

PASTOR'S NOTES

Epiphany & Baptism of the Lord

In most years the Solemnity of Epiphany and the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord are separated by a week, but this year they follow one upon the other. Sunday [January 7th] celebrates the Lord's **Epiphany** and Monday [January 8th] celebrates the **Baptism of the Lord**. Each of these days celebrates a great truth in the life of Christ and his revelation of God's Truth to us. As Jesus will declare, "... the truth will set you free." [Jn. 8:32]

In its most basic form the solemnity of the Epiphany is the story of **the magi** coming to Bethlehem. They represent the Gentile world (*non-Jewish people*) coming to worship a new born king of Israel. The Gentile world, unlike the Jewish nation, had not had the privilege of having had prophets announcing God's love affair with the human race. Yet here they come! **The point is** – *All people throughout history, who seek the Truth and the meaning of life, will find it in the person of Christ born in Bethlehem.* The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the story of salvation for the whole world that will come to be in Christ's Death and Resurrection. As John's Gospel tells us, "... anyone who accepts him, he empowered to become children of God." [Jn. 1:12]

An Epiphany devotional practice is to have chalk blessed and then use the blessed chalk to inscribe upon the door frames of our homes the inscription — **20+C+M+B+24**. As the Holy Family welcomed the wise men, may the doors of our homes this coming year be as welcoming. 2024 represents the present year; C-M-B traditionally represent the first letter of the names of the three wise men — **Caspar, Melchior, Balthasar**; the four crosses represent the four Gospels that tell the story of Christ, Savior of the World!

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On Monday, January 8th the Church celebrates the **Feast of the Baptism of the Lord**. In its simplest form it represents the beginning of Christ's public ministry in the land of Israel. **But**, a moment's reflection brings to mind a basic question – **Why is Christ baptized?** For most Christians baptism is associated with the removal of original sin from our souls. Today's feast celebrates Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan river. **But Jesus is God and sin can have no part of God. So why did Jesus get baptized? He is sinless and has no need of baptism!**

In reading the story of Jesus' baptism, John the Baptist insists that Jesus should baptize him; yet Christ insists that John baptize him. In turn the Church notes a number of points in this feast of the Baptism of the Lord:

- 1) **Christ's baptism** reveals the fact of Christ's divine sonship when the Father's voice declares, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*"
- 2) Beyond the Father's voice **Christ's baptism** includes the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. This suggests the appointment and anointing (commissioning) of Christ who, in turn, will now begin his 3-year public ministry of redeeming the human race culminating in his death, resurrection, ascension and the sending forth of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.
- 3) **Christ's Baptism** professes his solidarity with the human race including the sin we bear because of our descent from our first parents and their Fall from grace – *now he will restore the likeness of God that had been lost by the sin of Adam and Eve.*
- 4) **Christ's Baptism** in the waters of the Jordan river makes all the waters of baptism holy.

As St. Maximus of Turin declares, "*Christ is baptized not to be made holy by the water, but to make the waters holy... For when the Savior is washed, all water for our baptism is made clean, purified at its source for the dispensing of baptismal grace to the people of future ages.*"



St. Leo's Catholic Church
211 Langer Ave North
PO Box 340
Casselton ND
347-4609

St. Thomas Catholic Church
401 Third St. North
PO Box 22
Buffalo ND
633-5150



The Epiphany of the Lord January 7, 2024

Weekend Mass Schedule for St. Leo's and St. Thomas

1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays: 8:30 am St. Thomas, 10:30 am St. Leo's
2nd & 4th Sundays: 8:30 am St. Leo's, 10:30 am St. Thomas
Every Saturday: 5:00 pm at St. Leo's

Mass Intentions for the week of Jan 7:

Mon - Jan 8 – 9:00 am – +**Karol Utt** by Mike Utt

Tues - Jan 9 – St. Thomas – 9:00 am – +**Souls in purgatory**

NO MASS at St. Leo's

Wed – Jan 10 – 9:00 am – **Madalyn Wiersma** by Casey & Anna Garman

Thurs – Jan 11 – 9:00 am – **Anthony Garman** by Casey & Anna Garman

Fri – Jan 12 – 9:00 am – +**Linus Kensok** by Margaret Kensok

Sat - Jan 13 – 5:00 pm - +Helen Depuydt by Darin & Judy Hamre

Sun - Jan 14 – St. Leo's - 8:30 am - For the people of our parishes

St. Thomas - 10:30 am - +Larry Zaun by Penny Zaun

Parish Staff:

Pastor: Fr. James Ermer

E-mail: james.ermer@fargodiocese.org

Secretary: Delores Grommesh

Phone: 701-347-4609

E-mail: stleo@casselton.net

RE Coordinator: Patty Roth

Phone: 701-347-4609

E-mail: dre@stleosnd.org

Website: www.stleosnd.org

Prayer Chain:

Kelsey Lako: 701-793-7088

Maintenance: Paul & Sherry Radermacher

Phone: 701-793-7740; 701-793-7798

St. Leo's Directors: Dave Glennon & Micah Bartholomay

St. Thomas Directors: Gary Milbrandt & Flint Kasowski

Sacrament of Reconciliation

at St. Leo's

4:00 - 4:45 pm Saturday

at St. Thomas

8:00 - 8:15 am

before all 8:30 am Masses

~ Anytime by appointment

~ Communal Services during

Advent and Lent

New Members: If you are new to the area, we would love to have you as a registered member. To register as a new member of the parish, please visit with Fr. Ermer after Mass.

Please join in praying the Rosary 25 minutes before the Saturday evening and Sunday morning Mass times.

PARISH EVENTS/MEETINGS

Tues., Jan 9 - 7:00 pm - Social Concerns committee meeting at the rectory
 Wed., Jan 10 - Religious Education classes resume – see below
 Sun., Jan 14 - 2:00 pm - KC Free Throw Contest at Central Cass West Gym
 Thurs., Jan 18 - 12:00 pm - Casselton Ministerium meeting in the Spirit of Life Center
 Sun., Jan 21 - 9:00 am - KC Breakfast in the Spirit of Life Center
 Tues., Jan 23 - 7:00 pm - Finance committee meeting at the rectory
 Wed., Jan 24 - 7:45 pm - KC meeting at the rectory
 Mon., Jan 29 - 7:00 pm - Pastoral Council meeting at the rectory


Religious Education Class Times — Wed., Jan 10th

St. Thomas RE classes — 3:45 pm

St. Leo's RE classes: Simple Supper - 6:00 pm
 Grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4 — (5:15 pm session); (6:30 pm session)
 Grades 5, 6, 8, 9 & 10 — 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm
 Grade 7 - Class A and 12th grade — 6:15 - 7:45 pm



Upcoming Ministry Schedule

	Saturday Jan 13 5:00 pm St. Leo's	Sunday Jan 14 8:30 am St. Leo's	Sunday Jan 14 10:30 am St. Thomas
Lector	Mark Voss	Shari Kensok	Alecia Killoran
Eucharistic Ministers	Bill Franck Lori Howard	Denise Bartholomay Ann Faught Susan Kempel Paul Olsen Deb Werner	Linda Milbrandt Jurgen Suhr
Altar Servers	Addison/Noah Hushka Sophie Scherweit	Melody Kempel Quinn/Riley Gunkel Emma Rupp	Abigail Killoran Ali Killoran
Offertory Collectors	<i>Volunteers needed</i>	<i>Volunteers needed</i>	Jurgen & Barb Suhr
Gift Bearers	<i>Volunteers needed</i>	<i>Volunteers needed</i>	Aaron Haseleu Family
Lead Rosary	Richard Muscha	Deb Werner	

NEWS AND NOTES

Join us to sing from the choir loft! "Choir Sunday" will be **Sunday, Jan. 21st** at the 10:30 am Mass. Anyone middle school and older is welcome to sing. We will meet in the choir loft from 9:30-10 am that day to run through these songs: #494, #761, #393, #387, #599, #559. YouTube is a great way to practice at home beforehand. Music with harmony parts available—ask Wanda Mangin.



Council 9477

Knights of Columbus Free Throw Contest will be held on **Sunday, January 14th at 2:00 pm** for boys & girls ages 9-14 at the Central Cass School West Gym. For more information please see the flyer on the bulletin board in the church entry.



Knights of Columbus Breakfast: Serving French toast and sausage **Sunday, January 21st from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm** in the Spirit of Life Center. Free will offering.

"Soup"er Bowl: Sunday, January 21st at Holy Cross Catholic Church (2711 7th St E, West Fargo, ND) from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. Serving a wide variety of soups with bread and dessert. Adults- \$10, Children- \$5. Unlimited sampling! Please see the flyer on the bulletin board for more information.

Catholic Man Night: Monday, January 22nd at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church (210 5th Ave W, West Fargo). 6:00 pm—7:00 pm Adoration & Confession. 7:00 pm—8:00 pm Meal with talk by Bishop John T. Folda and short discussion to follow. Free will offering. All men are invited, bring a friend!

Women's Retreat: On February 2-4 at Franciscan Retreat Center in Hankinson, ND, women are invited to a retreat called Handmaid of the Lord: My Heart for My Son. There will be Rosary, engaging large group talks, small group discussions, Mass, Confession, Eucharistic Adoration, private priest/deacon spiritual direction, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, Liturgy of the Hours, and more. Room & all meals provided, cost \$300 (students \$200). Register at 222.ecclesiadomestica.net/registration or call St. Boniface, Lidgerwood ND (701)538-4604.



GIFTS for THE CHILD: At the main entry of the church is a crib that is accepting all sorts of baby supplies, e.g. diapers, wipes, blankets, and toiletries. These items will be donated to some of the agencies that work with expectant parents/single moms. Monetary donations can also be turned in to the parish office.



Help Support our Cameroon Card Mission: Cards are available for purchase in the magazine rack in church entry. There is a wonderful selection for all occasions available for purchase. Cost of cards is 50¢, please place money in envelope provided and return to parish office.

This week's Stewardship moment:

"They fell down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh." ~ Matthew 2:11

Notice the order of events in the Magi's visit. First, they knelt before Jesus and prayed to Him. Then they presented Him with their gifts. We, too, must take time to pray before we present our gifts to the Lord. We never know what God may be asking us to share!