

~From the Administrator~

January 3, 2010

Dear Parish Family,

I want to thank everyone who contributed to our parish celebrations for Christmas. Thank you to the musicians, cantors, and choir members whose beautiful playing and singing made our liturgies a little slice of heaven on earth. Thank you to the team of individuals who brought in and decorated the inside of the church, the altar, the choir loft, and the countless decorations in the gathering area.

Thank you to the lectors and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. And a great big thank you to the altar servers who were especially attentive and adapted so that we could give appropriate worship on Christmas with added solemnity.

To everyone who set-up or tore-down or cleaned-up, or sent a card or gift or food ... or helped in any way ... THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

We entered the New Year with the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, and I thought it would be good to start the year by consecrating ourselves, our families, and our parish to Our Lady.

O Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church,
I renew and ratify today the vows of my Baptism;
and I renounce forever Satan, his pomps and works.

I give myself entirely to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate
Word of God, and the Second Person of the Trinity;
to carry my cross after Him all the days of my life,
and to be more and more faithful to Him each day.

I choose you, Mary, for my Mother and patroness.
I consecrate to you my body and soul, my belongings,
and all my activities; for the greater glory of God
in time and in eternity.

— Amen

Please remember in your prayers John Wieber, who passed away December 29 in Port St. Lucie, Florida. John was born and raised in Beal City, where he was a farmer and, until the past few years, lived on the family farm. He is survived by one sister, Rita Doerfer. Please pray, as well, for the consolation of his family and friends.

ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO HIM O LORD, AND LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON HIM.

I ask your continued prayers for priests and seminarians as we move into the second half of the Year for Priests. Bishop Joseph Cistone has set the dates for ordination to the diaconate on May 14th, and ordination to the priesthood on May 21st. Please pray for our diocesan seminarians – in particular, Marcel Portelli and Deacon Ricky Varner – as they make preparations for their next step in the Sacrament of Holy Orders this Spring.

Happy New Year! Let us continue to pray for each other. God bless you!

Fr. David

Theotokos (from Greek Θεοτόκος “God-bearer”, “the one who gives birth to God”) is a title of Mary, the mother of Jesus used in the Eastern Churches. It is often translated in English as the Mother of God. The Council of Ephesus decreed in 431 that Mary is Theotokos because her son Jesus is one person who is both God and man, divine and human.

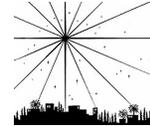
This title excludes the understanding of Mary as Mother of God in the eternal sense. Christians believe that God is the cause of all, with neither origin nor source.

On the other hand, most Christians believe God the Son is begotten of God the Father “from all eternity”, but is born “in time” of Mary. Theotokos thus refers to the Incarnation, when the Second Person of the Holy Trinity took on human nature in addition to His divine nature, this being made possible through the cooperation of Mary.



The Three Kings

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1807-1882



Three Kings came riding from far away,
Melchior and Gaspar and Baltasar;
Three Wise Men out of the East were they,
And they travelled by night and they slept by day,
For their guide was a beautiful, wonderful star.

The star was so beautiful, large and clear,
That all the other stars of the sky
Became a white mist in the atmosphere,
And by this they knew that the coming was near
Of the Prince foretold in the prophecy.

Three caskets they bore on their saddle-bows,
Three caskets of gold with golden keys;
Their robes were of crimson silk with rows
Of bells and pomegranates and furbelows,
Their turbans like blossoming almond-trees.

And so the Three Kings rode into the West,
Through the dusk of the night, over hill and dell,
And sometimes they nodded with beard on breast,
And sometimes talked, as they paused to rest,
With the people they met at some wayside well.

“Of the child that is born,” said Baltasar,
“Good people, I pray you, tell us the news;
For we in the East have seen his star,
And have ridden fast, and have ridden far,
To find and worship the King of the Jews.”

And the people answered, “You ask in vain;
We know of no King but Herod the Great!”
They thought the Wise Men were men insane,
As they spurred their horses across the plain,
Like riders in haste, who cannot wait.

And when they came to Jerusalem,
Herod the Great, who had heard this thing,
Sent for the Wise Men and questioned them;
And said, “Go down unto Bethlehem,
And bring me tidings of this new king.”

So they rode away; and the star stood still,
The only one in the grey of morn;
Yes, it stopped – it stood still of its own free will,
Right over Bethlehem on the hill,
The city of David, where Christ was born.
And the Three Kings rode through the gate
and the guard,

Through the silent street, till their horses turned
And neighed as they entered the great inn-yard;
But the windows were closed,
and the doors were barred,
And only a light in the stable burned.



And cradled there in the scented hay,
In the air made sweet by the breath of kine,
The little child in the manger lay,
The child, that would be king one day
Of a kingdom not human, but divine.

His mother Mary of Nazareth
Sat watching beside his place of rest,
Watching the even flow of his breath,
For the joy of life and the terror of death
Were mingled together in her breast.

They laid their offerings at his feet:
The gold was their tribute to a King,
The frankincense, with its odor sweet,
Was for the Priest, the Paraclete,
The myrrh for the body's burying.

And the mother wondered and bowed her head,
And sat as still as a statue of stone,
Her heart was troubled yet comforted,
Remembering what the Angel had said
Of an endless reign and of David's throne.

Then the Kings rode out of the city gate,
With a clatter of hoofs in proud array;
But they went not back to Herod the Great,
For they knew his malice and feared his hate,
And returned to their homes by another way.

Epiphany (from Greek ἐπιφάνεια “appearance”, “manifestation”) is a Christian feast day which celebrates the revelation of God in human form in the person of Jesus Christ.

It falls on January 6 or on a Sunday close to that date. January 6 in the Julian Calendar, which is followed by some Eastern Churches, corresponds at present to January 19 in the Gregorian Calendar, which is the official civil calendar in most countries.

On this day, Western Christians commemorate principally the visitation of the Biblical Magi to the child Jesus, i.e., his manifestation to the Gentiles. Eastern Christians commemorate the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River, seen as his manifestation to the world as the Son of God. It is also called Theophany, especially by Eastern Christians.