

PASTOR’S NOTES

Christmas - *the gift that defines all giving!!*

Christmas is always a special day, especially for children as they tear into their Christmas gifts and their spirits leap for joy when they get something they really wanted. Gift-giving is a treasured way of showing our love for other people.

Of all the gifts ever shared in all of human history **Christians believe the Christmas gift of the Christ Child defines all measures of love-giving.**

Christmas celebrates the **mystery of the Incarnation** when God assumed our human nature or as the Prologue of John’s Gospel declares — “*In the beginning was the Word, the Word was in God’s presence, and the Word was God ... the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*” Every time we pray the Creed we say, “*... he came down from heaven and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.*” Of this the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) says: “Belief in the true Incarnation of the Son of God is the distinctive sign of Christian faith.” (463)

All of this leads to a very logical question – **Why did God assume our human nature?** St. Peter Chrysologus gives the over-arching answer when he says the human race takes its origin from two men – Adam the first man and Christ the second man. The first man (Adam) was made by the second man (Christ). Christ had stamped his image and likeness on the first Adam when he created him. Adam’s sin has deprived us of God’s likeness. This is why Christ took on himself the role and name of the first Adam – **in order that he might not lose what he had made in his image.** That is why Scripture says of Christ, “I am the first and the last.” In essence the Father’s gift of Christ (the second man) restores the goodness lost by Adam (the first man).

In paragraphs 456-460 the Catechism of the Catholic Church says the Word became flesh for four (4) reasons:

- (1) The Word became flesh for us in order **to save us** by reconciling us with God. St. Gregory of Nyssa says it this way, “*Sick, our nature demanded to be healed; fallen, to be raised up; ... We had lost possession of the good; it was necessary for it to be given back to us. Closed in the darkness, it was necessary to bring us to the light; captives, we awaited a Savior; prisoners, help; slaves, a liberator. Did they (meaning the human race) not move God to descend to human nature and visit it, since humanity was in so miserable and unhappy a state?*”;
- (2) The Word became flesh so that thus we might **know God’s love.** As John’s Gospel says, “*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*” (Jn. 3:16)
- (3) The Word became flesh to be our **model of holiness.** As John’s Gospel has Christ saying, “*I am the way, and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me.*” (Jn. 14:6)
- (4) The Word became flesh to make us **partakers of the divine nature.** St. Athanasius puts it this way, “*For the Son of God became man so that we might become God.*” St. Thomas Aquinas says it this way, “*The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods.*”

Such is the gift of Christmas and why Christmas is the gift that defines all giving. It is in this spirit that we say ‘**Merry Christmas**’!!!



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



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
December 22, 2019

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 Dec 22:
Mon - Dec 23 - 9:00 am - **+Kenny Habiger** by Tamera & Glen Krogman
Tues - Dec 24 - **Christmas Eve - 5:00 pm - Mass at St. Thomas**
9:00 pm - Carols begin at St. Leo’s
9:30 pm - **Mass at St. Leo’s - +Chris Volk** by Jerry & DeLilah Volk
Wed - Dec 25 - **Christmas Day - 10:00 am– Mass at St. Leo’s- +Mary Ermer** by Mary Kempel
Thurs - Dec 26 - 9:00 am - **+Duane Mergner** by Marian Watson
Fri - Dec 27 - 9:00 am - **Cameron Alex** by Patty Alex
Sat - Dec 28 - **St. Leo’s - 5:00 pm - +Joe Franck** by Helen Franck
Sun - Dec 29 - **St. Thomas - 8:30 am Mass - +Kenny Habiger** by Frank & Laura Biggers
St. Leo’s - 10:30 am Mass - For the people of our parishes

Parish Staff:

Pastor: Fr. James Ermer
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Secretary: Delores Grommesh
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Website: www.stleosnd.org

Prayer Chain:
Bea Bachmeier: 347-5555
Kelsey Lako: 793-7088

Maintenance: Paul & Sherry Radermacher
Phone: 701-793-7740; 701-793-7798

St. Leo’s Directors: Mark Rehovsky & Mark Wieland
St. Thomas Directors: Larry Zaun & Gary Milbrandt

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.


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

| PARISH EVENTS/MEETINGS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |
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| <b>Tues., Dec 24 - 5:00 pm– Christmas Eve– Mass at St. Thomas in Buffalo</b><br><b>9:30 pm– Christmas Eve– Mass at St. Leo’s, Carols start at 9 pm</b><br><b>Wed., Dec 25 - 10:00 am - Christmas Day – Mass at St. Leo’s</b><br><b>Tues., Dec 31 - 5:00 pm– Holy Day/Mary Mother of God– Mass at St. Thomas in Buffalo</b><br><b>Wed., Jan 1 - 10:00 am– Holy Day/Mary Mother of God– Mass at St. Leo’s</b><br>Sun., Jan 5 - 9:00 am - KC Breakfast in the Spirit of Life Center<br>Tues., Jan 7 - 7:00 pm - Cemetery committee meeting at the rectory<br>Wed., Jan 8 - 3:45 pm - RE classes at St. Thomas<br>Wed., Jan 8 - 6:30 pm - RE classes at St. Leo’s, Simple Supper at 6:00 pm<br>6:15 pm - Junior class meets<br>Thurs., Jan 9 - 12:00 pm - Casselton Ministerium meeting in the Spirit of Life Center<br>Tues., Jan 14 - 7:00 pm - Liturgy meeting at the rectory<br>Tues., Jan 21 - 7:00 pm - Finance committee meeting at the rectory<br>Tues., Jan 28 - 7:00 pm - Pastoral Council meeting at the rectory |  |

**Thank you** to West Funeral Home for providing the *Feasts & Saints* calendars for 2020. The calendars are located on a table at the entrance to the church. Please take one per household. Thank you.

### Upcoming Ministry Schedule

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|  | <b>Saturday Dec 28</b><br><b>5:00 pm</b><br><b>St. Leo’s</b><br>4th Sat of the Month | <b>Sunday Dec 29</b><br><b>8:30 am</b><br><b>St. Thomas</b> | <b>Sunday Dec 29</b><br><b>10:30 am</b><br><b>St. Leo’s</b><br>5th Sun of the Month      |
| <i>Lector</i>                                                                     | Tony Roth                                                                            | Jackie Vavra                                                | Darcee Rehovsky                                                                          |
| <i>Eucharistic Ministers</i>                                                      | Paulette Schmitt<br>Sandie Nystrom                                                   | Joe Killoran<br>Linda Milbrandt                             | Virjean Cramer<br>Susan Kempel<br>Mark Rehovksy<br>Jerry Volk<br><i>Volunteer needed</i> |
| <i>Altar Servers</i>                                                              | Lillian Roth<br>Olivea Roth<br>Evelyn Roth                                           | Clay Hovelson<br>Meyer Wendel                               | Paris Mack<br>Parker Mack                                                                |
| <i>Offertory Collectors</i>                                                       | <i>Volunteer needed</i>                                                              | Bob & Judy Von Bank                                         | <i>Volunteer needed</i>                                                                  |
| <i>Gift Bearers</i>                                                               | <i>Volunteer needed</i>                                                              | Aaron Haseleu Family                                        | <i>Volunteer needed</i>                                                                  |

| NEWS AND NOTES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| <p><b><u>Church Decorating:</u></b> If you would like to help prepare the church for Christmas, we will be decorating at <b>9:00am on Tues., Dec. 24<sup>th</sup></b>. Young and old are welcome!</p> <p><b><u>Ministry sign-up:</u></b> We are still looking for help with Readers, Mass servers, and EMHCs for our Christmas and New Year liturgies. Please sign up on the schedule in the church entry.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p><b>Knights of Columbus Breakfast:</b><br/>  Sunday, Jan., 5<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm in the Spirit of Life Center. Serving French toast and Sausage. Free will offering.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <div>  <p><b>St. Leo’s Advent Baby Shower:</b> A baby is just the beginning of a beautiful story but many moms in our area struggle to make ends meet. St. Leo’s Parish will collect items to make this Christmas a little brighter for babies and moms. Donations can be put by the manger in the front entry of the church before <b>Dec. 24<sup>th</sup></b>. See the poster on the bulletin board for donation ideas. All donations collected will be distributed equally to the following non-profits: The Perry Center, Women’s Care Center, and Birthright of Fargo Moorhead.</p> </div> | <p><b>Annual Collar Classic Basketball Game:</b> Join in the festivity December 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at the Shanley High School Gymnasium, Fargo. Cheer on the priests and the seminarians during their annual basketball competition. The game is free and there are half time games for the kids. It’s a blast, and usually makes for a very competitive game!</p> <p><b>Redeemed Women’s Conference 2020:</b> March 27-28 at the Avalon Events Center, 2525 9th Ave S, Fargo, ND. Space is limited. Early registration before March 1 is \$50, after March 1 the cost is \$75. To register on line and for more information go to: <a href="http://FargoDiocese.org/RedeemedWomen">FargoDiocese.org/RedeemedWomen</a></p> <p>Registration forms are also available on the church bulletin board along with more information about the conference.</p> |
| <p><b>2019 Contributors:</b> We ask that you please try and have your 2019 contributions in before December 31<sup>st</sup>. IRS regulations say that if a donor wants to claim a contribution as a charitable deduction for 2019 for income tax purposes, it must be received or postmarked by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Checks dated for December 31<sup>st</sup> will be credited to your 2019 offertory statement and checks dated January 1<sup>st</sup> will be credited to your 2020 statements. Thank you.</p>                                                                                                                                                             | <p><b>Hospice of the Red River Valley</b> offers ongoing Grief Support Groups for 2020 in the Fargo-Moorhead area. For a complete list of classes, groups and workshops please see the flyers on the bulletin board.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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| <p><b>This week’s Stewardship moment:</b><br/> <i>“When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.” - Matthew 1:24</i></p> <p>Putting our complete trust in the Lord without expecting anything in return. Striving to put God first in all things and follow Him wherever He may lead us. As we prepare for the birth of our Lord, pray for the strength and courage to be a model of discipleship, just as Joseph was.</p> |
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