

Our Lady of Grace



Catholic Parish

595 East Main Street · Avon Park, Florida 33825



27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 7, 2007

THE INFANT IN MY WOMB LEAPED FOR JOY



Parish Office

- Phone: (863) 453-4757
- Fax: (863) 453-2620
- Monday through Friday
9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

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Fr. Nicholas McLoughlin

Spanish Apostolate

Fr. José Gonzalez

Pastor Emeritus

Fr. Gerald Grogan

Assisting Clergy

Fr. Robert Onze
Fr. John Belfield

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Respect Life

Respect Life Sunday

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." (Luke 1:41-45)

We know the story. The Archangel Gabriel had announced to the Virgin Mary God's invitation to become the mother of the Messiah. As further evidence that nothing is impossible for God, Mary's elderly cousin Elizabeth, thought to be barren, was also expecting a child, John the Baptist. Both Elizabeth's pregnancy and Mary's – despite their unusual circumstances – are cause for rejoicing. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the unborn child Jesus announces his presence to John, his unborn cousin. John leaps for joy, proclaiming to his mother, in effect: "Behold! The Lamb of God!" Elizabeth, too, is then filled with the Holy Spirit and recognizes Mary as the blessed tabernacle of our Lord and Savior. Through the evangelical witness and sacrificial love of Mary, Jesus and John, the work of our salvation has begun.

The Old and New Testaments are filled with such passages extolling children as gift and blessing. It is disheartening, then, to see how far our culture has diverged from this view. To be sure, most parents love their children generously and even unconditionally. But today the inherent, priceless value of every child – as a unique individual created and loved by God – is no longer universally accepted. Before birth at least, a child's worth seems to depend on his parents' attitude toward him. A Planned Parenthood ad illustrates this point well: "Babies are loud, smelly and expensive, unless you want one."

Unborn children are routinely dehumanized by the abortion industry. The author of a widely used textbook on abortion techniques describes pregnancy as a "parasitic illness." A well-known columnist writes: "A goldfish resembles a human being more than an embryo does." One author has described the unborn human being as "protoplasmic rubbish," a "gobbet of meat." A Princeton professor has followed this thinking to its logical conclusion to demean the newborn child: "Human babies are not born self-aware or capable of grasping that they exist over time. They are not persons." Therefore "the life of a newborn is of less value than the life of a pig, a dog or a chimpanzee." Such attitudes have crept into people's behavior. Many of us seem to spend much of our adult lives trying to avoid the inconvenience of having children, and we don't like surprises in the children we do have.

Consider: Despite their many risks and harmful side effects, hormonal contraceptives exceed \$24 billion in annual sales worldwide.

The abortion industry claims that half the children conceived in the United States are "unwanted" and half the "unwanted" children are aborted – more than 1.3 million annually. The most common reason given for abortion is that raising a child could interfere with one's education or career. We are often told how costly it is to raise a child. The scarcity of large families among wealthy and middle-income couples suggests that many who could afford more children value other things more than bringing a new life into the world.

Conversely, some couples who have difficulty conceiving will pay tens of thousands of dollars to have a fertility clinic create a son or daughter for them. How many parents realize that for every IVF-created child who survives to birth, many others die in the process? And if that custom-made embryo is found in the lab to have a “defect,” the clinic will readily recommend scrapping the “faulty” child and ordering up another. Tragically, many scientists and politicians now think of living human embryos created in fertility clinics – but no longer desired by their biological parents – as raw material which can be destroyed for stem cell research. Is it any wonder that some scientists now want to create human embryos in the lab, by fertilization or cloning, solely to kill them for their stem cells? Or that such misguided efforts continue despite the existence of morally acceptable alternatives, such as stem cells from umbilical cords and other adult sources that are already helping patients with 72 conditions and diseases? In all these ways we are being urged to stop seeing human life as God sees it. From the moment of our conception, God does not see us superficially as a microscopic, unformed cell. In every child, born or unborn, God sees the individual he created to love, and be loved by, for all eternity.

At the other end of life, as well, the bonds of love between generations are being stretched thin. Some doctors and ethicists claim that patients with dementia or in a so-called “persistent vegetative state” are no longer really persons and that families should deny them even the most basic forms of nourishment and care. And yet, however weak and vulnerable such patients may appear, they have the awesome power to inspire heroic, sacrificial love from their family members and caregivers – a power that can lead to the sanctification of those who care for them. It matters not to God whether we are now, or ever, conscious of our existence or capable of “higher thought.” The value of a human life does not depend on exercising one’s intellect; it comes from God’s fatherly love for each human, created in his image. His love is present long before our brain waves can be measured at six weeks’ gestation and long after our brains no longer function so well. His love is present long before our heart begins to beat at 22 days after conception and long after our heart begins to fail. His love is present at every step and misstep of our lives.

And to some of us who are humble and lowly, God grants the privilege to be his instrument in bringing forth holiness from others. God loves, and wants us to love, the grandfather lying unconscious in a hospital bed, the child with severe physical and mental impairments, the frightened teenaged mother and the unplanned embryo nesting in her womb. Each of these vulnerable persons is given to us so we may learn to love as God loves – generously, sacrificially and unconditionally.

May we never tire of proclaiming the dignity and worth of every human life. May we never tire of serving the vulnerable and their caregivers with generous hearts. And may we never cease to pray for the day when all people, and all societies, will defend the life of every human from conception to natural death. Let us make the prayer of St. Ignatius of Loyola our own: “Pray as if everything depends on God; work as if everything depends on you.” We need to pray and work to uphold the dignity of human life.

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Paul & Justine Devlin
(863) 453-5327

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Ed Tomek
Charles Devlin
Peter Estrada
Kevin Bouffard
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Schedule of Masses and Prayers

Saturday Vigil

4:00 p.m.
7:00 p.m. Spanish

Sunday

8:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.

Holy Days

8:00 a.m.
Vigil 5:30 p.m.

Daily Mass

Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m.

First Friday

Mass & Holy Hour
8:00 a.m.

First Saturday

Mass at 8:00 a.m.

Confessions

Saturday 3:30 p.m.

from our *Pastor's* desk

Rosary and Benediction: Question: What is it that Lily Potter, Harry Potter's mother, in J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows," Julian in P.D. James's novel and movie, "Children of Men," Sophie in the Oscar winning movie, "Sophie's Choice," and Mary the mother of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, have in common? They were confronted with a "choice" about an innocent child by an evil dictator: Lord Voldemort in the Harry Potter books, Xan, the tyrant in "Children of Men," the Nazi officer in "Sophie's Choice" and by the coward and bully, Herod, the Roman governor at the time of the birth of Jesus. We know what Mary's choice was. She went into exile with her husband, Joseph, to protect the life of an innocent child, Jesus. Women are faced with similar choices today. Mary was a teenage mother. Joseph was out of work. They were homeless – Jesus was born in a stable or cave in which animals were housed. Shortly after his birth, his parents were refugees in Egypt. The circumstances of their lives were not at all conducive to the birth of a child. Yet, Joseph and Mary were willing to sacrifice everything in defense of the life of an innocent child. The praying of the Rosary provides us with an opportunity to reflect on their lives and example and assist us in the choices that we make. Won't you come to the Rosary and benediction with your families on **Monday evening in church at 7:30 p.m.?**

Inquiry Series for Adults Who are Searching: John's Gospel (John 1: 45-51) gives us a scene in which Phillip meets Nathaniel and tells him, "We have found the one about whom Moses wrote in the law, and also the prophets, Jesus, son of Joseph, from Nazareth." Nathaniel - sounding like a 21st century cynic and skeptic – responds, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" Phillip, not wishing to get drawn into an argument, wisely says, "Come and see." He brings Nathaniel to Jesus. We meet people like Nathaniel on the beach, in night clubs, at games, at home, in a neighbor's house, at the airport, over a drink and in the office. They may be 'fallen-away' Catholics; they may be Christians who are not Catholic, who do not 'belong' to any other Church; they may be unbaptized. Why don't you invite them, or better still, come with them to the **Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults**, which is on **Monday evenings at 6:30 p.m.** in the conference room in the Grogan Center—come and see. **Father Nick** will lead the series, and he will be assisted by a number of other facilitators.

Scripture Series on Matthew's Gospel: Isn't it extraordinary that the "Word of God" or the "Promise of God" appear in the singular form throughout the Scriptures? Can we not derive a special significance from this fact? In Matthew's Gospel the "Promise" is Jesus. Jesus is the "Word of God," the message of God become man. Jesus is also God's unique response, God's gift that fulfills all the hopes and expectations of the people of Israel and all our hopes as well. God has given his world to Israel. Matthew opens his Gospel with a genealogy that identifies him as the son of Abraham and the son of David (Mt: 1:1). Matthew also identifies the community of believers. The believers are those who claim the inheritance of Abraham and the House of David. The simple purpose of the genealogy is to introduce the community of believers of both Jews and Gentiles to their common heritage, the promise made to Abraham, to David and to the fourteen generations in exile. The genealogy also implicitly illustrates the continuity of God's promise and the expectation of believers throughout the generations. Dominant in chapters 1 and 2 are the unexpected ways in which God fulfills his promise and the inconsistent and varied response of the believers. The Infancy narratives (Mt 1&2) tell the story. **Meet your Instructor:** Join your instructor, noted author, journalist and radio talk-show host Dale O'Leary **in the new Education Center on Wednesday evening at 6:30 p.m.**

at our *Parish*

English Classes for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Our Lady of Grace will provide English classes for speakers of other languages (ESOL) for anyone who is interested in learning and/or improving their English listening, speaking and reading and writing skills. While the classes are being sponsored by Our Lady of Grace Parish, they are being provided under the auspices, generosity and outreach of South Florida Community College. A qualified English language teacher and supplies are provided by the college free of charge. The class will meet Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings from 6 to 9 p.m. in the newly renovated Education Building. For additional information, contact Nelly Guzman, ESOL coordinator, at (863)784-7380 or at guzmann@southflorida.edu.

Spiritual Adoption of Unborn Child at Risk of Abortion

The parish Respect Life Committee, with the encouragement of Bishop Frank Dewane, is introducing a new Respect Life Ministry entitled "Spiritual Adoption of an Unborn Child in Danger of Abortion." Every parishioner is encouraged to spiritually adopt an unborn baby at risk of abortion. You will be asked to sign a pledge card in which you promise to spiritually adopt a baby and promise to pray for that baby every day for the next nine months. The pledge cards which were distributed on the weekend of September 29/30 should be returned to the Church on Respect Life Sunday, October 7.

Church Service Center

Collection Frequently, people come to the Church office for help with rent, electric bills, food, gas and medicines. To help them, you are asked to bring some food to Church on the weekend of October 13/14. A second collection is taken up after Communion. The food and the proceeds are sent to the Church Service Center here in Avon Park—which is

supported by local churches—from where it is distributed to those who are in need. Thank you for your generosity.

Ladies Guild Meeting

The first meeting of the Ladies Guild for the fall will be installation of the officers at the 8 a.m. Mass on Wednesday, October 10. Installation will be followed by a continental breakfast and meeting. All ladies of the parish are encouraged to attend. See you there!

Renovated Youth Center

Re-opens The newly renovated Youth Center will re-open on Wednesday evening, October 10, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. for grades 6 through 12 and for community college students. The center includes two game rooms with pool tables, air-hockey, ping-pong and other game activities. There is also an indoor racquetball court. Outdoor games include soccer and baseball. If you are priming to become a 'Teen Idol,' you can practice on the 'Dance-dance-revolution,' or on the soon-to-be-purchased karaoke equipment. 'All work and no play makes Jack and Jill dull persons.' Come play and pray with fellow teens in a relaxed atmosphere. Food and drinks are provided. Come and see and bring your friends.

Do you want to become a Parish Council member?

Kevin Bouffard (chair), Peter Estrada, and Charles Devlin, Parish Council election committee members, in accordance with the Parish Council bye laws, have set up a process for the Parish Council elections, which will be held in November. All parishioners are eligible if they are at least 16 years old and are registered in the parish for one year. You are asked to pick up an Application for Parish Council Membership Form and complete it. Forms can be picked up at the entrance to the church or in the parish office. Complete the form and return it to the parish office.

Sacramental Life of the Parish

Baptisms:

Baptismal orientation is the first Sunday of each month. Ceremonies are performed on the second Sunday.

Marriages:

Adequate preparation is required. Call the parish office six months in advance.

Ministry to the Sick:

Arrangements can be made to have a priest and/or a Eucharistic minister visit on a regular basis, if necessary. Call the parish office.

Registration

Permanent and seasonal members are encouraged to register. Registration cards are available at the main church entrance.



Our Lady of Grace Catholic Charismatic Prayer Meeting

A prayer meeting is a weekly gathering to give praise, thanks, honor and glory to Jesus through song, prayer and teachings. Our purpose is to worship and honor God and to build up the Body of Christ as brothers and sisters in the faith. All are welcome to come and grow in love of Jesus and one another. We meet Sunday evenings at 6 p.m. in the parish Education Building and begin with the Rosary. For more information contact Paul and Justine Devlin, 453-5327.

**Readings for
the Week of
Oct. 7, 2007**

Sunday

Hebrews 1:2-3; 2:2-4
2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14
and Luke 17:5-10

Monday

Jonah 1:1-2:2, 11
Luke 10:25-37

Tuesday

Jonah 3:1-10
Luke 10:38-42

Wednesday

Jonah 4:1-11
Luke 11:1-4

Thursday

Malachi 3:13-20b
Luke 11:5-13

Friday

Joel 1:13-15; 2:1-2
Luke 11:15-26

Saturday

Joel 4:12-21
Luke 11:27-28

Next Sunday

2 Kings 5:14-17
2 Timothy 2:8-13
and Luke 17:11-19

Please Note: Names will be left on the prayer list for one month. If you would like a name to be kept longer on the list, please call the parish office.

Mass Intentions for The Coming Week



Saturday, Oct. 6

4 p.m..... † John Moviel by the Moviel family
† Arlene Naida by her husband
7 p.m..... Mass in Spanish

Sunday, Oct. 7

8 a.m..... † James Smithson by the Knights of Columbus
10:15 a.m..... † Ronald Keppler by Elaine Keppler

Monday, Oct. 8

8 a.m..... † Mary Litwinski by Bruno Litwinski

Tuesday, Oct. 9

8 a.m..... † Pierre Brassard by the Dumont family

Wednesday, Oct. 10

8 a.m..... † Anna Rosatone by Georgine & Brenda

Thursday, Oct. 11

8 a.m..... For our parish family

Friday, Oct. 12

8 a.m..... † Mary, Thomas and John Casey by Ed & Maureen Castine

Saturday, Oct. 13

4 a.m..... † Marie Helfrich by Loretta Evans
† Jonas Morgan by his wife
† Rosendo Patino by daughter

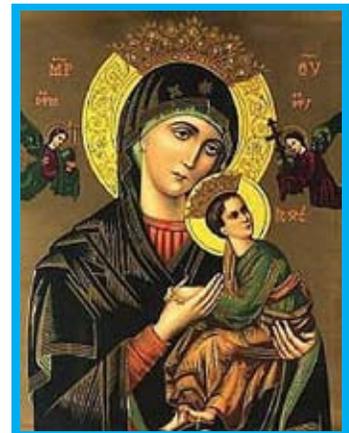
Sunday, Oct. 14

8 a.m..... † Edwin Buzzell by His Mother
† Wallace McLean by Evelyn McLean
10:15 a.m..... † Craig and Brian Dumbleton by their family

Please Pray for...

Richard Caracaus
Art Paek
Carol Neill
Joann Vanisacker
Noreen Buckley
Marlene Snyder Glaab
Joyce Hoenicke
Gladys Markowski
Mary Ruth Lutes
Betty Wegner
Grace Marie Snellen
Jim Willis
Maria Victoria Lopez

*Holy Mary,
Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the
hour of our death.
Amen.*



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Those who care for the sick,
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