

ST. MARY MAGDALENE CATHOLIC CHURCH



625 MAGDALA PLACE APEX, NORTH CAROLINA 27502
919 657 4800 - fax 919 657 4805 website ~ stmm.net

December, 2007

My Dear Friends,

I write to wish you a joyful Advent, a time that is filled with the happiness of preparation for Christmas. I first want to commend the parish for the generous outpouring of gifts for the needy during the Thanksgiving time. I listed in my letters in the bulletin [available on our website] some of the numbers of gifts given for our Helping Hand Ministry, the Christmas Angel Tree, and the special effort to supply Catholic Parish Outreach and the Western Wake Crisis Ministry. Though very few in our Parish are needy, there is evidence that many in our area are not so fortunate, both at the holiday time and all through the year.

Here is the Advent schedule of Penance Services this year; all begin at 7 PM:

Thursday, December 6 - St Bernadette, Fuquay-Varina
Tuesday, December 11 – St Andrew, Apex
Monday, December 17 – St Michael, Cary
Wednesday, December 19 – Lourdes, Raleigh

There will be a Penance Service at 11 AM on Monday, December 10 at St Andrew in Apex. Details regarding this Service will be in our Parish Bulletin.

Here is our parish Christmas schedule for your early planning:

Monday, December 24: Christmas Eve Masses at 3 pm, 5 pm, 9 pm
Tuesday, December 25: Christmas Day Mass at 10 am

There will be sufficient room for all to sit and to find parking for the 9 pm Christmas Eve Mass and the Christmas Day Mass. Tuesday January 1 holyday Mass is at 10 AM

Enclosed is an envelope for you to use for Memorials or in Honor of loved ones for us to purchase Christmas flowers and decorations. These names will be included in the Christmas bulletin. We need to receive the names no later than Sunday December 16 to be included in the Christmas bulletin.

During November our parish bulletin included information regarding our parish financial needs. Most of these needs were created by our ambitious building programs in 2000 and 2004. We enjoy and make great use of our buildings every day. However, the monthly mortgage responsibility is always with us.

You can see in the bulletin "Pledge Payment Shortfall" the enormous strides we have taken in reducing this amount during the past year. I think it is possible to bring the amount to near zero in the next 12 – 18 months. Thank you for this generous response in the blue envelopes during the past year.

Here is our "Parish Financial Snapshot" for this year.

PARISH FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

- Full Financial Report is on the parish website – www.stmm.net
- Total current parish debt for both buildings and rectory is \$7,124,907
- The box on page 3 of weekly bulletin shows \$602,000 of unpaid pledges. Blue Envelope reduces this shortfall.

How much our parish families gave each week so far in 2007 –

- 97 households gave between \$36 and \$129 each week
- 105 households gave between \$25 and \$35 each week
- 75 households gave between \$20 and \$24 each week
- 86 households gave between \$15 and \$19 each week
- 147 households gave between \$10 and \$14 each week
- 76 households gave between \$7 and \$9 each week
- 206 households gave between \$3 and \$6 each week
- 162 households gave between \$1 and \$2 each week
- 333 households have no record of any gift

As happened last year when this report was made, many people expressed their distress to me when they saw this report. I appreciate very much their expressions of concern about the low level of church support by some.

There is no gentle way to say that some parish members should examine their consciences about the level of their generosity to our parish. I include the information in this Christmas letter because I want all to know of our need - and as a reminder that all of us are called to be generous in our lives.

Keeping all our blessings to ourselves is not the Christian way. I hope if people are not giving to our parish, they are generously giving to some worthy charity. The Gospel teaches to give freely, not from our excess, but from our heart.

Christmas is the time we celebrate generous giving: God's gift of Jesus to us and the gift of salvation. The gifts we give one another are shared in remembrance of that wonderful act of God. May this Advent Season provide us a time to reflect on our opportunities to share with others the blessings we have received.

I am grateful to God for giving me the blessing of being pastor of St Mary Magdalene at this stage in my life. I look forward to sharing the joys of the Christmas season with you and your families.

May this Christmas be one of the best for you, for your family, for our parish, and for our entire world.

Peace and Prayers – Father Donald Staib