



St. Isidore Catholic Church

A Letter From Our Pastor

Respond to God's Love this Christmas

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**December
2009**

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Dear Parishioners,

Where has the time gone? It seems like just yesterday we were enjoying the warm weather, vacations, cookouts, and all the other great things that summer offers us. Now, here we are with winter upon us, Christmas just around the corner, and the start of a new year closer than we could have imagined.

Most importantly, during December we await the birth of the Messiah – Jesus Christ. Every year it seems that the Christmas “stuff” is put on display earlier and earlier. I saw Christmas decorations being sold as early as August. One of the radio stations began playing Christmas music non-stop on November 1st. One of my friends has almost all his gifts bought and wrapped already (that sounds most unusual to me – since I don’t start shopping anytime before Dec. 15th and wrap gifts after Mass on Christmas Day).

We take the time to get all the “stuff” done for Christmas early – the shopping, the wrapping, the decorating, etc., but how early do we start preparing our hearts for Christmas? How early do we begin to talk to our children about the true meaning of Christmas? We take them early to see Santa and get their picture taken, but when do we begin to take them to the Nativity Scene – to explain the story of Jesus’ birth to them? When



do we begin ourselves to “make straight the path for the Lord”? Many of you made commitments of time of prayer during our Stewardship Renewal. The Advent and Christmas season opens up for us many opportunities to take time for our faith. Hopefully, we will take advantage of those opportunities.

Plans have been made for the Christmas Liturgies. We will have a prayerful time of prelude before Midnight Mass that will lead us into the celebration of Christmas – which really begins with Midnight Mass. This will help us take the time necessary to enter into the real meaning of Christmas.

Finally, on behalf of myself, Fr. Mark, Fr. Dennis, and all of our Parish Staff, I want to wish you and your family a very Blessed and Holy Christmas Season. We also look forward to welcoming all of you to our Christmas Celebrations. If you haven’t been here in awhile – make this the time that you come back to worship the King of Kings and Lord of Lords – the babe born in a manger on Christmas Day.

Peace,

Fr. Jerry Simonelli

Who's First On Your Christmas List?

The Christmas season is approaching. We have already made our gift lists, even checked them twice. First there is family, then friends, our children's teachers and coaches – even the mailman; Christmas inspires us to give our family and friends gifts of love and appreciation, “thank you’s” for all they do for us during the year. The very idea of holiday gift giving – a display of love and gratefulness to those who have touched our lives – is parallel to the concept of stewardship. When we give to God, we are effectively saying “thanks” for all He has done for us.

Think of all God has done for you this year. How have His loving arms embraced you? Maybe He has answered a special prayer intention. Maybe He has created a job opportunity for an unemployed loved one, helped safely bring a new baby into the family, or instilled peace during a difficult time. God's blessings are countless, and the abundant gifts He bestows upon us are given freely out of incomprehensible love – despite our unworthiness.

Think of the ways you respond to God's bountiful blessings. How do you choose to show Him your thankfulness? During Advent, as we prepare for the coming of Christ, will we remember to add Jesus' name to our list? Uncle John wants a new drill, and Grandpa definitely needs a new cardigan, but what does Jesus want? After all, isn't it His birthday we are celebrating?

The very first name on the list – above our spouse, children, relatives and friends – should be God's name. As disciples of Christ, we are called to give God our “first fruits,” not our leftovers. We should joyfully place God first on our gift-giving lists, not out of guilt or as an afterthought, but out of love and appreciation.

Stewardship allows us to tangibly give a Christmas gift to God through our time, talents, and treasure. We give God gifts of time through prayer, such as spending time before the Blessed Sacrament or praying the Rosary. We can give our talents to God in the guise of simple charitable actions; consider bringing a meal to a hard-pressed neighbor, or watching a young mother's children so she can prepare for her own family's Christmas. What about treasure? We can give God a portion of our income this Christmas by dropping an extra dollar in the collection basket. Whatever choices you make this season, make the decision to be a good Christmas steward.



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¿Quién esta Primero en tu Lista de Navidad?

La temporada de Navidad se acerca. Hemos hecho ya nuestras listas de regalos, y hasta la hemos chequeado dos veces. Primero esta la familia, luego los amigos, los maestros de nuestros hijos y entrenadores – hasta el cartero; la Navidad nos inspira a dar a nuestra familia y amigos regalos de amor y apreciación; “gracias” por todo lo que hacen por nosotros durante todo el año. La idea de dar regalos durante los días festivos – una muestra de amor y agradecimiento a aquellos que han tocado nuestras vidas – es paralela al concepto de co-responsabilidad. Cuando damos a Dios, estamos efectivamente diciendo “gracias” por todo lo que El ha hecho por nosotros.

Piensa en todo lo que Dios ha hecho por ti este año. ¿Cómo te han rodeado sus brazos en abrazos llenos de amor? Quizás, El ha respondido a una intención especial presentada en oración. Quizás, El ha creado una oportunidad de trabajo para un ser amado que se encuentra desempleado, o ha ayudado a traer al mundo un bebé en la familia con salud, o derramado paz durante una época difícil.

Las bendiciones de Dios son ilimitadas, y los abundantes regalos que El nos depara son atorgados libremente, el resultado de un amor incomprensible – a pesar de no ser merecedores de tal amor.

Piensa en que forma respondes a las abundantes bendiciones de Dios. ¿Cómo escoges mostrarle tu agradecimiento? Durante Adviento, mientras nos preparamos para la venida de Cristo



¿recordaremos añadir el nombre de Jesús a nuestra lista? Tío Juan quiere un taladro nuevo, y abuelo definitivamente necesita una chaqueta, pero ¿Qué quiere Jesús? Después de todo, ¿no es Su cumpleaños que celebramos?

El primer nombre en la lista – por encima de nuestra esposa, hijos, familiares y amigos – debe estar el nombre de Dios. Como discípulos de Cristo, somos llamados a dar a Dios nuestras “primicias,” no las sobras. Debemos, con alegría, poner a Dios primero en nuestras listas de regalos, no por que nos sentimos culpables, pero por amor y apreciación.

Co-responsabilidad nos permite dar un regalo palpable de Navidad a Dios, en forma de nuestro tiempo, talento y tesoro. Damos a Dios regalos de tiempo a través de la oración, dedicando tiempo ante el Santísimo Sacramento, rezando el Rosario. Damos nuestros talentos a Dios, en simples acciones caritativas; considera llevar una comida a un vecino necesitado, o cuidar los niños de una joven madre para que ella pueda preparar la Navidad para su familia. ¿Y qué hubo del tesoro? Podemos dar a Dios una porción de nuestros ingresos, dejando un dólar extra en la cesta de la colecta. Cualquier cosa que escojas hacer esta temporada, decide ser un buen co-responsable Navideño.

English as a Second Language Classes Offered at St. Isidore

By Rich and Lisa Muegge, St. Isidore Parishioners/ESL Instructors

One of the many ministries in our parish involves the tutoring of adults in English as a second language, commonly referred to as ESL. It's a coaching style of teaching, which is why one of the texts is entitled Side by Side. Retired teachers Rich and Lisa Muegge had been tutoring ESL elsewhere and realized such a program could be instituted here at St. Isidore. Deacon Terry and parishioners Jeanie Jadran and Suzanne Mendoza were instrumental in helping them get the program to the starting block in February of 2005.

The program continues today as a vital activity thanks to support from Ane' Berg, Human Needs Director of our parish, and Tom Norton, parish administrator. Of course, greatest thanks go to the 27 generous tutors who volunteer their time and talent, 90 minutes per session. The ESL year runs from Oct. 1 through June 1, with appropriate time off for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Holy Week, and spring break.

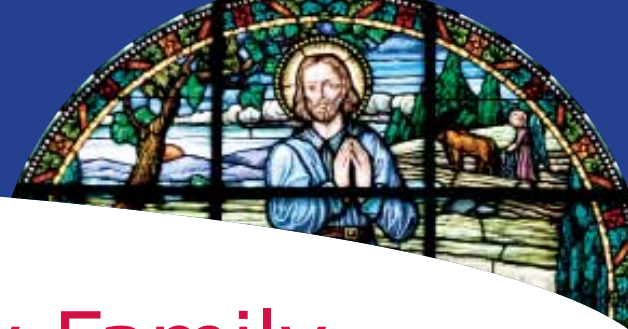


Lisa, Rich, and almost all the tutors are parishioners here at St. Isidore, and so are many of the 31 students. Tutors choose which of two sessions they prefer: either the session on Wednesday mornings (9 to 10:30 in the church library and the large meeting room to the left of the narthex), or the one on Thursday evenings (7 to 8:30 in rooms 7 and 8 of St. Isidore School.) Each tutor works separately with one or two students. Lisa and Rich tutor in each session in addition to administering the program.

Prospective tutors are welcome to observe the ESL sessions at any time. Requests can be made through Ane' Berg (630-295-6890). No teaching or tutoring experience is required, nor any proficiency in the first language of the student. The books and some of the training are supplied by The People's Resource Center in Wheaton. The largest food pantry and literacy program in DuPage County, the PRC also provides other services such as computer training. Several of the ESL students have availed themselves of the PRC's seven-week computer training workshops which culminate in the awarding of a free refurbished computer.

The ESL program is an important ministry for the parish to support. It not only brings the English-speaking and Spanish-speaking contingents of the parish together, it helps our students to help themselves now and in the future. It satisfies the biblical mandate to welcome strangers, which in this case is fulfilled not just with words and a smile and ongoing friendship, but with the transmission of language, a powerful tool to help the students fully participate in a culture they have sacrificed so much to join.

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Feast of the Holy Family

Christmas Doesn't End Dec. 25

It's Dec. 26, and we've celebrated Christmas, opened all of our gifts and practiced all of our Christmas traditions.

What do we do now?

The Christmas season is far from over. In fact, the octave of Christmas has just begun, and the Holy Solemnity of the Nativity of our Lord on Christmas Day, is directly followed by the Feast of the Holy Family of Nazareth on Dec. 28.

After giving birth in a stable, Mary and Joseph were now charged with a great responsibility. Their home would be the place where our Lord grew up! Do you ever stop and think about what it must have been like for Mary and Joseph to raise the Savior of the Universe? They changed His diapers, fed Him His meals, and helped Him learn to walk. No doubt, Joseph taught Jesus how to safely work a saw, and Mary probably helped Him mend His clothes. This puts all of our parenting duties into perspective. Can you imagine caring for Our Lord as He was a vulnerable and



helpless child? In fact, contemplating the Holy Family in this way gives us a new-found appreciation for family life — with all of its trials and triumphs.

Though little is known about Jesus' early years, we know He grew up just like any human child, and Mary and Joseph were chosen to parent Him. The Lord chose the family as the place for His birth and His growth, thereby sanctifying the fundamental institution of society. From then on, the Family was much more than just a group of people living together. With the Holy Family as our example, all Christian families

are called to be small domestic churches. As was the humble home of Nazareth, the family is an authentic school of the Gospel, wherein we live our faith on a daily basis. John Paul II explains that "recollection and prayer, mutual understanding and respect, personal discipline and community asceticism and a spirit of sacrifice, work and solidarity are typical features that make the family of Nazareth a model for every home."

As Christian families, we must follow the example of the Holy Family, and be lights to shine the Truth in the midst of a sometimes dark world. Through their humble existence, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph remained united to one another and to the Father, working always to remain close to Him and to show His love to the world. So also must we do. As Christians, we are called to show the world "convincingly that it is possible to live marriage fully in keeping with God's plan and with the true good of the human person — of the spouses and of the children who are more fragile" (NMI 47). Then, amidst all of the spilled milk and temper tantrums, all of the birthdays, graduations, and marriages, we will serve as a sign of God Himself — three persons united in love!

May Jesus, Mary, and Joseph bless and protect all families so that they will extol the peace, joy, justice, and love that the newborn Christ has given us as a gift to all of humanity!

Opening Our Doors to LINK Our Youth

At St. Isidore, we appreciate our young people and value their contribution to our parish family.

They are not just numbers — they are the hope of the Church, a vibrant and refreshing source of spiritual energy and faith.

In honor of our young people and in recognition of their needs, on Nov. 15, we celebrated the grand opening of the LINK facility, a former retail space located $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile north of our parish campus.

“The facility provides an identity for our youth, and helps them feel that they belong to our parish,” says Youth Ministry Director David Heimann. “By giving them a place to meet at a church facility, we are helping the youth establish a habit of coming to church. We are also preserving the faith for future generations in the process.”

Over time, the need for such a facility had become quite clear, and was discerned at a Parish Council meeting this past February. The 40 active youth programs we have at our parish, which are made available to our 1,800 junior and senior high youth, had formerly been meeting in the homes of individual parishioners. However, there were critical reasons for drawing them back to meeting at church. Our youth began using the LINK facility towards the end of October, and currently about 400 youth are registered in utilizing the building.

The LINK facility, which provides space for 50 youth groups to meet regularly, including Confirmation preparation

groups, four senior high youth groups and more. Its five small group rooms for catechesis are designed to be similar to living rooms in homes, providing a relaxed and comfortable environment. The youth enjoy free access to the Real Presence of Christ in the tabernacle located in the chapel, a simple room with a glass block wall as an interesting

back drop. In the large group gathering space, 100 youth gather each evening for prayer. The facility also features a recreation room.

The importance of having such a meeting space runs pretty deep.

“Young people and adolescents are on the margins of society because they don’t have

an overall society that believes in them and their skills,” says David. “The Church becomes a place for them to come that rectifies the injustice that society puts on them.”

Such a blessing doesn’t come without a cost, however, and the youth are relying on the generous support of our parish family. We have a five-year lease and the total monthly costs for the facility

are just under \$8,500 per month. Please consider giving your treasure to God by enclosing a one-time offering in your designated bi-monthly offertory envelope or an envelope located in the pews. You can also fill out a pledge form, to be found in the back of the church.





Financial Report

St. Isidore Quarterly Financial Report July 1, 2009 - September 30, 2009

Income/Expense Statement

	YTD Jul 1, 09– September 30, 2009	Last year YTD Jul 1, 08– September 30, 2008
Income:		
Weekly Collections	499,663	525,789
Easter/Christmas Collection	0	7
Faith Formation ¹ Income	780,641	743,170
Other Collections	2,150	4,080
All Other Income	107,324	120,665
Total Income²	\$ 1,389,778	\$ 1,393,711
Expenses:		
Parish Administration & Operations	301,587	344,088
Liturgy & Music Ministry	37,364	39,987
School	391,379	384,566
Religious Education	94,543	107,405
Youth Ministry	69,709	22,061
Adult Formation	20,553	28,968
Community Life	13,064	16,039
Outreach & Social Action	16,349	34,159
Interest on Loans	6,556	9,176
Capital Repairs, Fundraising, Restricted Donations	74,346	95,769
Total Expenses	\$ 1,025,450	\$ 1,082,218
YTD Net Income	\$ 364,328	\$ 311,493

¹ School, RE, Adult Formation, & Youth Ministry tuitions and fees.

Our Debt

Remaining Debt balance as of 9/30/09 \$ 89,248

	<u>YTD 9/30/09</u>	<u>9/30/08</u>
Future Fund Savings Account	\$299,420	\$383,885

	<u>YTD 9/30/09</u>	<u>9/30/08</u>
Education Endowment Fund Balance	\$230,726	\$251,416

St. Isidore Catholic Church

Your Advent-Christmas Schedule and Envelope are enclosed.

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Carta del Parróco

Respond to God's Love this Christmas

¿A dónde se ha ido el tiempo? Parece como que fue solamente ayer que estábamos disfrutando de un clima calido, vacaciones, parrilladas, y todas esas cosas grandiosas que el verano nos ofrece. Ahora estamos aquí con el invierno sobre nosotros, la Navidad a la vuelta de la esquina y el comienzo de un nuevo año lo más cercano de lo que nos hubiéramos imaginado.

Más importante aun, durante Diciembre estamos en la espera del nacimiento del Mesías – Jesucristo. Parece que cada año las “cosas” Navideñas se ponen en exposición cada vez más temprano. Yo vi decoraciones de Navidad que se empezaron a vender en Agosto. Una estación de radio empezó a tocar música navideña sin-parar desde el 1ro de Noviembre. Uno de mis amigos ya compro casi todos sus regalos y hasta ya los tiene envueltos (esto suena muy inusual para mi – ya que yo no comienzo mis compras antes del 15 de Diciembre y envuelvo regalos

después de la Misa del Día de Navidad).

Nos tomamos el tiempo para tener todas las “cosas” hechas antes de Navidad – las compras, los regalos envueltos, las decoraciones, etc., ¿pero que tan temprano empezamos a preparar nuestros corazones para Navidad? ¿Qué tan temprano empezamos a hablarles a nuestros hijos sobre el verdadero significado de Navidad? Los llevamos temprano a ver a Santa y que se tomen una foto, ¿pero cuando comenzamos a ver un Nacimiento – para explicarles la historia del nacimiento de Jesús? ¿Cuándo es que nosotros comenzamos a “hacer el sendero recto para el Señor”? muchos de ustedes hicieron el compromiso de tiempo en oración durante nuestra Renovación de Corresponsabilidad. La temporada de Adviento y Navidad nos abre muchas oportunidades para tomar tiempo para nuestra fe. Espero, que tomemos ventaja de estas oportunidades.

Los planes para nuestras Liturgias ya están hechos. Tendremos un tiempo

de orar en prelude antes de la Misa de medianoche que nos llevara a la celebración de Navidad – que realmente comienza con la Misa de Medianoche. Esto nos ayudara a tomar el tiempo necesario para entrar al verdadero significado de Navidad.

Finalmente, por parte de mía, del Padre Mark, del Padre Dennis, y del personal de nuestra parroquia, les deseo a ustedes y a su familia una temporada muy Santa y Bendecida Navideña. También los esperamos en todas nuestras celebraciones Navideñas. Si no han estado aquí por un tiempo – hagan este el tiempo para regresar a adorar al Rey de Reyes y al Señor de Señores – la criatura nacida en un pesebre el Día de Navidad.

Paz,



Padre Jerry