Rev. Robert Clark

Pastor

Rev. Patrick O'Neill

Associate Pastor

**Rev. Charles Watkins** 

Associate Pastor

**Maria Arias** 

Director of Hispanic Ministry

**Mary Beth Ford** 

Youth Director / Social Concerns

Jolene Hillgoth

School Principal

Patricia Kahl

Director of Religious Education

**Bobbie Kallal** 

Business Manager

**Justin Sisul** 

Music Director

Christopher Wagner

Information Technology

**Dolores Wouk** 

Minister of Care Coordinator

PASTORAL OFFICES

700 W. 55th Street

La Grange, IL 60525 708-352-6209

PARISH SCHOOL

708-352-4820

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION / RCIA

708-352-4856

YOUTH MINISTRY /

SOCIAL CONCERNS

708-352-4641

LITURGY / MINISTRY OF CARE

708-352-4834

MUSIC DIRECTOR

708-352-4547

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

708-352-8597

## ST. CLETUS CHURCH

Rectory 600 W. 55th Street LaGrange, IL 60525 www.stcletusparish.com www.stcletusschool.com

### **WEBSITE EDITION**



### **MASSES**

Saturday Evening: 5:00p

Sunday: 7:00a, 8:00a, 9:30a, 11:00a, 6:00p (Spanish)

Evening Before Holy Day: 7:00p

**Holy Days** 

6:30a, 8:00a, 9:00a

Monday - Saturday

8:00a

#### **BAPTISMS**

 $1^{\rm st}$  &  $3^{\rm rd}$  Sunday of the month at 1:00pm. Parents must be registered parishioners and attend the Baptism Preparation Class. Please make arrangements by calling the rectory office at 708-352-6209.

#### WEDDINGS

Dates & times are reserved for registered parishioners. Initial arrangements must be completed five months in advance of the wedding date.

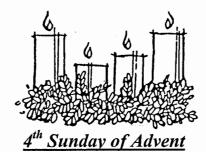
# HOME / HOSPITAL VISITATION & COMMUNION CALLS

Please contact the Ministry of Care office at 708-352-4834

#### CONFESSIONS

Every Saturday 4:15 - 4:45 PM

# Fr. Bob's Utterings



Elizabeth asks Mary today in the gospel, "But who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" On this fourth Sunday in Advent we could ask the same question of God, "Who are we that God should send His only son into the world for us?" Just as the baby in Elizabeth's womb stirred for joy the spirit of God that dwells within us stirs with anticipation at the gift of Jesus the Christ. Our waiting and anticipation are quickly coming to fulfillment in Emmanuel, God made man, who is so near.

### Final Advent Signs and Symbols

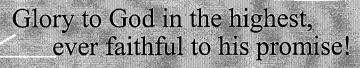
This final week of Advent, which is actually only one day long, brings us the last signs and symbols of this holy season of anticipation. We see that the last candle of our Advent wreath is lit. All the figures have appeared in the crèche except the baby Jesus. The star has appeared at the end of our road on the sanctuary wall. More trees and flowers of joy and celebration have appeared. All wait for the hour when the lights will be turned on and the Joy of Christmas will truly be here once again. These signs and symbols remind us that God loves us so much that He wishes nothing for us but "Peace on Earth" and "Good Will toward Men."

## Christmas Greetings

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of Fr. Pat O'Neill, Fr. Charles Watkins, Fr. Charles Gallagher, Fr. Pat Marshall, Fr. Mike McMillen, Fr. Don Blaeser, and myself to wish everyone at St. Cletus Parish a Holy Christmas and a Blessed New Year. What a great honor and privilege it is for all of us to have been chosen to minister to your needs. You are a very special community of believers that strengthens our faith daily. Thank you for sharing God's love with us.

Christmas Blessings to You and Yours with Love,

Father Bob Clark Pastor





Wishing you a Blessed Christmas,



## READINGS FOR THE WEEK December 24, 2006

Monday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89; Acts 13:16-17,

22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25]

Midnight: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96; Ti 2:11-14;

Lk 2:1-14

Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97; Ti 3:4-7;

Lk 2:15-20

Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98; Heb 1:1-6;

Jn 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14]

Tuesday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Mt 10:17-22

Wednesday: 1 Jn 1:1-4; Jn 20:1a, 2-8 Thursday: 1 Jn 1:5 — 2:2; Mt 2:13-18 1 Jn 2:3-11; Lk 2:22-35 Friday:

Saturday: 1 Jn 2:12-17; Lk 2:36-40

Sunday: Sir 3:2-7, 12-14 or 1 Sm 1:20-22,

24-28; Ps 128 or Ps 84; Col 3:12-21

[12-17] or 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24; Lk 2:41-52

Encounter God through Reading Scripture!



A Rrayer for World Reace

Almighty God, Oreator of all things, continue to be our refuge and our strength as we undertake the challenge of peace.

Bless and protect our servicewomen and men. Ret their faith and trust in you never weaken. Ret your Spirit quide them, that they might be brought home safely.

We pray for people of all nations. fill their hearts with the desire to ensure justice and equality for all. We ask that you watch over those exposed to the horrors of war. Let your compassion shine on all

who dwell in war-torn areas. Guide our daily path to the way of peace.

Ret us all, in some way, be an instrument of your peace. Amen.

#### Christmas Eve/Christmas Day Mass Schedule Gloria! Christmas Eve Masses: Accompaniment: Chamber Ensemble 2:00pm..... 2:15pm...Morrissey Hall Vocalist/Piano 3:30pm..... Children's Choir 3:45pm...Morrissey Hall Vocalist/Piano Chamber Ensemble 5:30pm..... 7:30pm...Spanish Mass Spanish 10:30pm..... Chancel Choir Christmas Day Masses: Accompaniment: 7:00am..... Traditional (Organ) 8:00am..... Vocalist/Organ Chancel Choir 9:30am..... 11:00am..... Contemporary Choir New Year's Eve: 5:00pm New Year's Day: 8:00am and 9:30am

### **Compassionate Care**

"For the Lord and his people will have compassion" Isaiah 49:13.

Compassionate Care, a new outreach ministry, is the parish connection to families who have lost a loved one. If you have experienced the death of a loved one, you personally know how devastating the loss can be for an individual and a family. Comfort and compassion are the best gifts we can offer members of our parish family during a very trying time. Volunteers are needed to participate on a rotating basis in the following capacities:

- 1) Be the initial contact person to help families plan the funeral liturgy if assistance is needed.
- 2) Conduct a brief evening prayer service at the funeral home during the wake.
- 3) Make sympathy cards (cards will be provided).
- 4) Mail cards and other bereavement literature on a set schedule.
- 5) Make follow-up phone calls to the bereaved families.

If you are so inclined to give of your time and talent to this very special ministry call Eugenia Callison at (708) 482-4974. Thank you.

Father Charles

### **Attention Lectors and Auxiliary Ministers!**

Lector and Auxiliary Minister schedule questionairres are available for pickup in the Minister's Room.

Fr. Pat O'Neill

## Wanted! Young Adults for Confirmation Retreat

We are looking for some young adults (age 21+) to join this year's retreat team for our overnight Confirmation Retreat on Saturday, February 24 and Sunday, February 25 at Lake Lawn Lodge. This is a great opportunity to share your faith and life experiences with our teens who are preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation in the Spring, and to nourish your own spirituality. Some of you have participated in this retreat yourself as a team, you know the important role our young adults play in a meaningful and enjoyable retreat experience. Please contact me at once if you are interested, know someone who might be interested, and for more details. Phone: (708) 352-4641; email: youth@stcletusparish.com. What a wonderful way to start out the New Year! Thanks, and I am hoping to hear from you soon!

Mary Beth Ford
Director of Youth

## Please Pray for

...our sick in your prayers: Mike Patzelt, Richard Taylor, Rita D'Onofrio, Anthony Regalado, Marilyn Matesevac, Joanne Mate, Adrianne Welenc, Hunter Peters, Mario Aguilar, Cacilia Ziegler, Jackie Dudley, Ruth Calandriello, Dorothy Salvato, Ann Marie Nabor, Nadine Pankow, Patty Johnson, Connie Kostecki, Jonii Patterson, Catherine Meyers, Luigi Iacopetti, Mary Jean Sternquist, Agnes Suennen, Joseph Johnson, Rose Ptak, Bridie Boyce, Stephanie Yakowicz, Louis Cesario, Virginia Wilson, Gail Pankow-Locker, Josie Spoto, Larry Wojnar, Louise Jaunich, Frank Werner, Virginia Tenerelli, Agnes Olszowka, Judy Hofstetter, Michael Karpinski, Emil Chlapecka, Augustin Jaso, Marie Krolicki, Mary O'Rourque, Debbie Broz, Scott May, and Jackie Zaccari.

Also pray for our parishioners who are in nursing homes or are homebound and unable to attend Mass.



Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

# SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2006 4th Sunday of Advent; Vigil of the Nativity Hope endures

When tomorrow arrives, four weeks of waiting will have turned into one celebration. But if

we believe our anticipation will be over, we are more than likely to be disappointed; our world and its problems remain, often, as they were. And how exciting would it be to have nothing to wait for anymore? When we wait, our faith is driven by a hope of the Kingdom of God. The end of Advent will not mark the end of a hopeful waiting but will renew hope's vigor as we look to the return of the Lord. On this, the final day of Advent, celebrate the waiting.

TODAY'S READINGS: Micah 5:1-4a; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45

"Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

## MONDAY, DECEMBER 25 NATIVITY OF THE LORD On being and becoming

On this day in history God became human. The essence of this event is about being and becoming. We know who God becomes: the Word made flesh; and we know who God is, was, and ever shall be: our savior. But who are you now and who do you want to become? You can be a light to the world; you can be part of God's saving plan; you can be a joy to the world. You only need to accept the gifts you've already received from Jesus Christ: grace upon grace.

TODAY'S READINGS: Midnight: Isaiah 9:1-6; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14/ Dawn: Isaiah 62:11-12; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:15-20/ Day: Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18
"From bis fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."

# TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26 FEAST OF STEPHEN, FIRST MARTYR The good with the bad

It's the day after Christmas, for goodness sake. We're still cleaning up, wearing our new sweaters, and working on the leftovers. Why remember the first martyr—someone stoned to death? But for more than 1,500 years the church has celebrated this feast at this time. Before his death, Stephen, as the Book of Acts tells us, was a deacon (the first in that category, too) and was responsible for feeding the poor. He also worked a few miracles and debated with opponents of the early Christian community—one particularly nasty dispute got him killed. As the day-after-Christmas saint, Stephen reminds that, in the midst of celebrating the birth of Jesus, service and sacrifice continue to be part of calling yourself a Christian.

Today's readings: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Matthew 10:17-22 "Brother will betray brother to death, and you will be hated by all because of my name."

# WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27 FEAST OF JOHN, APOSTLE, EVANGELIST A disciple by any other name

Since ancient times John has been a popular name for baby boys in all its ethnic variations: Juan, Sean, Eòin, Johann, Jean, János, Giovanni, and Ivan. In the first century many followers of Christ carried the name John: the apostle John, the brother of James and son of Zebedee, also thought to be the beloved disciple of John's gospel; John of Antioch, an early church leader probably responsible for the Gospel of John; John Mark, assistant to Peter who probably wrote the Gospel of Mark; John of Patmos,

who wrote Revelation; and possibly another John who wrote the three Letters of John. So on this day, we celebrate all those named John who helped bring us the good news of Jesus Christ!

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 1:1-4; John 20:1a, 2-8
"Mary Magdalene ran to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved."

# THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28 FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS Kids don't ride free

Each day a great number of innocent people—many of them children—suffer and die because of war, disease, and poverty. Even in our own country, school and gang violence, child predators, and other lethal forces threaten the lives of our young ones. The "holy innocents"—those King Herod ordered murdered in his vain hunt for the infant Jesus—are also all those who suffer from the violence humans inflict on one another and the planet.

All destructiveness begins in the human heart when people do harm out of fear or selfishness. This year, this Christmas season, tell yourself that hate and neglect will stop with you.

Today's readings: 1 John 1:5-2:2; Matthew 2:13-18 "Herod... was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were 2 years old or under."

# FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29 FEAST OF THOMAS BECKET, BISHOP, MARTYR When worlds collide

Issues of church and state crop up in every generation. In the 12th century, Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canturbury, stood firm against King Henry II in the latter's efforts to establish himself as absolute ruler over everything in his kingdom, including the church. Becket's refusal to submit to the king's ultimate authority cost him his life. The stakes are not always that high in the tensions between church and state, but people of faith must prepare themselves for difficult choices. Be clear about which of your loyalties are temporal—finite and fleeting—and which are eternal—everlasting and true for all time. That way when allegiances collide, you will know the path of truth.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:3-11; Luke 2:22-35
"This child is destined to be a sign that will be opposed so the inner thoughts of many will be revealed."

# Saturday, December 30 6th day in the octave of Christmas Keep the fa-la-las coming

Anyone who ever took music lessons knows what an octave is: a stretch of eight notes. The word also applies to the stretch of eight days after Christmas and Easter. The Christmas octave starts with Christmas and ends with the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God on January 1. It's a good way to remember that the celebration of Christmas begins—not ends—on Christmas. These eight days give you a chance to ask yourself what this great feast of Christmas means to you, and how you can live out that meaning the whole year long

Today's Readings: 1 John 2:12-17; Luke 2:36-40 "The child Jesus grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him."

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### Stewardship

What greater gift has ever been given than the one we received nearly 2,000 years ago? Nothing can be greater than the promise of salvation, the gift of Jesus Christ.

Let us rejoice and give thanks and realize that all that we have comes from God.

Our Weekly Offering	
December 17	
Budgeted revenue:	\$29,061
Collection Received:	28,063
Shortfall last week:	- 998
Revenue to budget	
Shortfall for this fiscal year:	- 68,576
# of envelopes mailed:	3,187
# of envelopes returned:	875
Thank you for your continued s	support. Please
remember to use your offertory	

### **Christ Belongs to All**

Christ was born in the first century, yet he belongs to all centuries. He was born a Jew, yet he belongs to all races. He was born in Bethlehem, yet he belongs to all countries.

-George W. Truett

### Too Hot to Handle: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah Event

The Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University is proud to present *Too Hot to Handle: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah Event*. This uplifting and dynamic

tenors Rodrick Dixon and Victor Trent Cook, soprano Alfreda Burke, a symphony orchestra and jazz combo conducted by Suzanne Mallare Acton, the **Too Hot Choir**, directed by Old St. Pat's Music Director Bill Fraher (with choir members from churches throughout the Chicagoland area). Tickets are available at (312) 902-1500, ticketmaster.com or at the Auditorium box office at 50 E. Congress Parkway (use Password FRIENDS to save \$10 per ticket!

### The Work of St. Cletus Parish - A Quiet Gift

The work of our parishes doesn't usually make the front pages. Few would describe it as earth shattering. It is quiet work. It touches one soul at a time. At St. Cletus Parish, imperfect people grow closer to God every day. Community is formed here whether through daily celebration of the Eucharist or dinner delivered to the home of a grieving family; God's love is quietly made manifest here. We have a good thing going here, a very good thing. Let's pass it forward.

If family circumstances allow, a gift to St. Cletus Parish through your estate plan would come to much good. Our parish would be a worthy beneficiary of your generosity. The gift of faith is one of the most wonderful gifts there is. Your bequest or other planned gift to St. Cletus Parish will help pass on our beautiful faith to a new generation of believers. We thank you for considering this generous option and wish you and your family a blessed Advent and Christmas.

### Worldwide Marriage Encounter!

For information about Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekends, scheduled for January 26-28, April 20-22, or June 22-24, 2007, please contact Jim and Kris at (800) 442-3554 or our website www.wwmechicago-gary.org. Merry Christmas!!

#### If Christ Had Not Come

If Jesus Christ had not come, the prophecies would be unfilled; there would be no Savior. The character of God who loves us and cares for us would be unknown; the secret of peace for the world would be unrevealed: The world would be without the marvelous example of a sinless life.

### Searching for Bethlehem in the Soul

Nearly twenty years ago, the renowned educator, Allan Bloom, wrote a very provocative book entitled, The Closing of the American Mind. As its title suggests, this isn't a book that flatters contemporary culture. Part of our mind is darkening, he suggests. Our sophistication is making us smarter but less wise. Something inside of us is narrowing. What? What's narrowing inside of us? How are our minds closing?

His basic idea can be captured in one image, this autobiographical piece:

When he was a young, undergraduate student in university, one of his professors walked into class on the first day and said this to the students: "you come here from your parochial backgrounds, full of your childish beliefs; well, I am going to bathe you in the great truths and set you free!"

Bloom wasn't impressed. He remarks that the professor reminded him of a little boy who had solemnly informed him at age seven that there was no Santa Claus or Easter Bunny. However, Bloom adds, he wasn't bathing me in any great truths, just showing off, like the professor. But still the lesson wasn't lost on him. From this, Bloom resolved to teach in the opposite way. He would, on the first day of his classes walk into the lecture room, look at his young students, and begin his class in words to this effect: "you come here with a lot of experience, already having tasted life, having been to a lot of places, and seen a lot of things, so I'm going to try to teach you how to believe in Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny again – then maybe you'll have a chance to be happy!"

The invitation, to learn how to believe in Santa and the Easter Bunny again, is one of the many challenges of Christmas. And the challenge is not so much to come back to the innocence of a child (something we could never do, even if we tried) but to see the knowledge and maturity that we've gained from all our years of learning and experience not as an end but as a stage, a necessary one, on the journey to a still deeper place, wisdom, fuller maturity.

What that means is that it is not just important to learn and become sophisticated, it is equally important to eventually become post-sophisticated; it is not just important to grow in experience and shed naivete, it is equally important to eventually find a certain "second naivete"; and it is not just a sign of intelligence and maturity to stop believing in Santa and the Easter Bunny, it is a sign of even more intelligence and deeper maturity to start believing in them again.

An old philosopher of mine used to express this in a series of adages: If you ask a naive child, if she believes in Santa and the Easter Bunny, she will say yes. If you ask a bright child if she believes in Santa and the Easter Bunny, she will say no. But if you ask even a brighter child if she believes in Santa and the Easter Bunny, she will say yes, for a deeper reason.

Almost everything about Christmas, from its deep real meaning to the piety and even (ironically) the commercialism we surround it with, invites us to be that third child.

But that's not easy. To be an adult is precisely to be experienced, complex, wounded. To be an adult is to have lost one's innocence. None of us, unless we die very young, carries the dignity of our person and one of our baptism unstained through life. We fall, we compromise, we sin, we get hurt, we hurt others, and mostly we grow ever more pathologically complex, with layer after layer of emotional and intellectual complexity separating us from the little girl and little boy who once waited for Christmas in innocence and joyful anticipation. And that can be painful.

Sometimes, if we're sensitive, the innocence of children can be like the stab of a knife to the soul, making us feel as if we've fallen from ourselves. But, in the end, that's an unhealthy over-idealization, the false nostalgia of J.D. Salinger's Catcher in the Rye. We're not meant to be children forever and innocence will always be lost.

Sometimes, more positively, we get to experience our old innocence and youthful wonder vicariously in the eyes of our own children, in their joyful anticipation and gleeful celebration of Christmas. Their belief in Santa and the wonder in their eyes as they look at the baby-Jesus in the crib help us find a certain softness inside again; not in the same place where we once felt things when we were children and still believed in Santa (because that would only bring the painful stab of nostalgia) but at a new place, a place beyond where we define ourselves as grown-up (because that's the place where wisdom is born).

That's also the place where Jesus is born. That's Bethlehem in the soul.

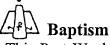
Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com.



### December 25 thru December 31

Day	Time	Intention			
Monday Christmas Day	7:00am 8:00am 9:30am 11:00am	Purgatorial Society Ann Grundman, William Magee, Catherine Fregeau, Thorbie Murphy, Mary McMahon, William McCollom, James Fenelon, Frank & Lorraine Peck Frances Stefanski, Belmonte Pieri, Antonia Chrabaszcz, Howard Madsen			
Tuesday	8:00am	Steven Slobodnik, Elsie Wagner, Eric Geyer, Velma Gartland			
Wednesday	8:00am	Angela Clifford, Esther DelReal			
Thursday	9:30am	Francis Herzog, Roland Barile			
Friday	8:00am	Purgatorial Society -Joseph Megla, Louis J. Kadlec			
Saturday	8:00am 5:00pm	Vincent Passardi Bennie M. Carnevale, Alex Grabb			
Sunday New Year's Eve	7:00am 8:00am 9:30am 11:00am 5:00pm	Marco & Emilia Rattin Catherine Fregeau Tim Jones, Eugene Sorrentino, Joseph Lattal Frank Lusson, Lottie Mendrala Rock Hauck			

Altar Servers # December 31/January 1, 2007 Please check schedule



This Past Week We Welcomed...Sean Patrick McCabe to Our Parish Family.

### **Rest in Peace**

Please pray for those who have died and their families:

- ...Sharon Block, sister of Ed Block
- ...John O'Donnell, husband of Mary Alice
- ...Mary Frances Danaher

Monday, December 25, 2006		11:00 AM		LR	Pawlowicz, Rita		
SM Zn B2 Zn B3 Zn B4 Me B5 Fa	DAM nuda, Ron nuda, Ron nuda, Louise ezan, Mary Ann- hey, Ann- rsilli, Helen-	LR	Chlapecka, Thoma	SM B2 B3 B4 B5 B6	Micek, Judy- Nilles, Carolyn Augustyn, Ron Dunkovich, Alice- Kensek, Maggie	C1 C2 C3 C4 C5 C6	Brannigan, Rifa Rogan, Janina Gebka, Mary Lu Micek, Judy-
8:00	AM	LR	Haggerty, Frank-				
SM Sto	amm, Richard	cı	Thuma, Mory				
B2 Gu	ide, Alfreda	C2	Zaremba, Elizobe				
B3 Bli	iss, Georgia	C3	Stumreiter, Earl				
B4 Sto	amm, Barbara	(4	Stamm, Richard				
B5 Wo	arren, Catherine	(5	Saban, Jockie		,		
B6 Wo	ouk, Dolores	C6				7	
9:30	AM	LR	Pfeiffer, Irv-			E	
SM Hu	llinger, Shirley-	cı	Nicosia, Christine				~
B2 Mc	Caffray, Paul	(2	Fisher, Harry			Ct	<i>1</i> / <del>4</del> 5
B3 Zu	pancic, Robert	(3	Horak, Veronica				
B4 He	rzog, Terri	C4	Hullinger, Shirley				
B5	_	C5	• • •				
B6		C6					

### **Christmas Wisdom**

The simple shepherds heard the voice of an angel and found their Lamb; the wise men saw the light of a star and found their wisdom.

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen