

# *~From the Administrator~*

December 6, 2009

Dear Parish Family,

I was able to stop in and meet up with a few of you after the late Mass last weekend, and look forward to getting to know all of you better over the next few months. Thank you for your kind welcome, and please keep reminding me of your names until I have them all committed to memory.

A bit of personal history, I am the middle of five siblings. I was born in Detroit, and my family has moved to Saint Clair Shores, Madison Heights, and Shelby Township - all in the Detroit area. I went to General Motors Institute in Flint, and then did graduate work at Purdue University. I've worked for General Motors, Robert Bosch Corporation, and Ford Motor Company as an engineer. And served in the United States Navy as a Cryptologic Technician overseas in Japan and east Asia.

My studies for priesthood were partially funded through the GI Bill, and I did my philosophy studies in Detroit; and my theology studies at Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio, and St. Paul Seminary in Minnesota.

Saturday (December 5) is the 6-month anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood, and Sunday (December 6) is the 6-month anniversary of my first Mass, which was held at St. Agnes in Freeland.

An interesting bit of trivia is that St. Agnes, Freeland used to be named after St. Philomena - just like I hear our parish was. I can't consider it a coincidence, and am hoping to do something to honor our original patroness in some way during my time in Beal City.

My parents, Bill and Pat, are both still alive and in their mid-70s. Two of my brothers and my sister (Bill, John, and Laura) still work for Ford and General Motors near Detroit. My youngest brother, Michael, is a psychologist and a lawyer and teaches at Notre Dame University in South Bend, IN.

My family name, Jenuwine, is from Bavaria and the Tirol area of Austria. The name comes from Saint Ingenuin, the patron saint of coal miners in the Alps. Ingenuin was bishop of Säben until 585 A.D. The bishop's seat in that area had been founded by Saint Cassian, but had long been vacant. Because of this, many of the local people had relapsed to their pagan customs. Ingenuin had extraordinary success in returning his flock to the Faith of the Church, and built a cathedral in Säben.

With the intercession of Our Lady, St. Joseph, St. Philomena, and St. Ingenuin - I hope to serve your needs ... despite my being very, very young in my priesthood. God bless you!

*Fr. David*

# ST. NICHOLAS DAY IS DECEMBER 6.

St. Nicholas is a legendary figure connected with Christmas gift-givers like Santa Klaus. He is thought to have lived in the 4th century, and to have been born in Lycia in Asia Minor. He was probably bishop in the Lycian city of Myra. Nicholas is thought to have been wealthy and to have given his gold away to help others. There is a story that he provided bags of gold as dowries for three daughters of a poor man. It is claimed that he attacked the Arian heresy and destroyed pagan temples. In Constantinople, Emperor Justinian dedicated a church to St. Nicholas who in the intervening two centuries had become famous. He is a patron saint of sailors, merchants, archers, children, and students.

During the Reformation, the celebration of St. Nicholas was replaced with a Christkind or 'Christ Child' celebration on Christmas Eve. The Christkind morphed into Kris Kringle, who then came to be identified with Santa Claus.

The name Santa Klaus comes from St. Nicholas: The Dutch Sint-Niklaas was shortened to Sinterklaas and Americanized to Santa Claus.



## What Does God Want with Me?

Excerpted from: *Answers not Promises*, by Mother M. Angelica, and C. Allison

When I was young, I used to read the lives of the saints, hoping to find someone like me. Someone who had to eat six times a day and get nine hours of sleep. Someone who was not robust enough to make all the sacrifices that the "ordinary" saint seemed able to make. I read about saints who had spent entire nights in prayer and gone days without food. The more I looked, the more discouraged I became, realizing that holiness must be for the elite.

As I leafed through the pious and often boring biographies, I got the impression that the saints were born saints; that they were creatures like angels, different from you and me from the very start. And the plaster-of-parish statues in our church just added to my confusion. The women were wide-eyed and graceful, while the men were gentle and handsome. There were no fat statues, no saints with big noses. None of the saints were frowning, and none looked tired.

Between the biographers and the artists, I was having a hard time imagining a saint's life, much less relating to it.

Before long, I was fed up. I wished then, and wish now, that the biographers of that saints unrealistic. They made them perfect.

*Always* kind. *Always* patient. *Always* able to resist temptation.

What the biographers failed to note was that the majority of saints were ordinary people who struggled with temptations, sin, frailties, and weaknesses. Just you and me.

Take the Apostles, for example. The men that Jesus chose to teach and to follow Him and to inspire others to follow Him were extremely imperfect. (Did you know that there is no account in Scripture of the Apostles ever catching any fish on their own?) They were jealous at times. Envious. They had temper tantrums, they pouted, they became obsessively depressed and fearful in times of trial. They ran in times of crisis, and they became proud of their status of being in the "in" group. They weren't too bright either, inasmuch as the meaning of a simple parable like the sower and the seed completely escaped them — so much so that they were forced to ask Jesus to explain it to them late at night. A parable that we consider within the intelligence of any fifth grader today was not comprehended by the men Jesus chose to be the leaders of His new Church.

Reading about the Apostles gave me a lot of courage. I could see

that they didn't start out being perfect. It became clear to me that saints are not born but made. I thus learned that there is great hope for all of us. For when we ask, "What does God want with me?" there is a single, beautiful answer, an answer that can sometimes astonish us.

The answer is that *God wants us to become saints*.

God gave you and me everything we need to become saints: the strengths and the weaknesses, the happiness and the heartaches, the flaws and the ability to overcome them in absolutely heroic ways. Which is why, if you are mired in a particular sin or trapped by loneliness or depression, or simply restless and bored, you must sit up and pay attention to God's mission for you in this life.

God wants *you* to be a saint!

I do not say this to be dramatic, or to pep you up, or to discourage you, or for any other reason. I didn't make it up, and there are days I wish it weren't true. But it *is* true. The only tragedy in this life is not to have been a saint. The moment you come to grips with this great truth, your life will change forever into one extraordinary journey toward holiness.

