temple fulfilled the scriptures and God's promise.

~Lisa Hampton



The Fifth Joyful Mystery, The Finding in the Temple

The Finding of Jesus in the Temple was a very important event in Jesus' life. Jesus was in the temple at the age of twelve. When Mary and Joseph found him, he was sitting in front of all the priests. He was preaching the good news to them and teaching them about God. The priests were asking questions and listening to this brilliant boy. When Mary and Joseph saw this they were amazed. Now Mary and Joseph were truly sure that Jesus was the savior of all God's people.

The Finding of Jesus in the Temple has a lot of meaning for me. It is a very special mystery. It has meaning because at such a young age Jesus was preaching the word to adults and older people. Jesus had the knowledge to go before the priests and tell them everything he knew about his father, God. The priests were speechless. There was a twelve-year-old boy that came into the Temple and was telling them how to love one another, live eternally, and to believe in God. If you have great faith and a deep desire to preach God's word, it won't matter how young or old you are. It will just matter what you do.

~Emily Scott