

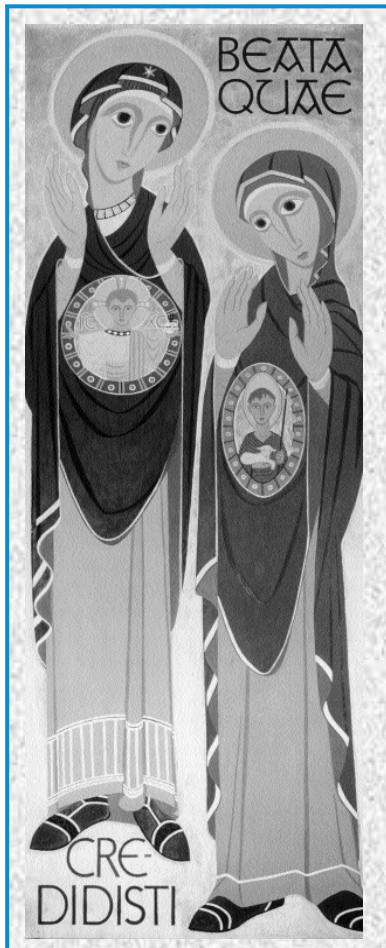
VISITATION CHURCH

12/21/08

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

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

62ND ANNIVERSARY 1946-2008

Pastor

Father Thomas F.A. O'Brien frthomasobrien@aol.com 612-822-3139

Administrative Assistant/Bulletin Editor

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Bulletin notices due by noon on Mondays.

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Master of Ceremonies

Timothy G. Wolfgram

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Parish Pastoral Council

Connie Klaers, Chair cklaers@msn.com 612-823-6213

Finance Council

Philip Gleason, Chair 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,

I've told several of you once before that with the approach of my first Christmas as a priest, the pastor asked me if I would like to be the principal celebrant for our Solemn Mass at Midnight on Christmas Eve. This really *was* a solemn high Mass in Fredericksburg, a great festive celebration, and it was a great honor and privilege for me to have been asked—truly an extraordinary Christmas gift.

Well, it was our custom to publish in advance in the bulletin the names of each celebrant for each of our Mass on the weekends, and so my name soon appeared in the Christmas schedule. Some of the wags in the parish—perhaps having seen *Going My Way* once too many times—immediately began to object. I was the Father O'Malley pushing Father Fitzgibbon aside, the Bing Crosby usurping Barry Fitzgerald's rightful and well-earned place. At dinner on Christmas Eve, Father Creamer said to me: "You're the celebrant; you read the Gospel. I've decided, though, that *I* will preach." Fine with me. The church was packed, with folks standing in the aisles. I read the Gospel, and then sat down. There was a stir as our parishioners watched their much-feared pastor move slowly to the ambo. At least, they all thought, he'll be brief; he never preaches more than three minutes. He stared at them for a full minute—one-third of the time he had allotted himself!—in absolute silence. Then, slowly he began: "Some of you are upset that young Father O'Brien is the principal celebrant of this Mass. Don't look surprised; I've heard *all* about it. That's what you wanted in the first place, isn't it? To let me know you disapprove....Well...Tough. Christmas is for children." With that everyone relaxed—Father's homily was almost over, and the scolding hadn't been too bad!

Each of us knows this. Christmas, indeed, is for children. Not just because of the feast's many delights: glitter-covered cookies and sweet treats; the joys of buying and wrapping and giving presents; the laughter and gentle reassurance of Santa himself as we cuddle in his lap and tell him our greatest desires and hopes, all those things we listed in our letter to him; the glories of the tree on Christmas morning.

In December 2006, Joseph Ratzinger focused on children at Christmas, too. He gave—at the Midnight Mass at St. Peter's, in his first Mass as newly-elected pope—what I think was one of the most richly provocative homilies I've ever heard. In part, he said, "God's sign is simplicity. God's sign is the baby. God's sign is that he makes himself small for us. This is how he reigns. He does not come with power and outward splendor. He comes as a baby - defenseless and in need of our help.

"He does not want to overwhelm us with his strength. He takes away our fear of his greatness. He asks for our love: so he makes himself a child. He wants nothing other from us than our love, through which we spontaneously learn to enter into his feelings, his thoughts and his will - we learn to live with him and to practice with him that humility of renunciation that belongs to the very essence of love.

"God made himself small so that we could understand him, welcome him, and love him. He became a child, so that the Word could be grasped by us. In this way God teaches us to love the little ones. In this way he teaches us to love the weak. In this way he teaches us respect for children.

"The child of Bethlehem directs our gaze towards all children who suffer and are abused in the world, the born and the unborn. Towards children who are placed as soldiers in a violent world; towards children who have to beg; towards children who suffer deprivation and hunger; towards children who are unloved. In all of these it is the Child of Bethlehem who is crying out to us; it is the God who has become small who appeals to us. Let us ask God to help us do our part so that the dignity of children may be respected. May they all experience the light of love, which mankind needs so much more than the material necessities of life."

Two suggestions: First, why not try to relax and enjoy the children who might touch your own life this Christmas—your own children and grandchildren, your nieces and nephews, your little friends in the neighborhood and those you see in local shops and restaurants—we believe that God takes special delight in them, and therefore so should you. Second, why not find some time in these hectic days for some peace and quiet, a moment or two of absolute solitude and silence, so that you can re-discover in yourself—deep within you—the child you were in your own earliest experiences of Christmas. For the child within you, the child of you who is most special to the Father, is the greatest hope you can give an old, old world in a New Year.

May you have the most wonderful and the happiest Christmas of your life. May joys and peace and love abide—in you, in your homes, and with all those you love. Amen.

With great affection,

Father Thomas F.A. O'Brien, Pastor



The sanctuary flowers this week are given by Lorraine Michaels to the glory of God and in memory of her sister, Mary Ann Michaels, who will be celebrating Christmas with Jesus.

PARISH NEWS

Sunday, December 21 following the 10:00 Mass we plan like to decorate the church for Christmas and need many hands to help. If you could stay after Mass for about 1 - 2 hours to help we would greatly appreciate it. If you have any questions, please contact Anita Rosener at 612-822-3139 or 612-869-3973.

The VCCW will not meet Tuesday, December 23. The next meeting will be January 27, 2009 at 7pm in the Fellowship Room.

Epiphany Brunch: Saturday, January 10. 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!

What could be better on a cold January night than to spend a little time with friends, have a warm beverage and hear about life in hot and arid Kenya. On Thursday, January 15 at 7:00 pm please join Mike Haasl from the Archdiocesan Office of Mission and our own Art Otto as they talk about their recent trip to Kenya. Mike and Art were part of an eleven person delegation from our Archdiocese that visited parishes in the Kitui Diocese as part of the Global Solidarity Partnership.

ALTAR SERVERS FOR CHRISTMAS:

Wednesday, December 24 4:00 p.m. Jack Bassett,
Charlie Bassett & Nick Bassett
11:00 p.m. John & Freida
Manthei, Peter Flynn, Jarad Dobesh & Rachel Winker
Thursday, December 25 10:00 a.m. Jenna Birkeli,
Claire McManmon



Christmas Flower Memorials and Honoraria

– Bill and Helen Rosener, Percy Bjornstad & Family, Ethel & Henery Riewer & Family, John Wickham, Tom Cassady, Jim & Shirley Marrian, Ruth Roedel, Mary Ann Michaels, Anna Michaels, Joesph Michaels, Welch-Rasmussen Family Members, Holton Family, Harold Simonson, John & Susan Reitan, Al Guck Family, Dorothy Occhino, Shirley Hendrickson, Florence Perrault & Marlene Schlueter.


December 22-28, 2008



Monday	No Mass Today
Tuesday	8:00 a.m. Ryan Largay†
Wednesday	8:00 a.m. John C. Lothamer, Jr.†
	4:00 p.m. James McLaughlin†
	11:00 p.m. Mary Ann Michaels†
Thursday	10:00 a.m. Florence Perrault†
Friday	8:00 a.m. John Ace†
Saturday	8:00 a.m. Bill Beha
	5:00 p.m. People of Visitation
Sunday	10:00 a.m. Nathalie & Tim Welch
	58th Wedding Anniversary

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.



 We extend our sympathy and the assurance of our prayers to the Rummy Family, upon the death of Arpad Rummy .

Last Week's Collection: \$3,378 .00. The *Buck Sunday* collection of \$270 was donated to our local Food Shelf.



CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIALS AND HONORARIA

You may donate flowers in the name of a loved one for our Christmas decorations. Please submit this form in the contribution basket, or to the church office.

Name of loved one(s) _____

Your Name _____

Amount \$ _____.

This is a tax deductible contribution.