

The Solemnity of Mary the Holy Mother of God

We seek God's blessings as did Mary. Because of her Son, we can confidently call God, "Abba"!

Merry Christmas!!!

We use that title of Mary every time we say the Hail Mary, "Holy Mary Mother of God Pray for us sinners." But, what do we mean by it? We certainly do not believe that Mary was a goddess. That's polytheism and paganism. The understanding of today's feast flows from and understanding of whom we see Jesus is in our lives. We believe that Jesus Christ is one person, with two natures, human and divine. There is only one Jesus, but He is both God and Man. During this Christmas season we celebrate the Eternal Word of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, becoming One with us: "The Word Became Flesh and dwelt among us." The One who was for all eternity Divine, takes upon Himself in time a human nature. Mary is the Mother of the Eternal One who has taken a human nature through her. She is therefore, the mother of God.

That's the theological side of today's feast. Let's look at the spiritual side by focusing in on Mary. Mary is the paragon of a person of faith. She has an interior relationship with God that renders His Presence so real in her life that she conceived His Presence in her heart before she conceived His Presence in her womb.

She is the best of us. She is the one with the most profound relationship with God. Yet, the Gospels continually show that Mary steps aside from the astounding events surrounding the birth of Jesus and, for that matter, His entire life. Mary ponders things in her heart, the scripture says. Why does St. Luke even bother to note that? Certainly any one who was present at the Nativity would ponder this within their heart. Certainly, anyone who is told by an old man in the Temple that her child would be the cause of the rise and fall of many and that a sword would pierce her heart would dwell on this for the rest of her life. Certainly, anyone who searched for a missing twelve year old and found Him teaching learned men would wonder what all this was about. Why does the Gospel of Luke mention this "pondering in her heart" over and over again? Perhaps, because the Gospel of Luke wants to emphasize that Mary is not just a simple bystander to the events of salvation. She is quite aware that God is working His miracle of redemption for His people. She is also aware that her role in God's plan is to be sure the focus is on the divine initiative, not on her. She allowed God to work without obscuring His actions with her own interventions. This is the very essence of the spiritual life: to allow God's work to be seen, and His Presence to be experienced in us and through us without deflecting the attention to us, to be humble servants.

Mary, the paragon of faith, the Mother of God, must be our model for the Christian life. If we really want to be people of God we have got to be sure that the focus of all we do as Christians is on God, not on ourselves. If and when we do this than the spiritual is able to become physical and our faith is able to become real.

No, Mary is not a goddess. Her faith life has shown us all how to bring God to earth and how to allow others to experience the spiritual become physical, the Word Become Flesh. She is the Mother of God. Today we ask her to help us to have the faith, humility and courage to allow God to become real in our lives, in our families and in our world.

May, Mary, Mother of God, teach us how to bring Jesus to a world that longs for Him and may this season of Christmas be a blessing to us all.

Peace,

Fr. John Gerth

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SCHEDULE

Our Christmas play was wonderful this year. One of our very on students from High School wrote and helped to organize her class to put the program on for our younger students. Thank you Chelsea Thomas for being an active parishioner, you did an outstanding job.

January 1, 2012	No CCD Classes - Christmas Break
January 8, 2012	Class @ 11:30 after Mass (Center)
January 15, 2012	No CCD Classes Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

CHRISTMAS BASKETS

Seventy-one families in the St. Joseph Church area benefited at Christmas through food boxes and supermarket gift card donations to our Parish Outreach Ministry. All of this was possible by donations of our parishioners and Osceola High School students. Thank you and may the Lord continue to bless us.

WELCOME!

We would like to extend a hearty welcome to those who have recently moved to our parish. We certainly hope you feel at home! We are always happy to have new parishioners register with us. The registration forms are in the bulletin racks. If you have any questions please feel free to contact the parish office @ (727) 822-2153.

St. Joseph Parish January 1-January 8, 2012

Sunday 1/1/12 <i>Solemnity of Mary the Holy Mother of God</i> Nm 6:22-27; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21	Vigil Mass @ 5:00pm (Church) Mike Mogil+ Mass @ 10:00am (Church) Emily Kronyak + No CCD will resume on 1/8/2012 Fellowship Time @ 11:30am (Hall)
Monday 1/2 <i>St. Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops & Doctors of the Church</i> 1 Jn 2:22-28; Jn 1:19-28	Mass @ 8:00am (Church) Diane Magnuson SI Tai Chi will resume on 1/9/2012
Tuesday 1/3 <i>The Most Holy Name of Jesus</i> 1 Jn 2:29-3:6; Jn 1:29-34	NO MASS Choir Practice @ 7:30pm (Church)
Wednesday 1/4 <i>St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious</i> 1 Jn 3:7-10; Jn 1:35-42	Mass @ 8:00am (Church) John Donahue Rosary Making @ 8:30 (Center) Bible Study @ 7:00pm (Hall)
Thursday 1/5 <i>St. John Neumann, Bishop</i> 1 Jn 3:11-21; Jn 1:43-51	Mass @ 8:00am (Church) John Donahue Breakfast Group @ 8:30am (Hall) Bible Study @ 9:00 am (Hall) Legion of Mary @ 6:30pm (Hall) Mass@7:00pm (Church) Parishioners of St. Joseph
Friday 1/6 <i>St. Andre Bessette, Religious</i> 1 Jn 5:5-13; Mk 1:7-11	Mass @ 8:00am (Church) Eileen Donahue SI
Saturday 1/7 <i>St. Raymond of Penyafort, priest</i> 1 Jn 5:14-21; Jn 2:1-11	Mass @ 8:00am (Church) Hugh & Joanne Imfeld SI Confessions @ 4:15pm (Church) Fr. Joseph Costello + Vigil Mass @ 5:00pm (Church)
Sunday 1/8 <i>The Epiphany of the Lord</i> Is 60:1-6 Eph 3:2-3, 5-6 Mt 2:1-12	Adult Faith Sharing @ 9:00am (Center) Mass @ 10:00am (Church) Willie Mae "Dear" Johnson+ CCD 11:30am (Center) Fellowship Time @ 11:30am (Hall)

FAST YARD SALE A Success!

Thank you FAST Team Members & everyone that contributed to the success of the Yard Sale. Our goal of raising \$1500 to cover FAST dues was covered. Most grateful to those who assisted us financially, volunteered & donations.

FAITH COMMUNITY NURSE

by Carolynn Drzycimski

Chocolate Lovers Rejoice

New research has gone further to explain how dark chocolate (not milk chocolate), inhibits the enzyme ACE (angiotensin-converting enzyme) which raises blood pressure. Swedish volunteers found that within 3 hours of eating dark chocolate they got the same 18% reduction of blood pressure that prescription blood pressure medicines produce. Limit yourself to 1 oz a day. This research also found that the flavonoids in dark chocolate improved cholesterol, made you smarter and protected DNA that can cause cancer. Other great flavonoid containing foods are red wine, green tea, apples, onions and cranberries.

December 31, 2011 & January 1, 2012

Servers for Sat, December 31 & Sun, January 1, 2012

Vigil Mass, Sat, 5pm: Reader: Geri Bowie
EM: Betty Pokorny-TBD
Sunday, 10am: Reader: Deirdre Schoeller
Altar Servers: Cassandra Owa-Shaina Buck-Adon Martinez
EM: Host: Theresa Ferreebe Cup: Mary Hornickle-Maria Salley-Elaine Normile-Paul Petrocy
Servers for Sat, January 7 & Sun, January 8
Vigil Mass, Sat, 5pm: Reader: Andy Durey
Altar Servers: Shaina Buck-Alissa VanWanzeele-Faith Magdael
EM: Geri Bowie-Susie Ajoc
Sunday, 10am: Reader: Bob Shannon
Altar Servers: Emmanuel Eke-Alissa VanWanzeele-Faith Magdael
EM: Host: Mary Hornickle Cup: Theresa Ferreebe-Barbara Ellison-Stella McGraw-Paul Petrocy

Tithing the weekend of December 31, 2011 & January 1, 2012

No information at this time because of the
Thanksgiving bulletin deadline.

Thank You for Your Generosity!

ONE NATION UNDER GOD

"Lord, bless the men and women of our military as they answer the call to serve our nation and defend our freedom. Protect them, particularly those in harm's way. Most of all let them know your love: that you are with them and will never forsake or abandon them. I ask this in the precious name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior." Amen.

PRAYER LIST

Please pray for our sick

Ella Clark - Mikki Considine - Eugene Danzey
 Elizabeth Waters - Erick Melvin, Jr - Linda Drzycimski
 Mary Linqanti - Mary Murray - Joanne Greenslade
 Rosanne Parker-Kathryn Davis- Sharmel Sandy
 Michael Meister -Mary Kilionski-Jill Rush
 Gerry Braun-Gabriel Smith-Pauline Thurston
 Leo Holland-Renee Hobbs-Ivy & John Beckford
 If you know of someone that needs to be on our prayer list please
 contact the Parish Office (727)822-2153

JUBILEE MASS OF THANKSGIVING

The Jubilee Mass of Thanksgiving with Bishop Robert Lynch honoring couples throughout the diocese who will celebrate 25, 50 or more years of marriage during 2012 will take place at St. Jude Cathedral on Sunday, February 12th at 3:00pm. A reception with light hors d'oeuvres will follow. You **MUST** pre-register no later than Monday, January 24th at the parish office, 822-2153.