

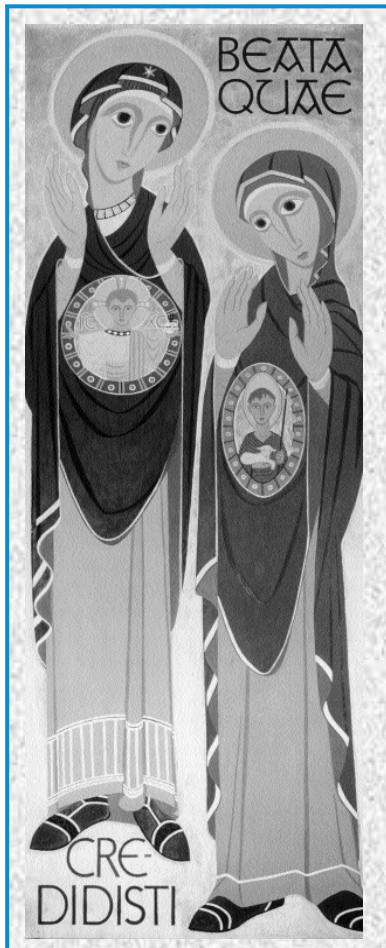
**VISITATION CHURCH**

**01/04/09**

**518042**

**CONTACT:**

**Chantel at 612-822-3139 or cell phone at 612-388-3255**



## Schedule

**Saturday Vigil** 5:00 pm

**Sunday Mass** 10:00 am

**Daily Mass** Tue-Sat 8:00 am

**Holy Days of Obligation**  
8:00 am, 7:00 pm

**Reconciliation**

Saturdays 4:00 pm,  
or by appointment.

**Nursery**

10:00 am Sundays, infant-4

**Eucharistic Adoration**

Every Thursday 8:30 am-  
7:00 pm.

**Rosary Devotion**

Before First Saturday Mass  
and daily Mass at 7:30 am.

# THE CHURCH OF THE VISITATION

*Catholic Church*

4530 LYNDALE AVENUE S. MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55419

[www.visitationcatholicchurch.com](http://www.visitationcatholicchurch.com)

Church Office 612-822-3139 Fax 612-824-3515

**62ND ANNIVERSARY 1946-2008**

## Pastor

*Father Thomas F.A. O'Brien* [frthomasobrien@aol.com](mailto:frthomasobrien@aol.com) 612-822-3139

## Administrative Assistant/Bulletin Editor

*Chantel Cervantes* [visichurch@aol.com](mailto:visichurch@aol.com) 612-822-3139

Bulletin notices due by noon on Mondays.

## Facilities Coordinator

*Anita Rosener* [visianita@aol.com](mailto:visianita@aol.com) 612-822-3139

## Custodian

*Tom Abresch* 612-822-3139

## Director of Music

*Barb Schrenk* [schrenkb@gmail.com](mailto:schrenkb@gmail.com) 612-203-9323

## Master of Ceremonies

*Timothy G. Wolfgram*

## Trustees

*Kristine Callaghan* 612-825-8431

*Tom Schuster* 612-866-8561

## Parish Pastoral Council

*Connie Klaers, Chair* [cklaers@msn.com](mailto:cklaers@msn.com) 612-823-6213

## Finance Council

*Philip Gleason, Chair* [pgleasoncpa@msn.com](mailto:pgleasoncpa@msn.com) 612-823-0080

## Baptisms

Saturdays or Sundays at Mass. Please call the parish office to make arrangements.

## Marriages

Six months preparation time needed. You must be a member of the parish for at least six months. Please call the parish office

## Parish Membership

Please call the church office to register in the parish.

## After Hours Emergency Only

*Father Thomas F.A. O'Brien* 612-532-4707

*As Kingfishers Catch Fire, Dragonflies Draw Flame....*

Dear Friends,

This Sunday we celebrate the Feast of Epiphany, the “showing forth” of God in our world in the person of Jesus. From our earliest childhood, most of us have associated Epiphany with the Three Kings following a wondrous star to the stable in Bethlehem, to offer their homage and to bring him gifts that anticipate his ministry, his passion and his kingship. The gifts, legend tells us, are gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

I’d like to spend a few moments reflecting on that gift of incense, because it is probably more in our consciousness these days as parishioners of The Church of the Visitation because we have used it during Advent and Christmas. This is important, I think, because we should know why we do so many of the things we do in our divine liturgy. But it’s also important because it seems to me that there’s great interest and concern among us about the frequency of its use; and I think we need to strike some kind of creative tension between aesthetic and liturgical sensibilities, and the concerns of those who find themselves allergic to the smoke incense produces. I’d like to address them as best I can. Some of this background comes from an article written by Father Thomas Craughwell, *Great Clouds of Incense*.

“Standing about 15 feet high, with thick stems and dense branches, the *Boswellia sacra* looks like a shrub that needs pruning. Slash the trunk and a thick resin oozes out; wait a day or two and the resin will harden into nuggets that look like rock candy. These nuggets are the raw material of incense. For thousands of years the *Boswellia* trees of Oman have provided the incense that burned in the temples of Egypt, Babylon, Athens, Rome, and of course the holy Temple in Jerusalem. Today, the incense burned at a solemn Mass, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, or at a funeral probably came from Oman. (Yemen has planted groves of *Boswellia* trees and exports incense, but Oman still dominates the market).

“In the temple rituals of the ancient world incense played a symbolic and a practical role. Because it was rare, expensive, and would be completely consumed by fire, it was considered a suitable sacrifice to the gods. Furthermore, priests and people hoped that their prayers would rise to heaven like the great clouds of sweet-smelling smoke. Then there was the practical dimension of burning incense: in temples where animals were sacrificed and their carcasses burned, incense helped mask the stench.

“Both the Old and the New Testaments tell us that incense is pleasing to God. In the book of Exodus God commands Moses to build a small, gold-plated altar specifically for burning incense every morning and evening (Exodus 30:1-8). In St. Luke’s gospel we read that St. Zachary the priest was about to offer incense in the Temple in Jerusalem when the archangel Gabriel appeared to announce that he and his wife Elizabeth were about to have a son, the future St. John the Baptist (Luke 1:8-13). And the book of Revelations describes a scene in Heaven in which an angel burned incense in a censer, “and the

smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints... before God” (Revelations 8:3-4).

“In spite of biblical endorsement of the practice, there is no evidence that Christians during the first three hundreds of the Church used incense at Mass. Perhaps Christians worried that clouds of incense billowing from their little house-churches would have attracted unwanted attention. Another reason is more probable: among the early Christians incense stirred up unhappy memories. During periods of persecution, Roman magistrates always offered a Christian the chance to save his or her life by burning a few grains of incense before an image of a pagan god. Christians who refused were executed, while those who out of a natural fear of pain and death complied and burned the incense became a source of shame and heartache for their fellow Christians.

“For reasons are hard to pin down, by the late 4th century the Church in the East had begun to use incense in worship. Etheria, a nun from present-day France who in 381 began a lengthy pilgrimage to the Holy Land, tells us that incense was burned in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. As the bitter memory of incense’s link to the era of persecution faded, the Church in the West took up the custom, censuring everything that was considered holy—the bread and wine, the altar, the crucifix, the book of the gospels, the celebrant of the Mass and the sacred ministers, and the congregation. Today incense serves the same purpose as it did when Moses burned it in the desert—it pays homage to all that is holy, and symbolizes our prayers ascending to God.”

During the Christmas season, several of you spoke to me about your dislike of incense, or your allergy of incense, and asked that I do something to help you. A number of you spoke to me about your love of incense, and asked that I use it more and more—every Sunday. I’d like to make a commitment to you: unless something *extraordinary* arises, we will use incense at Mass *only* on the following feasts: Christmas, Holy Family, Epiphany, Holy Thursday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, All Saints, and Christ the King. Ten major feasts of the Church, six of which *always* fall on Sunday. If you wish to avoid incense entirely on these ten feasts, please plan to come to the Vigil Mass on the Saturday that anticipates that feast—no incense. If you wish to come to those Masses that *will* use incense, try to choose a seat in the church where it’s unlikely that much of the smoke or fragrance will reach you—generally toward the rear and sides of the church. And, too, I’ll promise to try to limit the amount of incense we use—not so much to minimize its symbolic value, but not so much as to overwhelm most of us.

I hope this helps. Whatever your personal thoughts and feelings may be, I hope that you join heartily in this glorious feast of Epiphany. In your own life on this day, offer to God that which is most valuable, which is most pleasing to him: the gift of yourself.

Affectionately in Christ our Lord,  
Father Thomas F.A. O’Brien, Pastor

**PARISH NEWS**

The Parish Pastoral Council will meet Tuesday, January 6, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. Please call the church office at 612-822-3139 if you are unable to attend.

**Epiphany Brunch: Saturday, January 10, 2009-** Journey in for Visitation's Annual Epiphany Brunch, Saturday, January 10, 2009, at 10:00 a.m. Come join in good fellowship, good food, and beautiful music by The Partners in Praise Girls Choir, under the direction of Julia Fahey. Reservations are required. Please call Kristine Callaghan at 612.825.8431 with your reservations ~ deadline is January 7. See you there!

**January 15<sup>th</sup>** (Thursday) at 7:00 pm please join your friends at Visitation to learn about our sister diocese in Kitui, Kenya that is part of our diocese-to-diocese Global Solidarity Partnership. Join Art Otto and Mike Haas! as they explain the ongoing partnership, and relate sights and impressions of their recent visit to parishes in the Kitui diocese. Warm refreshments will take the chill off a cold January evening!

**TODAY'S READINGS**

**First Reading** – Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! The Lord shines upon you and the glory of the Lord appears over you (Isaiah 60:1-6).

**Psalm** – Lord, every nation on earth will adore you (Psalm 72).

**Second Reading** – The Gentiles are coheirs, copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel (Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6).

**Gospel** – Magi from the east arrived, looking for the newborn king of the Jews (Matthew 2:1-12).



We extend our sympathy and the assurance of our prayers to the Taaffe family, upon the death of Dennis Taaffe. We also extend our sympathy and the assurance of our prayers to Richard Priolo, upon the death of his mother.



**Christmas Flower Memorials and Honoraria**– Kelly Reiswig Families

**Last week's collection:** December 28, \$2,807.00  
**Christmas collection:** \$6,395.25

**January 5-11, 2009**



Monday	No Mass Today	
Tuesday	8:00 a.m.	Casey Reynolds
Wednesday	8:00 a.m.	Toni Taaffe
Thursday	8:00 a.m.	Special Intention
Friday	8:00 a.m.	Thomas F. O'Connell, Jr. †
Saturday	8:00 a.m.	Archbishop Harry J. Flynn
	5:00 p.m.	Mary Ann Michaels †
Sunday	10:00 a.m.	People of Visitation

**PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK** in our parish: Margaret Sullivan, Kathryn Mattefy, Lyn Paradise, Patrick McDonald, Edith Gibney, Roger Coryell, Pattee Kilday, Ruth Kelly, Marion Tombers, Bonnie Klein, Donald Eblen, Amy (Reynolds) Gaston, Joseph Brashear.



**SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES**

- Sunday: The Epiphany of the Lord;  
 New Year Blessing of the Home;  
 National Migration Week
- Monday: St. John Neumann
- Tuesday: Blessed André Bessette
- Wednesday: St. Raymond of Peñafort;  
 Orthodox Christmas
- Saturday: Muslim New Year 1430

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK**

- Monday: 1 Jn 3:22 – 4:6; Mt 4:13-17, 23-25
- Tuesday: 1 Jn 4:7-10; Mk 6:34-44
- Wednesday: 1 Jn 4:11-18; Mk 6:45-52
- Thursday: 1 Jn 4:19 – 5:4; Lk 4:14-22a
- Friday: 1 Jn 5:5-13; Lk 5:12-16
- Saturday: 1 Jn 5:14-21; Jn 3:22-30
- Sunday: Is 42:1-4, 6-7 or Is 55:1-11; Ps 29 or Is 12:2-6; Acts 10:34-38 or 1 Jn 5:1-9; Mk 1:7-11



The sanctuary flowers this week are given by The People of Visitation to the glory of God and in memory of Dennis Taaffe.