

Stewardship is a way of life.
Tithing is God's Plan for Giving:

Tithing income: December 7, 2008	\$8,486.20
December 9, 2007	\$8,051.40
Children's Offerings	\$ 14.00

Next week's tithe will be for the charitable works of our parish St. Vincent dePaul Society.

From the pastor: I'm sure that, with the financial uncertainty all around us, tithing can be difficult. However, everything that has lasting value is always difficult. But even if uncertain financial times, we remember the spiritual value of tithing. As we focus on giving during the coming Christmas Season, perhaps we give our first gift to God – as we offer Him 10% of what He first gave to us. Remember, tithing is a **spiritual program** which also *happens* to raise funds. Thank you for faithfully remembering your weekly tithe – yes it is a sacrifice, but you'll discover the blessings, too.

Comments on Tithing from the pews: "We have become more involved in parish activities, including tithing, because we want to see the parish succeed in its service to the people."

FROM THE PASTOR

Weekly Reflection: Two-year-old Patrick was pushing on the kitchen table that had a fragile vase on it. His older sister Carrie told him to stop pushing on the table because he might break the vase. True to his being two, his sister's bidding only made him push all the harder. And, yes, the vase tipped over and broke into a thousand pieces. As his mother came into the kitchen, he ran to his room in tears and fear. Soon Mother came in, took him on her lap, and told the little fellow she was angry with him because he didn't obey but she still loved him. With that, Patrick tearfully said he was sorry and wouldn't do it again. This simple act of reconciliation is replayed thousands of times each day across our families. It is a reminder that we are called to "heal the brokenhearted" and pave the way for loving encounters. This story is a reminder of our own relationship to Jesus (as those who are poor and brokenhearted) and to each other (as those who are to reach out to all those in need). This is a message of the Gospel this Sunday: we are to be like John the Baptist, whose mission was to "testify to the light" – Christ's presence among the people. Testimony to the light implies two things. First, it means to do good works ("Bring glad tidings to the poor," "heal the brokenhearted," etc.). By these good works we, too, bring the presence of Christ to others. Second, "testify to the light" means to grow in relationship to Christ and with others. Yes, sometimes we are like the people in the Gospel in that we seek the Messiah but often do not recognize His presence in our midst. The work of Advent is to intensify our good works so that we can recognize

Christ in our midst; even more, it is the work of our whole Christian life!

About Liturgy: *Liturgy's Link with Right Living:* Christmas is one time of the year when charitable giving is very high. Many families, for example, limit or eliminate altogether their gift exchange and collect the saved money to give to a family in need or to some worthy cause. All of this is very good and laudable, but the first reading challenges us further and reminds us particularly of two things: First, our charity isn't something that might happen once a year. Charity – *genuine* caring for others – aptly describes our Christian living. It is something that we must pay attention to every day; we are "anointed" to do good works. Second, our just acts on behalf of others less fortunate than ourselves are clearly linked both to being "clothed...with...salvation" and to the praise of God. To state this liturgically: liturgy and right living are inextricably linked. The reason for this link rests not only in our intimate relationship with God – which liturgy celebrates in praise and thanksgiving – but also because of our intimate relationship with each other. In liturgy we come together and manifest the Body of Christ; as members we are joined to one another. When one part of the Body hurts, the whole Body hurts. Thus it is only right and just that we do whatever we can to "bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners..."

PARISH NEWS & ACTIVITIES

Christmas Food Baskets: The St. Vincent dePaul Society will be giving out Christmas food baskets to the needy of our parish and community. If anyone receives a free turkey from Giant or Weis and would like to donate it to our basket program please bring it to the rectory. If you know of anyone who may benefit from this project, please call the parish office. We are collecting non-perishable foods such as peas, corn, green beans, cranberry sauce, boxed stuffing, boxed cake mixes, frosting, pie crust and pie filling, canned fruit. We will also be collecting monetary donations to purchase turkeys, rolls, & bags of potatoes. Please place your donations in the left sacristy or church basement and bring them before December 15. Thank you for your generosity and kindness.

Our Annual Advent Penance Service is TODAY, December 14 at 6:30pm here at Sacred Heart St. Jude (3:30pm at St. Jude in Mifflintown). There will be several priests here to assist in the celebration of Reconciliation in



preparation for Christmas. If you plan to celebrate the Sacrament before Christmas, please make use of this opportunity when there are several priests available.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Thursday, December 18: *How Is Jesus Made Present Now?* Liturgical Prayer and the Mass.

March for Life – January 22, 2009: Citizens Concerned for Human Life Mifflin-Juniata, Inc invites you to attend the 36th annual March for Life to witness to the dignity and sanctity of human life from the very first moment of conception. With the coming inauguration of President-Elect Obama – we **MUST** make a **STRONG** statement to him declaring our belief in the sacredness of life. President Obama has pledged that his first two acts as President will be to provide public funding for abortions (our tax money) and allow further destruction of embryos for stem cell research. **YOUR PRESENCE AND WITNESS IS VITAL!**

A bus is already scheduled (and more can be added): 3am departure from Sacred Heart; visit to the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception (weather/time permitting); Rally for Life at the VERIZON Sports Arena; the March for Life from the Mall to the Supreme Court building. For students, this is an excused absence for a religious event (with the proper notes from parents). Cost is \$46 per person for transportation. Meals will be on your own (approximately \$25). Registration with a non-refundable, non-transferrable \$35 deposit is required at the time of reservation. Contact Frank Cunningham at 667-9334 or fcunning@embarqmail.com with questions. Deposits may be dropped in the parish office or collection basket. Registration is required by December 21, 2008.

Members of the Greeting Card Committee would like to continue to reach out to the homebound, those in nursing homes, and those celebrating birthdays of 70+ years. We would like to send cards for special events or important dates and anniversaries in their lives. But, to do this we need to be informed. If you have any information pertaining to the above group of people, please call Annie Pavao at 248-6016 or Charlotte Brittain 242-1945. Thank you!

LITURGICAL NOTES

Memorialize the Sanctuary Lamp: The following dates are available to memorialize the Sanctuary Lamp: Dates available: None in December. January 4, 18, 25.

The Sanctuary Lamp this week is in loving memory of Dybach, Stem, Wozniak, Senchysheh families from Theresa and John Dybach.

Memorialize Flowers: If you would like to memorialize

flowers at the altar or ambo (podium) please call the parish office to schedule. You order the flowers from the florist of your choice. The following dates are available: December 21. January 4, 11, 18, 25.



Sunday, December 14

7:30 AM Michael & Vera Helwig

11:00 AM Richard Quilter

Monday, December 15

7:00 AM Bernard Sutusky

Tuesday, December 16

7:00 AM Roario Fortino

Wednesday, December 17 (*O Wisdom...*)

7:00 PM Clair Heichel

Thursday, December 18 (*O Adonai [Lord]...*)

7:00 AM Jack Zeigler

9:00 AM Deceased of the Battista Family

Friday, December 19 (*O Root of Jesse...*)

7:00 AM Helen Berich

Saturday, December 20 (*O Key of David...*)

8:00 AM John Ughetto

4:00 PM Deceased of the Drozda & Zampelli Families

Sunday, December 21 (*O Morning Star...*)

7:30 AM Rocco Soccio

11:00 AM People of the Parish

Upcoming Events: Please remember to mark your calendars for these coming events surrounding the holidays and parish events:

Advent Penance Service:

TODAY; 6:30pm (3:30 at St. Jude, Mifflintown)

Christmas:

Christmas Eve Mass: 4pm (music at 3:30pm)

Christmas Eve Mass: 10pm (music at 9:30pm)

Christmas Day: 10am

Parish Christmas Open House at the Office

December 29: 6-8pm.

New Year's

New Years Eve: 7pm

New Years Day: 10am

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December

14 – CCD / 9am

14 – Mentor Couple Training / Office / 3:30-5pm

14 – **Advent Penance Service / 6:30pm/ church**

18 – RCIA / Office / 7pm

19 – Sacred Heart School Play / 10am & 7pm / church

22 – Parish Pastoral Council / Office / 7pm

Check out our parish calendars online at

www.SacredHeartLewistown.com

Click “parish calendars”

EDUCATION

Pornography: What's the Problem? *by Mark J. Houck*
Addressing Porn Addiction on a Pastoral Level
conclusion... As shepherds of God's Church, bishops, priests and deacons must know their flock (John 10:14) and must address the issue of pornography with the faithful. It is important for all spiritual fathers to lead their sons and daughters towards freedom and healing. How does one accomplish this goal on a pastoral level?

First, educate the community of believers about the problem. Priests must equip themselves with the knowledge to speak confidently and passionately about the issue of pornography. Two excellent resources for clergy are the pastoral letters on this topic by Bishop Paul S. Loverde of the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia and by Bishop Robert W. Finn of the Diocese of Kansas City - St. Joseph, Missouri.

Second, be willing to summon men to this effort from the pulpit. Remember, the Church is only as strong as its men! If our Church is being undermined by the multi-billion dollar pornography industry, it is only because the men of the Church are not defending Her. Encourage and invite the men of the parish to form a weekly men's group. Pastors can facilitate this process by putting these men in touch with the growing Catholic men's movement in the United States.

Third, encourage the parents of young people in the parish to take measures to protect their children from pornography, especially on the Internet. Parents need to take every precaution to safeguard their children and home from the dangers of pornography, for example, by purchasing filter programs. Parents need to be informed about online predators who attempt to lure unsuspecting victims, like their own children, into future porn addiction.

A Final Word on the Issue of Pornography: Ultimately, the problem of eliminating pornography addiction among Catholics and other Christians is not solely the responsibility of men or of the clergy. All who desire to protect the common good and defend Christ's Church must do their part. We need to remember that pornography addiction is an intimacy disorder and that those who are struggling with it are extremely wounded people.

The sexual revolution continues to destroy millions of lives. The Body of Christ has certainly suffered. Many marriages have been destroyed, and women and children have paid the highest price. As we move forward in this battle against the evil of pornography, let us remember that we engage in this fight for the well-being of our culture and of all humanity, and for the souls of pornography's countless victims today and in the future.

Mark Houck is the co-founder and president of a lay apostolate called The King's Men (www.thekingsmen.us)

STATEMENT of the President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops "If the Lord does not build the house, in vain do its builders labor; if the Lord does not watch over the city, in vain does the watchman keep vigil." (Psalm 127, vs. 1)

The Bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States welcome this moment of historic transition and look forward to working with President-elect Obama and the members of the new Congress for the common good of all. Because of the Church's history and the scope of her ministries in this country, we want to continue our work for economic justice and opportunity for all; our efforts to reform laws around immigration and the situation of the undocumented; our provision of better education and adequate health care for all, especially for women and children; our desire to safeguard religious freedom and foster peace at home and abroad. The Church is intent on doing good and will continue to cooperate gladly with the government and all others working for these goods.

The fundamental good is life itself, a gift from God and our parents. A good state protects the lives of all. Legal protection for those members of the human family waiting to be born in this country was removed when the Supreme Court decided *Roe vs. Wade* in 1973. This was bad law. The danger the Bishops see at this moment is that a bad court decision will be enshrined in bad legislation that is more radical than the 1973 Supreme Court decision itself.

In the last Congress, a Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) was introduced that would, if brought forward in the same form today, outlaw any "interference" in providing abortion at will. It would deprive the American people in all fifty states of the freedom they now have to enact modest restraints and regulations on the abortion industry. FOCA would coerce all Americans into subsidizing and promoting abortion with their tax dollars. It would counteract any and all sincere efforts by government and others of good will to reduce the number of abortions in our country.

Parental notification and informed consent precautions would be outlawed, as would be laws banning procedures such as partial-birth abortion and protecting infants born alive after a failed abortion. Abortion clinics would be deregulated. The Hyde Amendment restricting the federal funding of abortions would be abrogated. FOCA would have lethal consequences for prenatal human life.

FOCA would have an equally destructive effect on the freedom of conscience of doctors, nurses and health care workers whose personal convictions do not permit them to cooperate in the private killing of unborn children. It would threaten Catholic health care institutions and Catholic Charities. It would be an evil law that would further divide our country, and the Church should be intent on opposing evil. *To be continued...*

Third Week of Advent: The messianic age is here! Today is “joy” Sunday; we light the pink candle in the Advent wreath; we sing songs of joy. Not only is Christmas near, the Kingdom is also near to us. In fact, it has arrived with Jesus’ Incarnation and continues to grow within each of us. Sometimes we do not see the Kingdom so clearly, but it is here nevertheless. This week, remember that Jesus has won the victory; we have nothing to fear. **Monday** (Num 24:2-7, 15-17a; Mt 21:23-27): The Kingdom will triumph. In the Gospel, Jesus’ authority is questioned. Until its fulfillment at the end of time, the Kingdom of God will be challenged. Like Jesus, we will have times of trouble and opposition. How do you feel challenged to live your values in today’s world? **Tuesday** (Zep 3:1-2, 9-13; Mt 21:28-32): God waits patiently. Like the second son in today’s Gospel, we may be reluctant and even resentful about obedience at times. But God waits, knowing that we just need a little time. Is there anything you know you should be doing, but you have been putting it off? Maybe it’s time to say “yes” to God. **Wednesday** (Is 45:6c-8, 18, 21c-25; Lk 7:18b-23): What have you seen? John the Baptist, languishing in prison and awaiting death, began to have doubts about Jesus. We, too, have our doubts at times. If we recall the wonderful things God has done in our lives, the gloom lifts and faith returns. Today, make a list of the miracles God has performed in your life. **Thursday:** (Is 54:1-10; Lk 7:24-30) “Your maker is your husband.” Isaiah’s song of joy sums up the whole history of humankind. No matter what troubles or disappointments we have endured, God loves us. His loving covenant will never be undone. Read this song of joy several times today and think about how it applies to your life. **Friday** (Is 56:1-3, 6-8; Jn 5:33-36): God’s covenant is for all of us. There are no outsiders in the Kingdom of heaven. All are welcome. God accepts those whom the world rejects and gathers the “outcasts” into his family. Have you ever felt that you were an outsider? You are God’s, therefore a citizen of the Kingdom.

COURTESY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Watch The News on Dec. 15 - What have you done for your marriage today? That’s the question the Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg is asking in a series of TV spots to be lunched December 15 on area TV stations. In the messages, couples speak about the everyday things that they do for each other to show love and commitment as they answer the question: “What have you done for your marriage today?” The spots will premier during the 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. newscasts on WGAL TV 8, WHTM ABC 27, WHP CBS 21 and WPMT Fox 43. The spots are funded by your contributions to the annual Catholic Communication Campaign. Additional advice can be found at www.foryourmarriage.org

SACRED HEART SCHOOL

What is 5th Grade Doing? The months of November and December are busy months for the students in room 210. Auditions for the musical were completed and rehearsals began after the Thanksgiving break. Iowa and Cogat test results are in and were discussed with parents during the teacher-parent conferences the first week of December. In Math, the students have been learning how to write and solve algebraic equations. We moved into Inequalities before the Thanksgiving break and now we are discussing Data collection and Graphs. In Science, the students completed an information packet on Food Webs vs. Food Chains. They will continue studying the Ecosystem and explore how it has changed. This month, we will explore Biomes and learn more about the magic of recycling. In Social Studies, the students will continue studying about the “Age of Exploration” and discover important facts about Montezuma and Cortez. In Language Arts, the students completed Unit 1, “Relating to Others,” and will be moving on to “My World and Yours.” They will continue to improve their reading and writing skills through various in class activities. Mrs. Sherman.

Sacred Heart of Jesus School will present its **Christmas Musical**, “The Last Noel,” on Friday, December 19 at 10:00AM and 7:00PM in the church. Snow date is Monday, December 22. Please join us for this beautiful Christmas presentation by our school children to remind us about the true meaning of Christmas!

