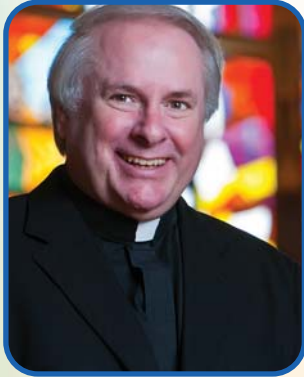


THE GIFTS OF ST. LAURENCE

GOD IS WITH US

My dear parish family,

A very merry and holy Christmas to all of you! The Christmas Season is almost three weeks this year, from Christmas Eve to January 13, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Advent precedes Christmas, and then the Church explodes into 20 days of resplendent joy that God-is-with-us in Jesus Christ.



One of the themes of Christmas is closeness, closeness to God and to one another. There is no more intimate closeness imaginable than the Incarnation. God takes to himself the fullness, the total reality of our human nature. There is a wedding actually: the two become one. Divine and human nature wed in Jesus for all eternity. He shared in our humanity that we might share in his divinity. His self-emptying is our glorification.

Closeness and communion in God's grace is the goal of human life – our destiny. Sometimes this closeness abounds with joy. Other times it intensifies in the midst of suffering. May you feel the closeness of Jesus this Christmas Season and be able to share that gentle joy with faith-filled friends and family. You know that St. Laurence will be celebrating to the max. We are family!

And don't forget another upcoming day of fiery love: February 9th, our tenth Heart of Worship.

Merry Christmas, everybody!

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Drew Wood, Pastor

St. Laurence Catholic Church ***God Is With Us!***

MAKE ROOM AT THE INN!

Picture a virgin youth, pregnant and tired alongside her faithful partner, Joseph, looking for shelter at an inn--any inn! We are all too familiar with this Christmas story and feel relief when the young couple is offered a simple manger. A place where animals eat and sleep will be their baby's first bed. And they were grateful for this place.

This Christmas we can make room at our "inns". We can invite that neighbor who turned away from the Church to the beautiful Midnight Mass. We can include that "distant" relative in the Christmas tradition of kneeling and praying before the life-sized manger scene. We can even make room in the pews during Mass by moving to the center!

We can truly be part of the special Christmas story by simply saying yes to Jesus, just like Mary did. Say YES to volunteering time to a toy drive for children in need. Say YES to singing Christmas carols with family and friends in a hospital ward. Say YES to sharing the legend of the poinsettia, then present one to someone homebound and lonely. Say YES to making new friends at work and church.

Saying YES is "making room at the inn"... Our Inn, which we all need to get ready this Christmas season.

By Angela Rankin

Christmas 2012

MEET OUR SOCIAL CONCERNS BOARD



St. Laurence Social Concerns Ministry Board

Left to right (standing) Pat Sumner, Mark Eyring, Earl Norra, Keith Broussard, Michelle Broussard, Donna Romaine, Frances Conway; (seated) Deb Hernandez, Marcia Kielhofner, Pennie DeGroot, Terri Conti, Anita Kalunta-Crumpton

Blessed John Paul II said: "Jesus Christ taught that man not only receives and experiences the mercy of God, but that he is also called to practice mercy toward others: **'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.'**" We understand our call to care for the less fortunate and to respect and care for the goods of God's creation, intended for the whole human race. The Social Concerns Ministry of St. Laurence makes it possible for all members of our parish to respond to this teaching of our Faith and to live the Corporal Works of Mercy.

The Social Concerns Ministry **responds to the needs** of the poorest, often overlooked and vulnerable, people that are our neighbors in Fort Bend County, and raises **awareness of these needs** within our parish family so that we can all share in serving others. The Social Concerns Board provides oversight to the many programs, annual drives, ministries and groups that comprise this important part of our parish.

The Corporal Works of Mercy

(Based on Matthew 25: 35-36)

**Feed the hungry
Give drink to the thirsty
Clothe the naked
Shelter the homeless
Visit the sick
Visit the imprisoned
Bury the dead**

what they may say...

Pat Sumner: God calls us to be faithful to His people and the Social Concerns Ministry helps us to do just that.

Mark Eyring: A wise person once said that the only time that we feel complete is when we are helping others.

Earl Norra: I'm a hands-on kind of guy and the ministries of Social Concerns call for that kind of volunteer.

Keith Broussard: Having various perspectives on the board helps us meet as many needs in the community as possible, while being effective stewards of the monetary and property gifts that the parish entrusts us with.

Michelle Broussard: I am blessed each and every day with the ability to serve God, our parish and community as well as work with the best volunteers on the planet.

Donna Romaine: I serve out of gratitude for what we have and to raise awareness of the needs of the many unfortunate people in the world.

Frances Conway: I wanted to be a "hands-on" volunteer... the SCM truly serves the basic needs of those less fortunate in our community and I am able to use my education, experience and personal strengths to support those efforts.

Deb Hernandez: Mass is our obligation but the other part is service and there is no better way to shine the light of Christ's love than to serve others through our parish ministries.

Marcia Kielhofner: I have been involved with SCM for many years and continue to be amazed by the incredible work done by this group... There is no joy more complete than that which comes from helping others!

Pennie DeGroot: I've always felt like my calling is to help and serve others. I love working in the Social Concerns Ministry and feel blessed that I can assist those in need on a daily basis.

Terri Conti: I was raised with the old school belief that we are to know God, to love God, and to serve God. I believe in the power of one: One person can make a difference in another person's life.

Anita Kalunta-Crumpton: My background in Social Justice is a natural fit for contributing to this ministry; we as Catholics must serve one another with respect and dignity for all.

HEARTS ON FIRE

10th Annual Heart of Worship

Saturday, February 9, 2013

"Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way?" These words from the Gospel of St. Luke capture the joy of recognizing that God is with us, and provide the inspiration for the theme for the 10th annual Heart of Worship, "Hearts on Fire."

Heart of Worship is a daylong spiritual event at St. Laurence for everyone sixth grade and older, filled with great music, inspiring talks, Mass and Eucharistic Adoration. It was a little more than a decade ago when Fr. Drew Wood became pastor of our parish and began to lay the foundation for Heart of Worship. He had witnessed the spiritual renewal of our teens at the Steubenville summer youth conference and wanted to create a similar experience for the balance of his parish.

That first Heart of Worship featured Fr. Drew as keynote speaker; he was joined by parishioners, other clergy and a rabbi, who served as breakout speakers. In the years since, Heart of Worship has attracted such nationally recognized keynote speakers as Cardinal DiNardo, Fr. Ronald Rolheiser, Fr. Dave Pivonka, Anne a Lay Apostle, and Mother Adela Galindo. In honor of our 10th anniversary year, we are "coming back to the heart" of Heart of Worship, with Fr. Drew returning as keynote speaker.

Additionally, attendees will have an opportunity to hear two of three featured breakout speakers.

Schedule

10:30 a.m.	Check-in
11:30 a.m.	Praise & Worship
12:00 p.m.	Welcome & Keynote
1:30 p.m.	Break
1:45 p.m.	Break Out Session
2:45 p.m.	Break
3:00 p.m.	Break Out Session
4:15 p.m.	Dinner
5:15 p.m.	Praise & Worship
6:00 p.m.	Mass
7:30 p.m.	Adoration with Eucharistic Procession and Benediction



Michael Gormley, our Middle School Youth Minister and a popular retreat leader, will speak on "Igniting the Fire," a challenge to set the world on fire with the heat of Christ's love for us. Sally Robb is a Catholic radio host, teacher and lecturer, who will encourage us to remember the bright joy we felt when we were young and so full of faith in "Burning Hearts & Flashing Joy". And Agnes Fernandes, a beloved parishioner of St. Laurence, will speak on "Strength in the Darkness," based on her own story of loss, suffering and faith, following the brutal murders of her husband and son.

Don't miss this Spirit-filled day at your own parish! Heart of Worship will be held on Saturday, February 9, 2013, from 11:30am to 9:00pm. Registration is available now, both online at www.stlaurence.org and in person at the parish office. The cost to attend is still just \$15 per person, which includes dinner by Pappa's Catering. More than half of attendees are from St. Laurence, but each year, the event attracts hundreds of people from around the archdiocese, other states and even other countries, so advance registration is recommended.

For more information, please visit the parish web site or call the parish office at 281-980-9812.

CHRISTMAS

12/25 Christmas

The liturgical season of Christmas begins on December 25th each year with the **Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord**.

For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They shall call him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. **Isaiah 9:5**

This is an opportunity to celebrate the gift of the Christ-child with gratitude to God the Father.

12/30 Feast of the Holy Family

On December 30th every year during the Christmas season, we celebrate the **Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph**.

God sets a father in honor over his children; a mother's authority he confirms over her sons. **Sirach 3:2**

This is an opportunity to honor our father and our mother and to renew our commitment to grow in holiness as a family.

1/1 Octave of Christmas; Solemnity of the BVM, Holy Mother of God

January 1st is not only the first day of the calendar year, but it is a Holy Day of Obligation every year to celebrate the **Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord** and the **Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God**.

The shepherds went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. **Luke 2:16**

This is a time to ponder in your heart, as Mary likes to do, what it means that God in all His divinity became fully human through Mary, as His only begotten Son Jesus Christ.



AS SEASON

1/6 Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

On January 6th (or the nearest Sunday) during the Christmas season, we celebrate the **Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord** when the 3 wise men arrived to pay homage to the infant Jesus.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea,
in the days of King Herod,
behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,
"Where is the newborn king of the Jews?
We saw his star at its rising
and have come to do him homage." **Matthew 2:1-2**

This is an opportunity to remember that Jesus Christ came for the salvation of the whole world and to share this Good News with all others.

1/13 Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

The liturgical season of Christmas ends with the **Feast of the Baptism of the Lord**.

Thus says the LORD:
Here is my servant whom I uphold,
my chosen one with whom I am pleased,
upon whom I have put my spirit;
he shall bring forth justice to the nations. **Isaiah 42:1**

This is an opportunity to renew your own personal baptismal promises – renouncing everything about Satan and trusting in the Holy Trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit!

How does your family celebrate the Christmas season?



On Christmas Eve we have **soup**. Just soup, like a traveling meal, something that Mary and Joseph could have had once they settled themselves in the stable in Bethlehem. *-Lori Hanig*

On Christmas morning, immediately after opening gifts, we move to the kitchen where everyone helps in preparing **Christmas Crepes**, which I believe our children look forward to more than they do opening presents. *-Jim Murray*

When the girls were little, we chose a **new Christmas book** each year. We would read it (and all the old ones), and then put them away until the Christmas decorations came down from the attic the next year. *-Margie Koenig*

With our South Louisiana roots, our tradition following the Christmas Eve Children's Mass is hot, spicy gumbo and French bread and watch **old Christmas movies** together. *-Pam & John White*

As Music Director, I have never been able to sit with my family at Christmas Mass, so about 10 years ago, Siobhan suggested that the **whole family sing** at a Mass on Christmas Day so we could all be together. We've been doing it ever since at the 10:00am Mass. *-Mary Thompson*

We always wait until the eve of the 1st Sunday of Advent to turn the lights on the **outdoor nativity scene**; then the rest of the lights come on the next night! It's always been our reminder of why we celebrate Christmas. *-Sharon Harry*

For 12 years, our original Disciples In Mission group gets together for a **Family Caroling Party**. We start at one house with a simple dinner and carol through the neighborhood to another house for hot chocolate and dessert. *-Deanna Ennis*

Because Fr. John Weyer would **open one gift** on Christmas Eve, my children wanted to do the same; they are now in their 20's and Jenny still reminds us that Fr. John said it was okay to open just one. *-Michelle Broussard*

After Mass on Christmas Eve, we go home and have **meatball poboy**s. One year, we came out of Mass and the cars were blanketed in snow! That year we had meatballs and snowballs. *-Germaine Guedry*

Las Posadas is celebrated the nine consecutive nights before Christmas in different houses and there is always traditional Mexican food, tamales, hot chocolate, a piñata full of candy, and happy people celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. *-Adriana Gutierrez*

We got married on Dec 18 and we chose to have the song **O Holy Night** played at our wedding. Each Christmas, after the lights are on the tree, we turn out all the other lights in the house and play our favorite Christmas carol. *-Scott & Mary Tann*

To keep our focus on Christ's birth, we will only give **three gifts** to each other on Christmas Day, just like Jesus received from the three wise men, but we will save one last gift to give on Epiphany, to honor the day Christ received His gifts. *-Laura Stephens*

Each year, our kids make a **homemade gift** to give to Jesus on Christmas Day. *-Ruba Kaiser*

The **Christmas pickle ornament** is always the last ornament put on the tree and we hide it deep inside and let the girls look for it. The lucky one to find it is blessed with a year of good fortune! *-Greg Schockling*

While everyone else is shopping the weekend after Thanksgiving, our family gets cozy with blankets, pillows, hot chocolate and popcorn to watch **The Polar Express**. *-Debbie Haney*

After serving at the Midnight Mass, I look forward to going home and sitting down to **enjoy a feast** of menudo, tamales, and a cold beer with family and friends – usually we are up until about 4-5am! *-Deacon Charles Plant*

Our family LOVES Christmas, but to this day Don and I have never given each other a 'Christmas gift'. I think that it is because we have always realized that **we are the gift to each other**... our family is the gift. *-Sherry Burns*

We celebrate Christmas with our **Filipino traditions**: we attend Simbang Gabi and Midnight Mass, then home for a midnight snack of bibingka, puto bungbong and kastanias, before exchanging gifts. *-Doris Villegas*

YEAR OF FAITH

Proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI

October 11, 2012 - November 24, 2013

What are we as Catholic called to do?

- **READ** – Pope Benedict XVI's Apostolic Letter, *Porta Fidei*
- **CELEBRATE** – In liturgy
- **PRAY** – For the renewal of the Faith
- **STUDY** – On the documents of Vatican II
- **DEEPEN** – Knowledge of Faith through the Catechism
- **ENGAGE** – Take advantage of opportunities to turn towards Jesus Christ

YEAR OF FAITH 2012
2013



FOR YOU...

St. Laurence offers a wide variety of programs, studies and prayer groups. Check the parish web site for more details and plan to commit to attend at least ONE this year:

Year of Faith: Rediscovering the Second Vatican Council & Catechism of the Catholic Church, by Charles Johnson, Monday evenings, Jan 14-Feb 11 (7:00-9:00pm)

Evenings for Parents, Sunday evenings, Jan 27, Feb 24, Apr 28 (6:30-8:15pm)

Bridges to Life: Restorative Justice by John Sage, Monday, Jan 7 (7:00-9:00pm)

Forming Moral Conscience, by Anne Comeaux, Tuesday, Feb 12, (7:00-9:00pm)

Financial Peace University, Saturdays, beginning Jan 12, (9:30-11:30am)

Scripture Studies, offered mornings, afternoons and evenings, for men and women, also available in Spanish. Check parish web site for details.

Come and See, for Catholics who have been away from the Church, Monday evenings, Jan-Feb OR Apr-May (7:15-9:00pm)

Adult Confirmation, Thursday evenings, Feb 28-May 16 (7:00-9:00pm)

Spiritual Book Studies, Wednesdays, Jan 9-Apr 17 (9:30-11:30am); and Thursdays (10:30am-noon)

Contemplative Prayer Group, Wednesdays (9:30-noon)

Lay Apostle Prayer Group, once/month on Mondays (day and evening options)

Spanish Prayer Group, Tuesday mornings, 9:30am-noon

Cenacle Home Retreat, Thursday afternoons, Feb 7-Apr 11 (1:00-3:00pm)

Evenings for Couples, Wednesdays, Jan 30, Feb 21, Apr 24 (7:00-9:00pm)

Heart of Worship, Saturday, Feb 9, 11:30am-9:00pm

FOR YOUR FAMILY...

Study together!

Read the Holy Father's Apostolic Letter on Year of Faith, *Porta Fidei*, and documents from Vatican II

Learn what Catholics believe in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Adults Catechism or YouCat

Memorize and take to heart the revised Nicene Creed

Read Bible stories with children

Make a YEAR OF FAITH display using statues, cross, candle, Bible

Celebrate the liturgical seasons – Advent Wreath, Lenten prayers, Easter candle, etc.

Keep the feasts of saints after which family members are named

Make a family pilgrimage – for example to the Cathedral

Display religious imagery in your home

Use craft materials to create images of faith, make rosaries

Pray together!

Pray for the renewal of the Faith among the People of God

Pray together as a family – grace before meals, prayers before bedtime, family rosary

Prepare prayerfully for Sunday Mass together

Have a family prayer board where prayer intentions can be posted

Learn the new Mass responses and reflect on the beauty of the Mass

Trace the sign of the cross on each other's foreheads before journeys, at bedtime, before school, at the end of family prayers

Attend the Parish Mission together!

This year, there is something for everyone...

"In His Image and Likeness"

March 4-6, 2013

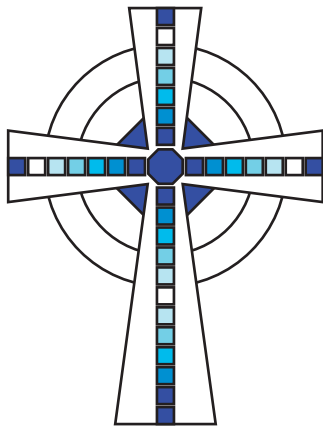
Both morning and evening sessions

Featuring: Jason Angelette, Mary Bielski and Michael Gormley

Musician: Greg Boudreax

Open to all ages: Special sessions for children

Advance registration begins in late January



NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Sugar Land, Texas
Permit No. 141

St. Laurence Catholic Church
3100 Sweetwater Blvd.
Sugar Land, TX 77479
281.980.9812

For event details see our web site at www.stlaurence.org



Christmas Mass 2012 Schedule

Christmas Eve – Monday, Dec 24

4:00pm - 6:30pm - 9:00pm & 12:00am Midnight
Mass
In the Church

4:15pm "Overflow Mass"

In the Religious Education Center

Christmas Day – Tuesday, Dec 25

8:00am - 10:00am - 12:00pm
In the Church

Holy Family – Sunday, Dec 30

(Regular Sunday Mass Schedule in the Church)

Sat 5:00pm Vigil

Sun 7:30, 9:00, 11:00am, and 12:45, 5:00pm

Solemnity of Mary – Tuesday, Jan 1

Monday, Dec 31 – 5:00pm Vigil

Tuesday, Jan 1 – 8:00am - 10:00am - 12:00pm
In the Church

MASS SCHEDULE

Daily Masses

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
7:30 a.m. & 12:00 p.m.

Wednesday 7:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.

Friday 8:15 a.m. & 12:00 p.m.

Saturday 8:30 a.m.

Sunday Masses

Saturday 5:00 p.m.

Sunday 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m.,

11:00 a.m., 12:45 p.m., 5:00 p.m.

Misa en Español

Segundo y cuarto sábado del
mes a 7:00 pm en La Capilla
de la Misericordia Divina

Sacramento de Reconciliación

en Español será ofrecido antes
de la misa del 6:00 pm a 6:45 pm

Reconciliation

Saturday after morning Mass

Saturday 4:00 pm to 4:45 pm

Wednesday: 5:30 pm to 6:20 pm

Mon.-Thur. after morning Mass

Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

His Eminence Daniel Cardinal DiNardo

St. Laurence Catholic Church

Rev. Drew Wood, Pastor

Rev. Santy Kurian, Parochial Vicar

Rev. Tom Hawxhurst, Parochial Vicar

Deacon Rey Arellano, Deacon Albert Bothe

Deacon Don Burns, Deacon Charles Plant

The Gifts of St. Laurence is a quarterly publication designed, written and published by St. Laurence Parishioners.
Direct comments to Sharon Ehrenkranz, Director of Communications, at 281.980.9812 or sehrenkranz@stlaurence.org.