



Around Our Diocese

Issue #111

The Diocese of Northern Indiana

January 2010

*A Passion for the Gospel of Jesus Christ
A Willingness to do Whatever it Takes*

*A Heart for the Lost
A Commitment to One Another*

A Letter from the Bishop

Dear brothers and sisters,

This Advent I've been re-reading C. S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*, for the first time in more than forty years. I first read the book in 1966, shortly after my Christian conversion, and Lewis helped me to puzzle through the implications of my encounter with Christ: who Jesus is, what he does for us, and how we're to respond. Re-reading it after so many decades, I found myself amazed by its relevance, and by the powerful way that Lewis prepares us to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Early in the book, for example, Lewis describes our planet as enshrouded in darkness, dominated by the forces of evil, the devil himself. And then he says:

Enemy-occupied territory – that is what the world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage. When you go to church you are really listening-in to the secret wireless from our friends: that is why the enemy is so anxious to prevent us from going.

The "landing in disguise" that Lewis describes is Christmas. God himself slipped into human history – as a human being: born in obscurity, almost unnoticed (though a few, like the shepherds and the Magi, caught glimmers of meaning), a pawn in the geopolitical maneuvering of the Roman Empire. "The word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). When we look at the helpless baby in the manger, shivering in the cold, we are seeing the King of the universe, newly arrived on planet earth.

Veiled in flesh the God-head see;
hail the incarnate Deity.
Pleased as man with us to dwell;
Jesus, our Emmanuel!
- Hymn 87

Lewis goes on to remind us of Jesus' claim to be God, echoed in words such as these: "The Father and I are one. . . . Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (John 10:30; 14:8).

I am here trying to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God.

Christmas brings us to our knees in the presence of the One who claims our allegiance and our obedience. The rightful king, as Lewis describes him, has not only come. He calls. He invites us to open our hearts to him and to follow where he leads. Christmas, in other words, leads to discipleship. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, may we celebrate his birth in our hearts and the transformation of our lives.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,
be born in us today.

- Hymn 78

Yours in Christ,

+**Ed**

New Ministry

St. Andrew's, Valparaiso has called the Rev. Roger A. Bower as its next rector. On January 3rd, Fr. Roger will begin his ministry there. Please welcome him, his wife, Barbara, and their family to our diocese.

Wheaton Choir to Perform in Plymouth

As a part of its Sesquicentennial Celebration, St. Thomas, Plymouth invites all in the diocese to a concert by the Wheaton College Concert Choir on Sunday, January 24th at 6:00 PM (EST).

The choir is under the direction of Dr. Paul Wiens. For nearly three decades, the choir has performed according to their motto taken from J. S. Bach: "Music's only purpose should be for the glory of God and the recreation of the human spirit!" In accordance with this motto, the Concert Choir's tradition has been skillful performance of the highest quality repertoire through disciplined, rigorous rehearsal and commitment to the choir's artistic and spiritual goals.

The concert coincides with the week of Prayer for Christian Unity and is being offered as a gift of thanksgiving to the community of Plymouth by the parish. For more details, please call (574) 936-2735.

Seminar in South Bend

The Good Samaritan Counseling Center in South Bend is offering a complimentary seminar at 12:00 PM (EST) on January 28th entitled, "Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times". This seminar shares its title with a recent book by the Rev. Peter Steinke, an ELCA pastor, whose work in this field is internationally known. This seminar will be led by the Rev. Jeff Hawkins, the center's Director of Clergy and Congregational Care. Bring your own sack lunch. Drinks and dessert will be provided. For more information, please call (574) 277-0274.

Website Updates & Other Internet News

Updates to the diocesan website for the coming year are underway and will be in place beginning in January. Also, Facebook users may wish to check-out the Northern Indiana group hosted by the Rev. Dolores Wiens of St. Barnabas-in-the-Dunes, Gary.

Congregational Development

In February, a new cycle of training by the Congregational Development Institute will begin. If you are interested in joining, please contact the Rev. Canon SuzeAnne Silla in the diocesan office.

Bishop & Diocesan Calendar for January 2010

January 1, 2010

12:05 PM (EST) Holy Eucharist at the Cathedral

January 3, 2010

Visitation to St. James, Goshen

January 4, 2010

Diocesan Office re-opens after holidays

January 6, 2010

7:00 pm (EST) Celebration of a New Ministry for the Rev. Daniel S. Repp at the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Elkhart

January 10, 2010

Visitation to St. Stephen's, Hobart

January 12, 2010

12:00 PM (EST) Deans' Meeting

January 15, 2010

12:05 PM (EST) Holy Eucharist at the Cathedral

January 16, 2010

10:00 AM (EST) Commission on Ministry

January 17, 2010

Visitation to Holy Family, Angola

January 18, 2010

Office closed

January 18-21, 2010

Visitation to Seminarians at Sewanee & Duke

January 24, 2010

Visitation to St. George's, Berne

January 24, 2010

6:00 PM (EST) Wheaton College Concert Choir performs at St. Thomas, Plymouth

January 25-27, 2010

Province V Bishops & Chancellors Meeting

January 31, 2010

Visitation to Blessed Sacrament, Placentia, CA
(Delegated Episcopal Oversight)

Around Our Diocese is published monthly. Please send stories, articles, and images by the 15th of each month to:

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The editor reserves the right to edit all articles. Please visit www.ednin.org for regular updates and more news from around our diocese.