

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time



News You Can Use...from Fr. Steve

The Danger of the Crèche and the Cross - Part 1

As sure as gas prices will rise in the summer, so too, as the holiday season rapidly approaches, we will be exposed once again to the debate about removing sacred, religious symbols [particularly Christian symbols] from public view. Displaying or speaking words like "Merry Christmas" or displaying iconic images like the Manger, or Mary and Joseph, or the Crucifix, etc [you know the "forbidden" list] are considered infringements on the rights of others and disregard the separation of church and state. Of course, we really don't know who is infringed upon other than the few who complain. I for one am not infringed upon when I see a menorah or a Kwanza candle. Truthfully, I really don't know anyone personally who is. Apparently, this irritating behavior of Christians wanting to signify their faith publicly in signs and images is not just an issue in the U.S., but also a serious concern in the former Christian countries of Europe as well.

Perhaps you saw the recent news story where Europe's Court of Human Rights ruled the display of crucifixes in Italian public schools violates religious and education freedoms under the continent's Rights Convention. A seven judge panel ruled in favor of Soile Lautsi, a parent of two children, who claimed public schools in her northern Italian town were violating her children's rights by displaying crucifixes. The Court did not see the reasonableness of the Italian government's point that the Crucifix was a national symbol of culture, art, history and identity, and spoke to the role of Christianity in the development of Western Europe.

I think it's time to listen more closely to those who are offended by religious symbols, predominantly the Christian symbols of crucifixes and cribs. Even though those who oppose the display of Christian symbols maintain that these images are violating their rights, it is clear to me that what they are really saying is the Crib of Jesus and the Cross of Jesus are scandalous images. The truth of the matter is they are absolutely right. Our sacred scriptures, our theology, and our tradition are clear about the scandal of the Cross and the scandal of the Incarnation. Maybe they see what we take for granted - how scandalous and dangerous these symbols really are to the status quo and how subversive they are to the ways of the world. Maybe the images of Christmas and the images of Good Friday and Easter have become so commonplace for us believers that we have domesticated them and drained them of their power to shock and transform us. Maybe we owe a spiritual debt to those who oppose these images because their fear and dislike can connect us on a deeper level to how radical they really are.

St. Charles Seminary Annual Fall Appeal - Today

Each year the Church in Philadelphia has a special collection to support the work of the Seminary in training future priests, not just for Philadelphia but also for many dioceses throughout the country who utilize St. Charles for their formation programs. Your continued generosity and support will ensure that all our future priests receive the best opportunities to grow in their vocations. Please pray for all seminarians in formation, particularly Tom Whittingham and Patrick Muka who entered their priestly studies from St. AJ.

Reminder: The main Church is open for visits and prayer on Wednesday afternoons from 12:30 - 2 PM. Ring Rectory bell.

This Week at St. AJ

Saturday, November 14

4:00PM Confessions
5:30PM Vigil of Mass Intentions of Parishioners & Benefactors

Sunday, November 15 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

10:00AM Mass Intentions of the Rauer Family

11:30AM Mass Marian "Honey" Chambers

5:00PM Mass Linda Rodino

10:00PM Mass

Monday, November 16

7:30AM Mass Holy Souls in Purgatory

Tuesday, November 17

7:30AM Mass Holy Souls in Purgatory

12:05PM Mass Intentions of the Nguyen Family

Wednesday, November 18

7:30AM Mass Holy Souls in Purgatory

12:30PM to 2:00PM Church will be open today.

7:00PM Heritage of Faith – Vision of Hope Presentation

Thursday, November 19

12:05PM Mass Robert Campion, Jr.

Friday, November 20

No 7:30 AM Mass on Friday.

6:00PM Wedding Rehearsal Larry Leso – Elena Huang SJM

Saturday, November 21

9:00AM Mass Intentions of Seth Stone

2:30PM Wedding Larry Leso – Elena Huang SJM

4:00PM Confessions

5:30PM Vigil Mass Thomas Holton

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)

RCIA meetings held on Tuesday evenings are for those seeking to enter the fullness of the Catholic Church. See the RCIA page of the parish web site or contact saintsajrcia@hotmail.com.

CATHOLIC FORUM TODAY after 10 AM Mass

Held every Sunday after the 10 AM Mass downstairs in the Parish Hall. Join us for a discussion of today's "Word" and to meet new Catholic friends – with coffee & donuts. All are most welcome.



Parish Bulletin Advertisers

There is good "stuff" inside the parish weekly bulletin but also on the back page where local businesses advertise. We encourage you to patronize these supporters of our parish. Some have discount coupons within their ads. Check it out.

November – Month of the Holy Souls

One of the best ways of honoring and remembering a deceased loved one is to have a Mass offered in her/his memory. The parish Mass book has openings and it is often possible to obtain a specific or special date such as a birthday or anniversary. Please call the Rectory to arrange an announced Mass.

We are a ParishPay Parish: Goals and expectations

St. Agatha-St. James is an Automated On-Line Giving Parish. Go to the parish webpage - www.saintsaj.org - and select the ParishPay link. At the donor page, you can thoughtfully and prayerfully choose your monthly offertory contribution. Thank you to all our new members who have taken the time to sign up and embrace their stewardship calling and responsibility.



GOAL = 100 Registered

Present number registered - 22