

INTENTION FOR THE DIVINE LITURGY (MASS) Today (12/28): None

SERVERS:	READERS
Anthony and Daniel Choueifati; Ola Boulos	Gladys Choueifati

SICK OR HOMEBOUND: Please call Father Anthony at 813-886-7413 or leave a message if there is anyone of our parishioners you want him to visit.

FROM LAST WEEK



2009 RELIGIOUS CALENDARS: Our 2009 Maronite calendars are here and will be available next week, 28 December, or you may request them during this week from Father. Please note that these calendars offer the names of Feast Days as well as other holidays. Cost is \$4.00, and your donation will just cover expenses for calendars and shipping. The rest will go toward church expenses. We only ordered a limited number this year. You may pay cash, or a check made out to Mission of Sts Peter and Paul. You may also send in a check for the amount and we will set aside a calendar for you. Thank you for your cooperation.

ALTAR SERVERS: Does your child want to serve at the altar of God's Church? If so, children must have received their First Holy Communion and have attended a server practice. **Any child who has already been serving regularly and not received Communion may continue despite the restriction, but Father must approve this. ALSO, ANY CHILD NOT ATTENDING THIS PRACTICE WILL BE ALLOWED TO SERVE UNTIL THE CHILD HAS PROPERLY BEEN INSTRUCTED.** Parents, if your child cannot attend, please call Father to make other arrangements. THANK YOU!

➔➔SERVER PRACTICE◀◀: There will be a server practice on Saturday 3 January, at 10:30 am SHARP and will be followed by a lunch of pizza and drinks.

NEW

LAST SUNDAY'S COLLECTION:

- 1 Weekly collection: **\$3,508.00** (includes a generous year-end contribution of \$2,000.00, and another of \$600.00)

MISCELLANEOUS: \$850.00

- 2 Adult Christmas Dinner reservations (parish will get half of this money); also sale of Calendars: **\$635.00**
- 3 Trip to St. Rita Church (17 December)(net): **\$215.00**

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY (22 December) (Net): \$505.00

Thanks to your generosity, these collections last week totaled **\$4863.00**.

CHRISTMAS COLLECTIONS: \$2608.00

- 1 Midnight Liturgy (Mass): \$1417.00

2 Christmas Day: \$1191.00

GRAND TOTAL, 17 DECEMBER THROUGH 25 DECEMBER: \$7471.00. THANK YOU!

➔PLEASE NOTE AND PLEASE HELP!◀
END-OF-YEAR DONATION (TAX CREDITS)

In consultation with our Parish Stewardship Council (PSC) we are trying to liquidate as many of our outstanding bills as possible before the end of the year without dipping into our savings. These include some very large regular bills such as: monthly rent; gasoline for parish travel; Gas & Electric (remember, we have to heat and light two buildings: church and rectory); other utilities; medical insurance; Father's salary and table; many other bills. If we could get a number of you to make large donations that could be tax write-offs, towards alleviating these **REGULAR FIXED COSTS**, it would help a lot. In addition, if you make your checks by the end of the year you can claim it as deductions for 2008. Wouldn't this be a good 2008 gift towards maintaining your parish community? **CAN YOU HELP?**

1 JANUARY IS A HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION: As we noted for the Feast Day on 8 December, Thursday, 1 January, is not merely New Year's Day. It is the Feasts of the Naming of Jesus and of Sts. Basil and Gregory. All Catholics are **REQUIRED** to attend Liturgy sometime on this day, and if you have no valid excuse (and not merely being up late on New Year's Eve) for skipping worship, you must confess this before receiving Communion. Please do your Catholic duty—here, preferably, or if you must, at a Roman Catholic parish, and start the New Year off right with parish prayer. We will pray at 11:30 am on New Year's Day. Suggestion: Go out to brunch as a family, and then attend Liturgy here.

6 JANUARY (THE EPIPHANY/BAPTISM OF THE LORD), HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION TOO: The same **CATHOLIC REQUIREMENT** applies for Holy Days of Obligation. On this day we will serve *zlaabya* and other traditional pastries.

OFFICE CLOSED FROM 12/30/08 to 1/2/09: Please Note: Father will be taking a few days of holiday on these days. No parish business will be conducted, except what is necessary—for example, Divine Liturgy (the Mass) on 1 January and Bulletin preparation. Calls will be returned for emergencies only.

ONGOING CONTACT LIST PROCESSING: About 30% of our outdated parish list has been processed. You can make our job easier by responding by completing the data forms distributed and mailing or bringing them in. Change of contact data (new address, phone numbers, email addresses, etc.) is always appreciated!



CHRISTMAS HELPER THANKS: As we know, this Community has no paid support staff to help with such complex things as preparing for Feasts like Christmas. We depend on the graciousness of volunteers. As we go along, Aboona has been trying to alert you to the improvements being made. In particular, many good people helped to make this Christmas celebration happen, from decorating the church, to the anonymous donation of flowers, the

Christmas Crib, fixing the lights at the front of the Church, our new church sign, and many other things most parishioners will never know. In addition, our thanks go out to the Choir and to the musicians who assisted them, and to our servers and lectors (readers). **THANK YOU TO ALL FOR YOUR BEAUTIFUL HELP.**

ALTAR DESIGN COMPLETION: Have you noticed the beautiful new Cross logo on the face of the altar? It has finally been finished and was set in place just several days before Christmas. We sincerely thank Samir Khalife once again for his generous donation of time and talent to beautify our sanctuary.

PASTORAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS CRITERIA: We are hoping to hold elections for our Parish Advisory Pastoral Council (PAPC) soon. A committee has been set up to work the proper process. Would you like to serve? We need you if you:

- 1) 1) are 21 or older (we want young people to serve too)
- 2) 2) Attend worship here regularly
- 3) 3) Contribute appropriately in some way (money, time, skills)
- 4) 4) Are a **TEAM PLAYER** with **CREATIVE IDEAS**



CATHOLIC BIBLE STUDY: St. Vincent de Paul Parish, 4843 Mile Stretch Drive, Holiday, 34690 will offer a class on the GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW, on Sundays from 4 January through 1 March (except Super Bowl Sunday 2/2) for 8 weeks, in their Family Life Center, from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm. Sessions will start promptly and end promptly. All teens, young adults and seniors are welcome. No previous experience with Scripture Study is needed, and it's free of charge! For details, please call (727) 938-1974.

Next Week's Scripture Commentary for the FINDING OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE



Today's Gospel story from Luke is the end of what New Testament scholars call the

“Infancy Narratives” (Birth and Childhood Stories) of Jesus. Here we see Jesus in a place, the Temple in Jerusalem, which was so important to the people of his Jewish heritage; a place that will, of course, be the scene of the Passion stories 18 years later in Jesus’ young life. In a sense, we are to see here a preview, as it were, of Jesus’ journey through his marvelous life to his blessed martyrdom and even more blessed Resurrection. This is the overall context.

However, more specifically, the story has to do with the question of the revelation of who the real Father of Jesus is and our bidding farewell to the Blessed St Joseph. Consider this. When Joseph and Mary return to the Temple to find their “lost” Child, they question Jesus, as any worried parent might: “Son, why have you done this to us?” They were worried sick.

Jesus’ reply to them almost appears disrespectful: “Didn’t you two realize that I must be in my Father’s house?” What and where is the house of the “Father” of Jesus? Isn’t it in Nazareth? But that is the point: Joseph is only the legal father of Jesus: **GOD IS THE TRUE FATHER OF JESUS**. So, in this story Luke is painting us a picture in which Jesus reveals the truth that Joseph and Mary truly already know: The origin of Jesus is divine.

From this point on in the Gospels, we no longer see St. Joseph. He disappears. His good and gentle earthly work is done. Now, the real “Father” becomes the focus of Jesus’ work: He has come to earth to glorify “Our Father in Heaven.”

