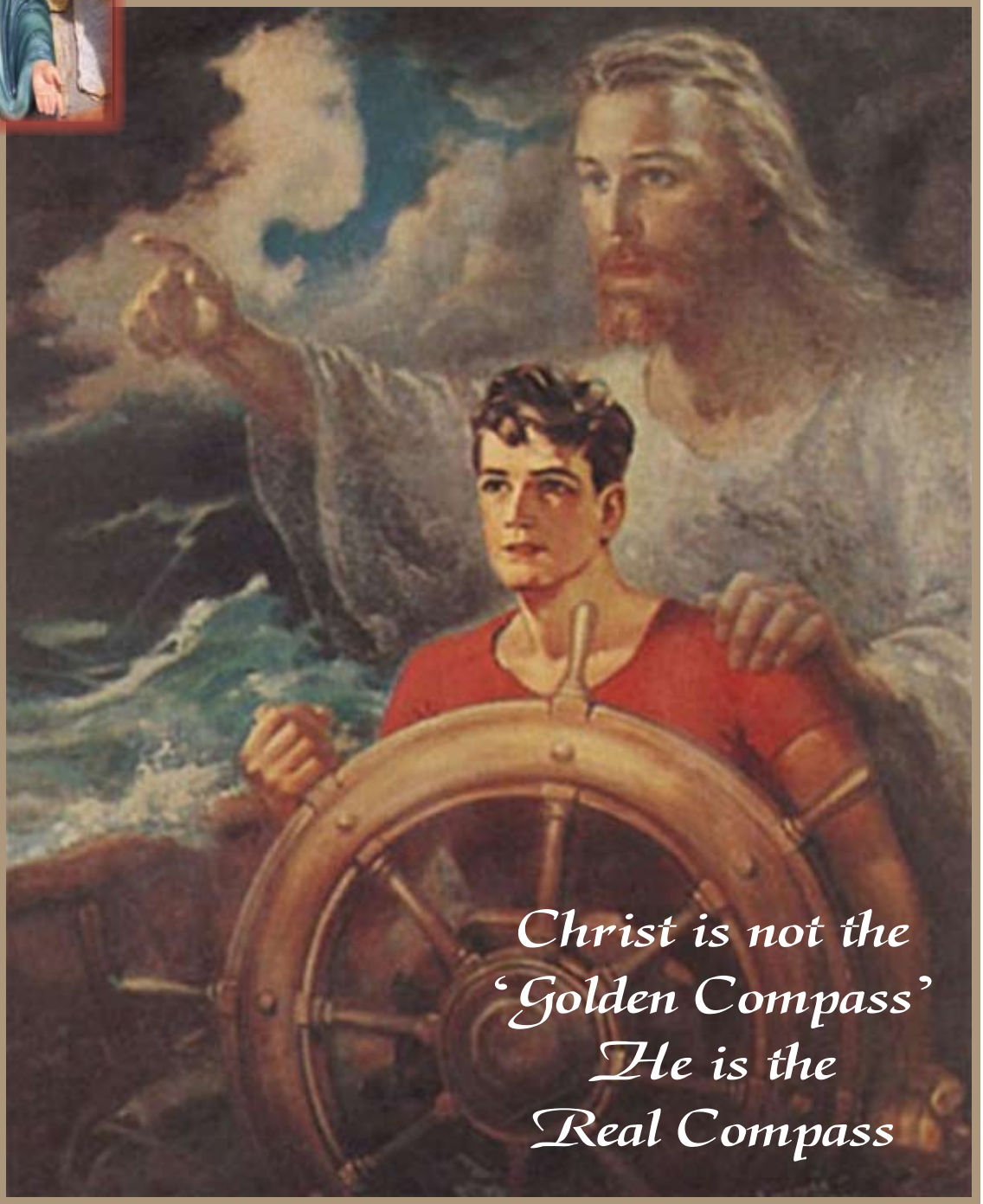
Our Lady of Grace

Catholic Parish

595 East Main Street · Avon Park, Florida 33825

Epiphany of the Lord **January 6, 2008**



Life Teen Mass: Sunday, January 13, 6 p.m.

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

Pastor
Fr. Nicholas McLoughlin

Spanish Apostolate
Fr. José Gonzalez

Deacon
Fred Simon

Pastor Emeritus
Fr. Gerald Grogan

Assisting Clergy
Fr. Robert Onze
Fr. John Belfield
Fr. Leo Frechette

Administrative Assistant
Betty Heiring

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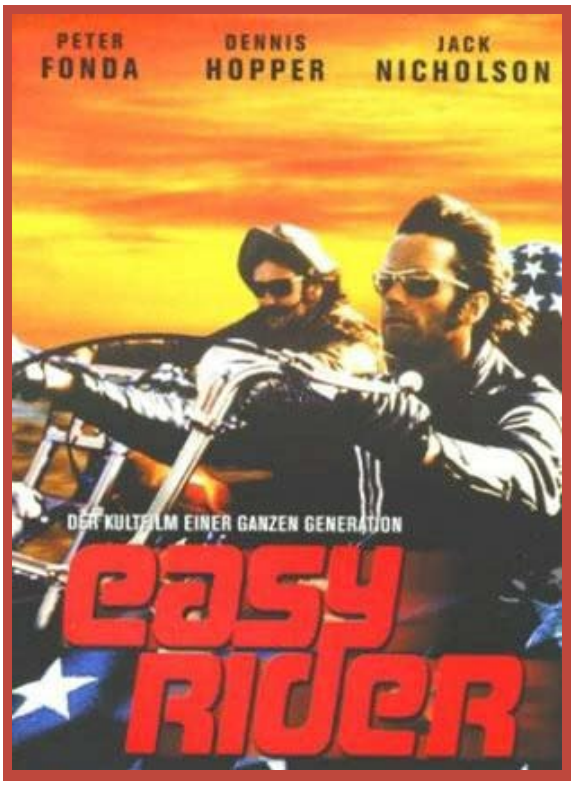
from our Pastor's desk



Dear parishioners: St. Augustine, a fifth century Easy Rider, gave expression to the Easy Rider Syndrome when he stated, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts cannot rest until they rest in You." We live in a restless, anxious age.

Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper and Jack Nicholson, three counter-culture restless hustlers set out on their Harley-Davidsons on a 'high' way through the 'wilderness' of the South-Western United States looking for a 'better America', not unlike the ancient 'three wise men' setting out on their camels looking to the 'stars' on a journey in search, they were not sure of what, that would give some kind of meaning to their lives, as told in the simple story in Mathew's Gospel (Mt 2: 1-12). Their "star" - their journey - led them to an unlikely manger in Bethlehem, which, in turn, led them to a 'life-changing-experience' and to return to 'their own country by another way.' My favorite rendition of the 'three Oriental kings' is the stonework of Autun Cathedral where the three are in the same bed – see the bulletin cover – under a large blanket, and all wearing their crowns! An angel is waking them to point out the star. One of them is shown with eyes wide open in wonder, another half awake with one eye open, but the third with both eyes closed sound asleep – as if to represent the three stages of spiritual awareness in the medieval tradition.

Apart from the legends and the art, spiritual writers reflected on the Magi in many ways. In more recent years, two Nobel-prize winning poets offered rather contrasting angles on conflict at the heart of the story. **T.S. Eliot** evoked a difficult journey toward a moment of inner conversion: this Birth seemed like Death for them, and so disturbed them that they were "no longer at ease" in their own vision of things. But for the Guatemalan, **Miguel Angel Asturias**, the white king offers gold in order that Jesus may confront the lure of wealth and power: 'even from the cradle You may see the Enemy… with You is born the grave of Gold.' **Ermanno Olmi**, the Italian film director, has developed the Magi story at some length in Cammina Cammina. We can all share our own version of the Magi story.

The Magi started from seeing a star – a good image of anything that calls people to set out on a journey toward faith. **Tony Blair's journey in faith** ended just before Christmas: he was received into the Catholic Church. He credits his family's example – his 'star'. The Episcopalian Bishop of Southwest Florida, **Bishop Lipscomb**, was received into the Catholic Church by Bishop Lynch, the Catholic Bishop of St. Petersburg, just before Christmas. It is interesting to note that **the Magi did not travel alone** – maybe that helps us understand Woodstock and the Groupie syndrome among today's young people. Following the light and their search for Christ is more effective in **small group gatherings** – not a lonely quest. This is one of the approaches to evangelization on the part of Life Teen – it prefers interactive small groups. **The Life Teen Mass** is more of a "praying, praising, and worshipping God together" and not a "collection of lone rangers," doing their "own thing".

One purpose of the Magi was to offer their own unique gifts. Young people offer their own unique gifts out of their own unique life-experiences and in an expression unique to their age. Life Teen affords them an opportunity "to praise and worship God" out of their unique life-experience and through the medium of contemporary music. **The Magi returned home by 'another way'**. To have found Christ, or to have been found by Christ, means that his Kingdom is an **alternative vision** of what life is all about. It is totally different from Herod's way of power and ego and death. Instead, it is a life-giving way of serving others, and of letting go of self. In the words of Irenaeus, "The Glory of God is humanity fully alive, but the life of humanity consists in the vision of God."

Father Nick McLoughlin

at our Parish

Life Teen Mass: Sunday, Jan. 13, 6 p.m. Our Lady of Grace Parish will begin a Life Teen Mass next Sunday, January 13, at 6 p.m. in Church. The Eucharist is the table around which we are fed with the word of God and with the body of Christ. It is imperative that young people "hear" the message in a medium that they understand. It is important to express their "praise and worship" in a medium that represents their expression.

Contemporary Music Group We have assembled a very fine group of singers and musicians who will "sing a new song to the Lord": a "new song" meaning music in their own medium—their manner of expression. Contemporary "praise and worship" music will be the mode of expression. Jeff Herbert from Sarasota will lead the group on the keyboard. He will be ably assisted by Gene Ryan, our Director of Music, on piano; Tom Gildea on bass guitar and bass fiddle; and Dylan Heiring on drums. High school students Justine Devlin, Crystal Blanco, Brittany Murphy, Arianna Ramirez, Megan Richardson and Ariel Starling will lead the singing.

Gifts In today's liturgy, we celebrate the "wise men" bringing their unique "gifts" to Jesus. Our young people here in Our Lady of Grace Parish are doing exactly the same thing. They are offering their "praise and worship" in a medium that is uniquely theirs. We encourage young people and young families to join us in this contemporary expression of "worship and praise." All are welcome since the Eucharist is the source of that unity which makes us a community.

Parish Nurse Program There is a need to assess the various health needs of our Parish. A presentation will be given in the Grogan Center on Sunday, Jan. 13, after 10:15 a.m. Mass. Nurses will be on hand to take blood pressure. For additional information call Alvina 314-0117.

Religious Education & Youth News

- Religious Education Classes resume on Sunday, Jan. 13, grades K – 8.
- Grades 9 – 12 will resume, 5:30-6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 9.
- Youth night for junior high and high school students will resume on Wed. evening, Jan. 9, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- Kevin Bouffard will resume his Sunday morning discussion group on contemporary Church issues from 9 to 10 a.m. in the Conference room of the Grogan Center, on Sunday, January 13.

National Vocations Awareness Week "This week we celebrate National Vocations Awareness Week. In doing so, I ask you to pray for our seminarians and for an increase in all vocations in the Church. I would be happy to know of and speak with anyone who has expressed an interest in learning more about the priesthood or religious life. The annual collection, on behalf of vocations and seminary education, will be taken up in all parishes of the diocese the weekend of January 12/13. May God bless your generosity." --Bishop Frank Dewane

Congratulations to Ed and Ruth Tomek on their 56th wedding anniversary.

Ladies Guild Meeting All women are invited to the Ladies Guild on Wednesday, January 9, at 1 p.m. in the Youth Center.

The Parish Council will meet in the conference room of the Grogan Center on Tuesday, January 8, at 7 p.m.

R.C.I.A. resumes on Monday, January 7, at 7 p.m. in the conference room of the Grogan Center.

Bereavement Group The bereavement group will meet in the Youth Center on Monday, January 7, at 2 p.m.

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 Youth Center and begin with the Rosary. For more information contact Paul and Justine Devlin, 453-5327.

Ex-British Prime Minister Tony Blair received into Catholic Church

By Simon Caldwell
Catholic News Service

LONDON (CNS) -- Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair became a Catholic during a private ceremony in London.

Blair, previously an Anglican, was received into full communion with the Catholic Church by Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor of Westminster. Blair was sponsored at the Mass of reception by his wife, Cherie, a Catholic.
The Dec. 21 Mass at Archbishop's House, the Cardinal's private residence, was attended by Blair's family and close friends. Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor said in a statement Dec. 22 that he was "very glad" to welcome Blair into church.

"For a long time he has been a regular worshipper at Mass with his family and in recent months he has been following a program of formation to prepare for his reception into full communion," the Cardinal said. "My prayers are with him, his wife and family at this joyful moment in their journey of faith together."
Blair, 54, served as British prime minister from May 1997 until June 2007.

He now serves as envoy to the Middle East for the Quartet, a group comprised of the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and Russia.

He was admitted into the church using the liturgical rite of reception of a baptized Christian, which involved him making a profession of faith during the course of the Mass.

He was given doctrinal and spiritual preparation by Msgr. Mark O' Toole, the Cardinal's private secretary, and also made a full confession before his reception. For most of his adult life, Blair has attended Mass each Sunday with his wife. Their four children -- Euan, Nicky, Kathryn and Leo -- were baptized in the Catholic Church and raised as Catholics.

In a Dec. 23 interview with the British Broadcasting Corp. Radio 2 "Good Morning Sunday" program, Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor described the Mass of reception as "very intimate, very prayerful."

"It was a very moving occasion," said the Cardinal. "I suppose for him (it was) the end of a process, in the sense that he's been thinking about becoming a Catholic for a long time.
"But also, in another sense it's a beginning, because when you become a Catholic, as so many people who have become Catholics have said to me, it's like coming home," he said.
"This was a gift for Tony, a personal journey, a gift for his family," he said, adding that Blair became a Catholic "partly because of the example of his family."

"I think also it's not just in his travels as prime minister, but even before that, there was something he said to me, that he feels at home in the Catholic Church in a way that he didn't in any other church or in the Anglican commune," the Cardinal added.

At the Vatican, a spokesman expressed “joy and respect” at Blair’s decision. “The Catholic Church joins in the sentiments of satisfaction expressed by Cardinal Murphy O’Connor,” the spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, said Dec. 22.

Father Lombardi said the church was happy to welcome such a “prominent personality.” He emphasized that Blair’s decision was not an impulsive one, but came at the end of a “long and profound journey of faith.”

Some Catholics and pro-life groups questioned the sincerity of Blair’s profession of faith in view of a political career in which he consistently voted for abortion rights.

John Smeaton, director of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, said in a Dec. 22 statement that he found Blair’s decision to become a Catholic “decidedly strange.”
“We are very concerned,” said Smeaton, a Catholic. “During his premiership, Tony Blair became one of the world’s most significant architects of the culture of death: promoting abortion, experiments on human embryos -- including on cloned human embryos -- and euthanasia by neglect.

“We are writing to Tony Blair to ask him whether he has repented of the anti-life positions he has so openly advocated throughout his political career,” he said.

Ann Widdecombe, a Conservative Party member of Parliament and a former Anglican who became Catholic in the early 1990s, told Catholic News Service Dec. 24 that the church would not have accepted Blair unless he assented to all its teaching on faith and morals.

“He would have had to change his mind” on matters such as abortion, said Widdecombe. “But I think he should now make that public for the avoidance of doubt.”

Blair was just 42 years old when he swept to power in a landslide election to become the youngest prime minister since 1812. His 10 years of office made him the Labor Party’s longest-serving prime minister and the only one to lead the Labor Party to three consecutive general election victories.

Even before he became prime minister there was speculation that he was about to become a Catholic. In the mid-1990s, the late Cardinal George Basil Hume of Westminster wrote to Blair to ask him to stop receiving Communion in the Catholic parish of St Joan of Arc near his home in north London. When Blair moved to Downing Street, he continued to worship with his family but at nearby Westminster Cathedral.

The onset of the war on terror following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks meant it was dangerous for him to attend public services. Masses were then celebrated at Downing Street by Father Michael Seed, a Franciscan Friar of the Atonement, who renewed speculation over Blair’s conversion earlier this year when he told a journalist that Blair was “practically a Catholic.”

Speculation intensified again after Blair accepted an invitation from New York Cardinal Edward M. Egan to be the guest speaker at the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Dinner in October.

As prime minister, however, Blair’s policies often brought him into conflict Catholic leaders. Scottish Cardinal Thomas Winning of Glasgow publicly criticized him over his voting record on abortion. Blair was also said to have endured a frosty 15-minute meeting with Pope John Paul II in February 2003, less than a month before British troops joined a U.S-led invasion of Iraq. At that meeting, the pope warned him that a war would disturb the whole Middle East and exacerbate tensions.

Blair returned to the Vatican in June, just weeks before he stepped down both as prime minister and a member of Parliament, for a meeting with Pope Benedict XVI.
Britain has never had a Catholic prime minister, although there is no constitutional barrier to such a move.

Readings for the Week of Jan. 6, 2008

Sunday
Isaiah 60:1-6
Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6
and Matthew 2:1-12

Monday
1 John 3:22—4:6
Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25

Tuesday
1 John 4:7-10
Mark 6:34-44

Wednesday
1 John 4:11-18
Mark 6:45-52

Thursday
1 John 4:19—5:4
Luke 4:14-22a

Friday
1 John 5:5-13
Luke 5:12-16

Saturday
1 John 5:14-21
John 3:22-30

Next Sunday
Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
Acts 10:34-38
and Matthew 3:13-17

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, Jan. 5
4 p.m. ..... † Lillian Goldsmith by Bill & Marie Crennan
† David Laya by his mother
7 p.m. ..... Mass in Spanish

Sunday, Jan. 6
8 a.m. ..... † Paul Gervais by Rainald & Sandra
10:15 a.m. ..... † Ronald Keppler by Elaine Keppler
† Ted Lipa by Bert & Esther Boruszewski
Special Intention for Ed & Ruth Tomek
on their 56th wedding anniversary

Monday, Jan. 7
8 a.m. ..... For our parish family

Tuesday, Jan. 8
8 a.m. ..... † Cliff Riker by Marian Riker

Wednesday, Jan. 9
8 a.m. ..... † Larry Laflamme by Jean & Theresa Lambert

Thursday, Jan. 10
8 a.m.

Friday, Jan. 11
8 a.m. ..... † Albert Budusky by Helene Nassour

Saturday, Jan. 12
4 p.m. ..... † Gilbert Schaefer by Mabel Schaefer
† David Laya by Jed & Philomena Ashley

Sunday, Jan. 13
8 a.m. ..... † Helen Andrzeikiewicz by Don & Lillian Mellske
† David Bakeman by Father Nick
† Georgia Berube by Rainald & Sandra
10:15 a.m. ..... † Frederick Bingham by Ron & Chris Bingham
† Roberta Suinck by Mary Ann & Bob Bland

Please Pray for...

Art Paek
Carol Neill
Joann Vanisacker
Noreen Buckley
Tyler Maxey
Charles Lindsey
Joan Roche
Melissa Clayton
Helen Dolan
Louis Bouchee

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

And Also for...

Those who care for the sick,
deceased members and benefactors of the parish,
and our loved ones.

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Ed Tomek
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Fred Nugent

Schedule of Masses and Prayers

Saturday
8 a.m. with Confession
at 8:30 a.m. (Nov. - May)
Vigil 4 p.m.
7 p.m. Spanish

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

Holy Days
Vigil 5:30 p.m.
8 a.m.

Daily Mass
Monday - Friday 8 a.m.

First Friday
Mass and Holy Hour
8 a.m.

First Saturday
Mass at 8 a.m.

Confessions
Saturday 3:30 p.m.

Autun Cathedral

An Angel is waking
The Three Kings in bed
To point out The star To Them