

MEETINGS THIS WEEK

- St. Joseph Parish Council: Monday, December 14th, 6:30 p.m., friary meeting room.
- St. Brigid Finance Committee: Tuesday, December 15th, 6:30 p.m., school.
- St. Joseph Bible Study: Thursday, December 17th, friary meeting room.

CHRISTMAS 2009 AT ST. JOSEPH'S SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

(CONFESSION):

Saturday, December 19th:

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon (in the church)
2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. (in the church)

MASSES:

Thursday, December 24th:

NO Parish Mass at 8:00 a.m.
4:00 p.m. (in the church)

4:00 p.m. (in the Fr. Hayes Center)

6:00 p.m. (in the church) Family Mass with re-enactment of the first Christmas Crèche in Greccio, Italy

Christmas Day, Friday, December 25th:

Midnight Mass (in the church)
10:00 a.m. (in the church)
There is **NO MASS** at 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 31st:

8:00 a.m. (in the church)
4:00 p.m. (in the church)

Friday, January 1st:

9:00 a.m. (in the church)
12:00 noon (in the church)

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULES

IN OUR CLUSTER

	<u>ST. PATRICK</u>	<u>ST. PIUS X</u>
December 24th	4:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	4:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.
December 25th	12:00 Midnight 9:00 a.m.	7:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m.

DENNY'S AFFINITY PROGRAM

St. Joseph Parish is now able to offer, free of charge, participation in Denny's Affinity Program. With the use of a Denny's Affinity Program card, the user will receive a 15% discount and 5% of the check will be donated to St. Joseph Parish. The program card can be used at all six Denny's Maine locations as well as at specific locations in New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. So, if you plan to eat at a Denny's Restaurant, it would be well worth having a Denny's Affinity card. Your use will also generate some needed income to St. Joseph Parish. To obtain an Affinity Program card, please contact St. Joseph Parish's office (797-7026, ext. 201).

CHRISTMAS CONCERT CD

St. Joseph choir's 2007 Christmas CD will be available after all Masses this weekend and the next two weekends. Your donation of \$15 will be placed in the fund to maintain St. Joseph's organ.



In honor of Nicholas Mancini, the Sanctuary Lamp will burn the week of December 13th.

THE NEEDY IN OUR MIDST

The collection taken up at our parish Thanksgiving Day Mass totaled \$642.00, a wonderfully generous response. These funds have been ear-marked for our St. Joseph's Fund for the Needy, the fund available to the friars here at St. Joseph's to distribute to those who seek assistance from us. Requests for assistance come for many needs: food, fuel, rent assistance, clothing, medicine – most times from persons outside of our parish community.

We have a growing awareness, however, that these same real needs lie within our parish community. We are aware that these needs may be compounded by a recent or impending loss or cut-back of employment. We are also aware that, oftentimes, parishioners who are experiencing need are hesitant, for whatever reason, to seek assistance.

The friars here at St. Joseph's have discussed this among ourselves and with our parish council. We wish to propose the following: Parishioners who wish to assist the needy of our parish family are encouraged to purchase a gift card (in whatever dollar amount) from Shaws, Hannafords, CMP, CVS, Rite Aid, Walgreens, or other providers of vital services) and anonymously drop the gift card into the weekend collection basket. Please make sure to note the gift card's value.

Parishioners who are in need should contact one of the friars here at St. Joseph's to make their need known. All contacts will be kept strictly confidential.

The friars will, to the best of their abilities, match those in need with gift cards received.

While this is an appropriate response during this Thanksgiving/Advent/Christmas time, we hope that this outreach to the needy in our midst might continue well into the future for as long as necessary.

SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

All are invited to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, on Friday, December 18th at 7:00 p.m., for a service of Advent Lessons and Carols lead by Bishop Malone with the Cathedral Choirs. FMI, call 773-7746, or email leon.griesbach@portlanddiocese.org.

MASS INTENTIONS



Among the intentions remembered at the Masses during the upcoming week are:

Monday, December 14

8:00 a.m. Holy Souls in Purgatory

Tuesday, December 15

8:00 a.m. Holy Souls in Purgatory

Wednesday, December 16

8:00 a.m. Barbara Constantine

Thursday, December 17

8:00 a.m. Frederick Joseph Cartwright, Sr.

Friday, December 18

8:00 a.m. Frederick Joseph Cartwright, Jr.

Saturday, December 19

8:00 a.m. Dorothy DiBiase

4:00 p.m. Mr. & Mrs. Christo Brelis

Sunday, December 20

8:00 a.m. Margaret Pizzo

10:00 a.m. Sr. Bertrand

5:00 p.m. Our Parish Family



CHURCH SUPPORT

A total of 665 individuals attended our four weekend Masses last weekend. Offertory collections totaled \$7,705 and the second collection to benefit our church's maintenance fund totaled \$3,305. One year ago over the same weekend, 715 individuals attended church and contributed \$7,695 to the offertory and \$3,030 to our maintenance fund.

The month of December is a very critical month in regards to the financial stability of our parish. To meet our "day to day" expenses, our parish finance committee is asking that all parishioners increase their offertory contribution from last year by \$1 per family attendee for each Mass attended during the month of December. If all in attendance could do this, this would go a long way toward helping us achieve our December offertory goal of \$47,810.

We'll keep everyone informed on how we are doing in achieving this goal with weekly updates in our church bulletin.

CLUSTER 28 TRANSITION COMMITTEE

The question I have been most asked these past few weeks in conversations about the clustering process is whether we will be closing one of our churches. The recent closing of two churches in Auburn-Lewiston Cluster and previously in other parts of the diocese make this a natural concern for all of us in these times, But I want to assure you that we are not considering this possibility as a part of the current clustering process. As I told you early on, all three parishes at this point are viable both in terms of finances and the number of parishioners. Thus when we come together as a single cluster next summer, we will come together as three parish families and our cluster school.

Of course, our joining each other as a single community of faith next summer is only the beginning of our work in facing the future. A part of cluster transition planning for us must be to establish a long-range planning process that will grow directly out of the cluster transition. Those entrusted with that process will need to work very hard to develop a three to five year plan for the cluster. And there are hard questions to be faced as a part of that process, including the issue of the long-term viability of the parishes as individual entities. Aging and diminishing demographics, the economy, and the care of our buildings are significant challenges we still face going forward.

Well, one step at a time. For the moment, let us put aside our worries about this more distant future (we can let God worry about that for now) and focus on the moment: coming together this summer in as positive a way as we can manage. Change is never easy, but if we share our strength and faith with each other, there will be more than enough to sustain us all.

As always, we pledge to communicate with you in a regular and transparent manner about our planning. If at any time you have input you wish to share, please feel free to speak with one of the committee members – you can call your parish or school office for contact information. Please continue to keep us and this process in your prayers.

-Fr. Jim Lafontaine



CANS AND BOTTLES

Bring your empty cans and bottles to St. Joseph's. Their redemption will financially benefit our parish. Through the thoughtfulness of parishioners Trish and Tim Boutot, owners of Boots Bounty Discount Beverage and Redemption Center in South Portland, a mobile collection vehicle will be in the church parking lot near the rear entrance to the church at specific hours each weekend: after the Saturday 4:00 p.m. Mass; after the Sunday 8:00 a.m. Mass; prior to the Sunday 10:00 a.m. Mass and before the Sunday 5:00 p.m. Mass. Drop your redeemable cans and bottles in the container and watch St. Joseph's income grow! The collection will continue throughout the month of December.

The Fourth Graders of *St. Brigid School*

Invite you to our performance of...

“A Piece of Christmas”
The Story of the Birth of Jesus



Thank you for all you do for our wonderful school! Your love and support toward St. Brigid makes our school the best Catholic School around! The fourth grade would like to invite you to our performance of “A Piece of Christmas.” We will retell the birth of Jesus through a beautiful play, complete with Nativity costumes and singing! We are blessed to have our principal, Ms. Lee, our music teachers, add their special talents to our performance!

We would love it if you could come and help celebrate the beautiful season of Christmas with us!
Thank you for being angels and making such a positive difference at St. Brigid School!

Monday December 21st, 2009
5:30PM
St. Patrick's Church
1342 Congress Street~Portland, Me

Please join us for refreshments in the basement of St. Patrick's Church following the performance