

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

Next week's tithe will be for the "pastor's aid fund."

From the pastor: As we reflect on the simple beauty and serenity of the Holy Family, we are reminded to give thanks that through our baptism, we are made part of the family of God. Our particular parish family has been blessed abundantly by God. As we welcome new families to our parish family and see it growing, we are grateful for all who have put their trust in the Lord and have made the tithing commitment. With the decision to put God first comes spiritual peace and joy.

Comments on Tithing from the pews: "Thank you for doing so much to get our new beautiful church. Yes, I lost my husband of 50 years, but God just continues to bless me when I began to tithe. It took me 18 months, but I'm finally there – and God's blessings are really flowing as a result. Thank you for sharing with us 'God's Plan for Giving.'"

My Good Deed for the Week: Here's what several of our young people offered as their tithe, in addition to their financial gift: A couple of 1st graders said: "I helped feed the dog, I helped Mom make cookies." A 5th grader said: "I helped my Gram put out Christmas decorations." A few 4th graders said: "I helped cut down the tree, I swept the basement, I packed my brothers lunch when my Mom hurt her ankle." A couple of 7th graders said: "I helped my brother understand his homework, I gave my friend money when she needed lunch at school, I took care of my rabbit." A Kindergartner said: "I cleaned my bedroom and watered the plants: "

FROM THE PASTOR

Weekly Reflection: "God so cared for the family of humanity that God gave us the Only-begotten Son; we show our acceptance of membership in God's family by caring for each other. Of course, this begins with our own family members. This fest calls us to care for one another in practical ways. Perhaps this means phoning an elder who lives alone or is in a retirement center or nursing home. Maybe this means sharing toys more generously on the part of little ones or pitching in to help without being asked on the part of adolescents or husband and wife listening more intently to each other. These family ways of showing caring relationships are "practice" for what is even more important: responding to God's will. In fact, we respond to God's will when we care for those around us in need. Dying to self for the sake of the other is what builds up each of us and our families, and makes us holy. This is the way to having the "favor of God" upon us.

About Liturgy: *Liturgy and Holiness & the Canticle of Simeon:* All liturgy is an opportunity to grow in holiness. This means much more than simply "getting grace." It

means that liturgy is one concrete way we can open ourselves to God's presence and give ourselves over to God's action so we can be transformed into ever more perfect members of the Body of Christ. Our growth in holiness begins with God's action within us. It continues with the dismissal from liturgy, when we are sent forth to live holy lives. Liturgy continues as we reach out to those who cross our paths with gentleness and kindness, justice and peace, forgiveness and reconciliation. Liturgy's fruit is God's grace borne out in the holiness of our lives.

Simeon's prayer in the Gospel becomes the Church's nightly prayer. The prayer Simeon utters when he takes the infant Jesus into his arms is now called the Canticle of Simeon or the *Nunc dimittis*. This is the proper gospel canticle for the Church's night prayer (or compline) and has been an invariable part of the Liturgy of the Hours since about the 4th century. Just as the elderly prophet Simeon could face his death with peace because he knew he had seen the Messiah so, too, when we sing this canticle very night before retiring to bed we can sleep peacefully in the confidence that God will see us through the night since the terrors of darkness were dispelled when the Light came into the world. It is a wonderful habit to pray this prayer of confidence in God each night.

Parish Christmas Open House & Blessing of Parish Office on Monday, December 29:

This year, I invite all our parishioners into our new parish office for our yearly Open House. We'll begin at 6pm with a formal "Blessing of the Office," then there will be a chance to just walk around and spend some time with each other (and taste my great-grandmother's famous eggnog). This year's open house at the office will be on Monday, December 29 from 6-8pm. All are welcome! Please, no gifts, just come and enjoy some refreshments and enjoy the holiday spirit with fellow parishioners and friends.



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

Parish Christmas Open House at the Office

December 29: 6-8pm.

New Year's – HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION

New Years Eve: 7pm

New Years Day: 10am

Holy Day of Obligation: January 1 is the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, a Holy Day of Obligation.

Masses will be at 7pm on December 31 at 10am on January 1.

Words of Thanks to so many who made our Christmas celebrations so joyful:

- the many who sent cookies and cards and goodies to the priests in the rectory and the parish staff in the office. Your “goodies” and Christmas greetings always cheered us up!
- Mrs. Ruth Allison and her helpers for coordinating the children for our Christmas Eve pageant during the 4pm Mass.
- Mrs. Deb Henry and Mrs. Ruth Allison and their “motley crew” for doing such a beautiful job on our decorations for Christmas (as always).

PARISH NEWS & ACTIVITIES

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!

Lewistown “Chip Drop”: This year, during the 2nd annual “chip drop,” Sacred Heart parish office will be one of the places where families can gather. Our doors will be open to welcome people to come, get warm, use the bathroom and play family board games. Anyone who would like to volunteer some time in the parish office on New Years Eve is asked to call the parish office.

First Friday Adoration & Holy Hour: Friday, January 2, is the first Friday of the month. There will be all day adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 7:30am until 7pm, when there will be a Eucharistic Holy Hour until 8pm. There is a sign-up sheet in the entryway for people to make the time commitment to come and spend time with the Lord in the Holy Eucharist.

What a GREAT way to begin the new year, spending some time with our Eucharistic Lord in prayer. Remember that the Eucharist cannot be left alone – so please make the sacrifice to come and spend some time with the Lord. Come, even just for 5 or 10 minutes to spend time with the Lord.



*Rite of Christian
Initiation of Adults*

Thursday, January 8: Baptism – Infant Baptism and the Sacraments: God uses the material world to sanctify us.

LITURGICAL NOTES

Memorialize the Sanctuary Lamp: The following dates are available to memorialize the Sanctuary Lamp: Dates available: January 4, 18, 25.

The Sanctuary Lamp this week is in loving memory of the McCaffrey and Boova family.

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: January 4, 11, 18, 25.

Van Transportation to Mass: The following is the van schedule for the next several weeks:

January 4 – Dave Kaniecki

January 11 – Mel Reed



Sunday, December 28 (Holy Family)

7:30 AM Anna E. Hackenberry

11:00 AM Deceased of the Battista family

Monday, December 29

7:00 AM Marge & Tom Connare

Tuesday, December 30

7:00 AM Ciro & Rose Simonetti

Wednesday, December 31

7:00 PM Therese McCaa

Thursday, January 1 (Holy Day of Obligation)

10:00 AM Bill Mahon

Friday, January 2 (Sts. Basil & Gregory Nazianzan)

7:00 AM Joseph Bondeskey

Saturday, January 3

8:00 AM Thomas McFadden

4:00 PM Giovanni & Olimpia Pannizzo

Sunday, January 4 (Epiphany)

7:30 AM The People of the Parish

11:00 AM Intention: for the health of Sr. Marie Luu's parents

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December

29 – Parish Office Open House / 6-8pm / office

31 – New Year's Eve “Chip Drop” downtown

January

1 – New Year's Day – **Holy Day of Obligation**

1-4 – Parish Office Closed

6 – Bible Study / 6:30pm / office

7 – Adult Enrichment Class / 7:30pm / office

8 – RCIA / 7:00pm / office

11 – CCD / 9:00am

11 – St. Monica Rosary Prayer / 7pm / church

Check out our parish calendars online at

www.SacredHeartLewistown.com

Click “parish calendars”

EDUCATION

The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA): A Radical Attempt to Prematurely End Debate Over Abortion

(by Denise M. Burke, AUL Vice-President of Legal Affairs): Nearly two years ago, the public debate over abortion was irrevocably altered. In the landmark *Gonzales v. Carhart* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the federal ban on partial-birth abortion and, more importantly, abdicated, at least in part, its role as the “National Abortion Control Board.”

In its decision, the Court signaled an increasing willingness to blunt attempts by abortion extremists to use the federal courts to unilaterally impose their radical agenda. The immediate reaction of activists and some members of Congress confirmed this critical shift.

Abortion advocates, including some members of Congress, hastily recycled the hyperbolic rhetoric of the 1970s. In one public statement after another, they condemned the decision and the Court, predicting--like modern-day Chicken Littles--that the outlawing of abortion was at hand and that women were about to be relegated to “second-class” status. For example, then-Presidential candidate Barack Obama stated, “I am extremely concerned that this ruling will embolden state legislatures to enact further measures to restrict a woman’s right to choose, and that the conservative Supreme Court justices will look for other opportunities to erode *Roe v. Wade*, which is established federal law and a matter of equal rights for women.”

Recognizing that the federal courts would no longer be a reliable and viable tool for actualizing their demands for unlimited and unregulated abortion, abortion supporters began to look elsewhere for the means to advance their radical agenda.

In late April 2007, Obama along with Senator Hillary Clinton and others, immediately re-introduced the federal *Freedom of Choice Act* (FOCA), a radical attempt to enshrine abortion-on-demand into American law, to sweep aside existing laws that the majority of Americans support-- such as requirements that licensed physicians perform abortions, fully-informed consent, and parental involvement-- and to prevent states from enacting similar protective measures in the future.

More importantly, FOCA is a cynical attempt to prematurely end the debate over abortion and declare “victory” in the face of mounting evidence that (a) the American public does not support the vast majority of abortions being performed in the U.S. each year and (b) abortion has a substantial negative impact on women.

Thirty-five years after *Roe*, abortion supporters are dismayed that abortion remains a divisive issue and that their radical agenda has not been submissively accepted

by the American public. Their weapon to impose their will on the unwilling American public is FOCA.

History of FOCA: Even before *Roe v. Wade* was decided in 1973, there were attempts by Congress to legalize abortion. For example in 1970, Senator Robert Packwood introduced the *National Abortion Act*, which sought to legalize abortion nationwide and preempt state laws restricting or regulating abortion. Although the *National Abortion Act* was unsuccessful, Senator Packwood later joined with Senator Alan Cranston to introduce the inaugural version of the *Freedom of Choice Act* (FOCA) in 1989.

FOCA was introduced at a time when some in Congress feared that *Roe v. Wade* might imminently be overturned (as a result of on-going litigation over abortion-related laws and restrictions including those at issue in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*), and were seeking a means to prevent states from enacting laws prohibiting or regulating abortion. FOCA’s main goals were to create a “fundamental right to abortion” and to eliminate any federal, state, or local government action (including the enactment of abortion-related legislation) that limited or “impeded” access to abortion.

Relying on specific portions of the Supreme Court’s decision in *Roe*, abortion supporters argued that FOCA would protect a woman’s right to an abortion prior to “fetal viability or at any time...to protect the life or health of the woman” and that states could, within enumerated limits, enact protective laws that did not interfere with a woman’s right to abortion.

Over the next several years, substantially-similar versions of FOCA were repeatedly re-introduced in Congress until 1993, when the provision allowing states to enact protective legislation was removed. The 1993 version of FOCA instead included criticism of the Supreme Court for abandoning the “strict scrutiny standard” (of reviewing abortion-related laws) for the “undue burden” standard that had recently been announced in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. Notably, under the new “undue burden” standard, requirements such as informed consent, reflection periods, and parental involvement for abortion were deemed constitutional.

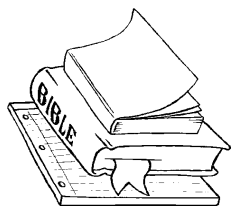
After its subsequent re-introduction in 1995, FOCA was not again introduced until 2004 when it was offered by Representative Jerrold Nadler in the House of Representatives and Senator Barbara Boxer in the Senate. In her accompanying press release, Senator Boxer explained that FOCA would “supersede all other abortion related laws, regulations or local ordinances,” which included informed consent laws and any health and safety regulations imposed on abortion clinics.

The most recent version of FOCA was introduced in April 2007, following the Supreme Court’s decision in *Gonzales v. Carhart*, upholding the federal ban on partial-birth abortion. This most-recent version was substantially similar to the 2004 version, but also included a section

deriding the Supreme Court's decision in *Gonzalez*. Specifically, FOCA mischaracterized the prohibition of partial-birth abortion as a "legal and practical" barrier that hindered "the ability of women to participate in the economic and social life of the Nation." Further, drawing upon "abortion mythology," this version of FOCA exaggerated the numbers of Americans who availed themselves of illegal abortions in the late 1800's and early 1900's, inflating the actual figure of less than one-hundred thousand to "over one-million."

Although expressing as its goal the simple codification of *Roe*, FOCA also expressly provided that it would apply "to every Federal, State, and local statute, ordinance, regulation, administrative order, decision, policy, practice, or other action enacted, adopted, or implemented before, on, or after the date of enactment." As Senator Boxer eloquently explained in 2004, "FOCA [will] supersede all other laws," especially those that the Supreme Court has held to be constitutional under *Roe* and its progeny. *To be continued...*

The Adult Bible Study group will begin studying St. Paul's letter to the Romans on January 6, 2009. We will meet every Tuesday from 7pm until 8:30pm in our new office building – 9 North Brown Street, Lewistown.



The winter session will run from January 6 until Holy Week.

Adult Enrichment classes will be held on the first Wednesday of every month starting January 7, 2009 after the 7pm Mass, in the church basement. Each month we will discuss a new topic. January's topic will be End of Life Issues and the Church's teaching. Questions, comments and suggestions on topics will be welcome. Contact Fr. Bateman at the parish office or Daniel Swigart at 899-6278.

COURTESY ANNOUNCEMENTS

The U.S. Census Bureau is in the Lewistown Area recruiting individuals to become census takers for the 2010 Census. You may call the following toll free number: 1-800-861-2010 to find the testing sites, dates and times in your area if you are interested in a well paying, part-time, temporary census taker's job.

TV spots for the *For Your Marriage* campaign of the U.S., Bishops in our Diocese. They will air on WGAL TV 8 starting in December and continuing until March. The spots promote the website and promote healthy marriages. It is www.foryourmarriage.org. The messages were created from "person-on-the-street" interviews gathered around the country. In the messages, couples speak about 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 answers range

from getting up early with the baby to carrying a spouse's purse. They show that short-term kindnesses cement a lifelong relationship. The couples include young and old and a rich variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The airing of the spots is made possible by local contributions to the annual Catholic Communication Campaign.

SACRED HEART SCHOOL

What is 2nd Grade Doing? Second grade has successfully begun to climb to success on their math thermometers and will continue to work hard on their facts in the future months. The upcoming winter months in math will feature adding two digit numbers, regrouping and borrowing for subtraction.

In reading, we are prepared to begin Unit 3, "Side by Side," where we will discuss teamwork and working well together with others. We continued to work on reading a total of 100 books together as a class. Our students read for the victims of Hurricane Katrina in their free time and summarized the books in a few sentences.

In Social Studies we have discussed family history and family traditions. This topic could have not come about at a better time of the year, with Thanksgiving and Christmas. In science, we continue to learn and discuss the various categories of animals, their characteristics and habits.

In Religion, students have learned about the seven Sacraments and how important it is to share in God's life. They know that we cannot see and hear God, but they can experience His Presence and love in the Sacraments, especially in the Eucharist at Mass, in the Scriptures and in many loving acts of others. They now understand that each of the Sacraments is a sign and celebration of God's love. At this time, children are being prepared to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. They have learned how to do an examination of conscience so they can make better choices and stay close to Jesus. They are encouraged to practice forgiveness at home, in the classroom and in the playground. (Ms. Corbin & Sr. Marie)

Sacred Heart School will host a **Business After Hours Event** sponsored by the Juniata Valley Area Chamber of Commerce on January 20, 2009 from 5:30 – 7:30pm. Chamber members are invited to see displays and activities throughout the evening. Members of the parish are invited to join us as well.

Sacred Heart School will be closed for the Christmas vacation until January 5, 2009.

Congratulations and Thanks to all of our SHS teachers and staff and volunteers and others who made our annual Christmas Musical such a wonderful success. The children did a fantastic job and we are grateful to all of you for making it all come together and become a reality!