

DECEMBER 2008

# THE TWIN SPIRES

VOLUME II NO. 4

CATHEDRAL OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST, SAVANNAH GA



# Advent

## O come, O come, Emmanuel

The lyrics of this popular Advent hymn echo a prophetic theme. The title comes from the well known Isaiah 7:14: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Immanuel is Hebrew for "God with us." The season of Advent that begins the liturgical year, consists of four Sundays starting with the Sunday closest to November 30th. The word "advent" is derived from the Latin *ad-ventus*, which means "coming" or "arrival." In the Roman Empire, this word referred to the arrival of a person of dignity and great power — a king, emperor, or even one of the gods. For Christians, Advent is the season of hope. Every year this basic spiritual attitude is reawakened in the hearts of the faithful who, while they prepare to celebrate the great Feast of Christ the Savior's Birth, revive the expectation of his glorious second coming at the end of time.

While the rest of secular society is already caught up in the frantic rush of shopping, decorations and parties, the Church takes pause during Advent to contemplate the wonder of God's undeserved mercy and love in Jesus Christ. Christians approach the Advent season much as expectant parents approach the months before a child is born. There are feelings of exhilaration, uneasiness and longing as the day of arrival approaches. Just as parents do everything they can to get ready and

put things into good order, God's people make ready both at home and at church by preparing their hearts for the coming of our Lord and Savior.

It is the time when the church patiently looks forward for the coming of Jesus Christ, and the faithful are admonished to:

prepare themselves worthily to celebrate the anniversary of the Lord's coming into the world as the incarnate God of love,

make their souls fitting abodes for the Redeemer coming in Holy Communion and through grace, and

make themselves ready for His final coming as judge, at death and at the end of the world.

Advent gives us a vision of our lives as Christians and shows us the possibilities of life. We might say that Advent is the season in which Christians must rekindle in their hearts the hope that they will be able, with God's help, to renew the world. Advent is our time to become more involved, more caught up in the meaning and the possibilities of life as a Christian community. Thus we are preparing not only for Christmas but also for Christ's Second Coming. This means that when he comes again, we will be awake and watchful. He will not find us asleep.

*Rejoice! Rejoice!*

*Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.*



## Cathedral Heritage Ball A Big Success

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Cathedral Heritage Ball to benefit the Cathedral Endowment Fund was held on Saturday, November 22, 2008 at the Savannah DeSoto Hilton. The theme of this year's ball was "Preserving Our Heritage".

The Mission of the Cathedral Heritage Ball Committee is to develop means to fund the Cathedral Endowment Fund, which preserves the architectural soundness, integrity and beauty of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist as a symbol of our faith for future generations. The committee has a single goal, to preserve the Mother Church in Savannah, the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist.

Since its inception, the monetary goal of the annual ball has been to raise a principal of \$1 million for the Cathedral Endowment Fund with only the interest being used to keep the Mother Church of the diocese in good repair. Co-Chairman Wanda Doyle expressed her appreciation to all who supported the Cathedral by attending the ball. "Your support will guarantee future generations the opportunity to visit Savannah's most magnificent historical landmark. It's our Mother Church of this diocese and that's very important."

The black tie party started with cocktails, a silent auction and a 50/50 auction. The attendees enjoyed a full course dinner followed by dancing until midnight to the music of the Swingtime Orchestra. The highlight of the evening was the Reverse Raffle for a Grand Prize of \$5000 and five \$1000 prizes as well as such major items as an exclusive dinner for eight with Bishop Boland, a week of free lodging in beautiful Kinsale, Ireland, and a sunset riverboat cruise. Gold sponsors included: Mathews Seafood, Dan J. Sheehan Co., St. Joseph's/Candler and M. J. Hogan & Co. Walter B. Murphy III was the honorary chairman of this year's ball.

Bishop Boland expressed his appreciation to the Committee, sponsors and attendees. "The Cathedral is a place of beauty and prayer, a place we can be very proud of, a special treasure that is visited by over 500 people every day of the year. The Endowment Fund has grown each year and now stands at over \$909,258 before the proceeds from this year's ball. Based on the anticipated proceeds from this year's ball, we should exceed the \$1,000,000 goal established for the Endowment," according to Boland.

Next year's Ball will be held on November 21, 2009. Mark your calendars now!



THE CATHEDRAL HERITAGE BALL, NOVEMBER 22, 2008

## Personal Hygiene Packets for the Social Apostolate

During the summer of 2006, the Cathedral Christian Services Committee (the “Out-reach” Committee) made a promise to the Social Apostolate of Savannah that we would try to provide, on a regular basis, the personal hygiene supplies they need when they offer bathing and grooming to their clients. By doing this we enable the Apostolate to use more of their funds to feed, clothe, and give other aid to those in need.

The Cathedral community has been meeting the supply needs of the Christian Services Committee by graciously emptying their closets of small, hotel- sized soaps, shampoos, deodorants, and toothpastes, toothbrushes, washcloths, and razors. We have also noticed purchases of washcloths from outlet stores and toothbrushes, razors, and small deodorants from Dollar General and Dollar Tree. Members of the Committee have donated bulk purchases of some of the supplies and one of our parishioners works for a hotel that donates soaps and shampoos.

Thank you for your past support of this project. Your help is greatly appreciated by the Committee, the Social Apostolate, and those who come to the Apostolate for a helping hand. We need you to continue asking family and friends to save these items for our project and give them to you to bring to the Cathedral for us. We will have another drive early in the new year.

Your help is truly appreciated by both the Committee and the Social Apostolate.

“Whatsoever you do for the least of my brothers, that you do unto me.”

## “Pray for Our Priests” magnets now available

*The Mission of the Serra Club is to foster and affirm vocations to the ministerial priesthood and vowed religious life. We recently expressed appreciation to our priests and all of us say prayers for them regularly, but here is a more tangible way to proclaim our support for these dedicated servants of the Lord.*

The Serra Club of Boston has created a number of “Pray for Our Priests” magnets for all those who wish to show support for priests. These distinctive black ribbons (with the white collar) are magnetized and can be affixed to your car to publicly show support for Catholic priests and encourage others to pray for them. Each magnet measures 8” x 3.5”



To purchase a “Pray for Our Priests” magnet, mail \$3.50 to:

**Serra Boston**

36 Virginia Lane  
Newburyport, MA 01950  
attn: Loretta Gallagher

Please e-mail [information@serraboston.org](mailto:information@serraboston.org) if you would like any more information or you can contact Peter Paolucci @ 912-231-1868 or via e-mail at [petepalu@aol.com](mailto:petepalu@aol.com).

**Please Pray for Our Priests!**

# WHY IS ST. PAUL SO IMPORTANT? BY FR. DOUGLAS CLARK

The theological impact of St. Paul's writings has had a most important and significant effect on Christianity. Paul claimed to be a disciple but asserted that he received the Gospel not from man, but by "the revelation of Jesus Christ." "I have been sent by the Lord to preach the Gospel of the Lord." His influence on Christian thinking has been more significant than any other New Testament author and he had a major impact on the main strands of Christian thought.

St. Paul was born "Saul of Tarsus", which in Hebrew is *Ša'ul HaTarsi*, around 8 AD at Tarsus in Cilicia, an ancient region of SE Asia Minor, in present day Turkey. His father was a Roman citizen, as was his family, which was attached to Pharisaic traditions and observances. Saul was a Rabbi, who earned his living by making tents, and prior to his conversion was a violent persecutor of the early Christians.

Together with St. Peter and St. James, St. Paul was one of the most notable of early Christian missionaries. Unlike the Twelve Apostles, there is no indication that Paul ever met Jesus before the latter's crucifixion, as Paul wrote, "I did not know him in the flesh." According to the Acts of the Apostles, his conversion took place when he experienced a vision of the resurrected Jesus as he was traveling the road to Damascus. Blinded by a heavenly light, he fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. When Saul got up from the ground he was blind so his companions led him into Damascus, where, after three days, a disciple named Ananias came to him and said,



"Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, the scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again; he was baptized, and afterwards, became a most zealous Christian and one of the church's foremost evangelizers, first among Jews, then among the Gentiles.

There are fourteen letters the New Testament traditionally attributed to St. Paul. Though in some cases the authorship is disputed, most scholars contend that one of these, the Letter to the Hebrews, was probably not written by St. Paul, since the Greek is too good. These epistles, circulated within the early Christian community, are full expositions of what Christians should believe and how they should live. They are the earliest-written books of the New Testament, were prominent in the first New Testament canon and were eventually included in the orthodox Christian canon of Scripture.

The remaining thirteen letters can be divided into three general categories. The three Pastoral Epistles, so called because they are addressed to

individuals, (first and second Timothy, and Titus) rather than communities, and give advice to disciples about caring for their flocks. The Captivity Letters (Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians) written while the St. Paul was in prison at the time of the writing. And the remaining seven letters (Romans, first and second Corinthians, Galatians, first and second Thessalonians, and Philemon) are addressed to single Christian communities or, in the case of Philemon, to a single individual, but ultimately they are aimed at a wider audience.

In Paul's earliest writing, a fragment in 1 Corinthians (15:3-8), written about AD 41, captures the core Gospel message and sets out the proof of Christ's divinity in, saying "*Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures: and that he was buried and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures:*" and that "*he was seen by Cephas; and after that by the eleven. Then he was seen by more than five hundred brethren* at once: of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep. After that, *he was seen by James, then by all the apostles. And last of all, he was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time.* In these few lines, Paul sets out the fundamental truth of our faith, that *Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose from the dead as it was written and was seen by many, to prove it was true.*

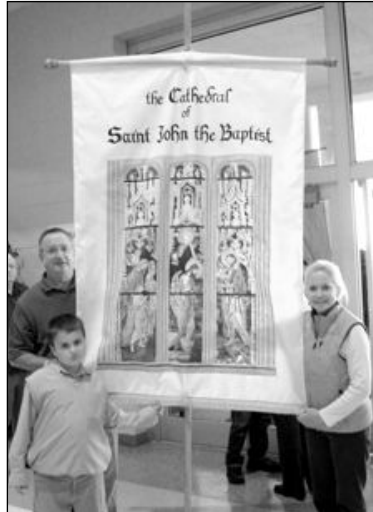
In his Epistles, St. Paul shows himself to be a profound religious thinker and he has had an enduring formative influence in the development of Christianity. The centuries only make his greatness of mind and spirit more apparent. During this Pauline Year, we should all try to read St. Paul's letters to gain a fuller appreciation of his contributions to our Catholic faith.

The One in Spirit diocesan gathering held in Perry Georgia on November 1, 2008, focusing on the Faith and the Family, was a very uplifting and inspirational celebration.

Nearly 4,000 Catholics came together to reaffirm their faith and hear some outstanding speakers. The meeting began with a joyful procession of 100 banners from diocesan parishes, small missions, schools and other Catholic organizations. Bill Wade, along with his grandson Richard Guerard and Mary Lawrence Kennickell led the parade carrying the beautiful Cathedral banner which was painted by Mary Lawrence. Bishop Boland welcomed the diocesan family, praised the cultural diversity of the gathering and thanked all who came as well as those who worked so hard to plan the meeting.

Cardinal Oscar Andres Rodriguez Maradiaga, the Archbishop of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, addressed the opening session and discussed the family in light of the Word of God. He urged each of us to go back to reading the Bible. "Our family is a fine place for the word of God to enter into our hearts. The family is one of the most important treasures in the tradition and heritage of our Christian people. And the word of God is spread by the parents who are the first teachers of the faith!" St Paul said, "We are the faithful of God. Be courageous and transmit the great fire of faith."

Cardinal Rodriguez continued, "Families have a mission to buildup the family of the church. God is



a family... three divine persons. The family is a gift." According to Pope John Paul II, "The future of humanity passes by way of the family." After the Cardinal's talk, Bill Wade spoke with him about his cousin, Fr. Patricio Wade, who has been a Jesuit missionary in Honduras for over 25 years.

Bishop Richard J. Malone of Portland Maine, who spoke on the "Splendor of the Catholic Faith", opened his presentation by challenging the attendees with the question, "Why are we Catholic?" After giving us a few moments to discuss this with the person seated next to us, he pointed out that we have a vast array of Catholic paraphernalia, the raw power of Catholic imagery to help us stay true to our faith. We have many wonderful examples of faith in the Communion of Saints. As someone said, "I like the company I keep, the Saints, a small select circle of heavenly friends." They will show us the way to salvation.

And God gave the supreme gift of himself, the body of Jesus, shared in the resurrection, and truly present in the Blessed Sacrament to sustain us. But sadly Bishop Malone reported that in a recent survey regarding Christ's real presence in the Holy Eucharist, only 57% of practicing Catholics said they believed Jesus was actually present in the Eucharist while almost 43% said the bread and wine were merely symbols. Flannery O'Connor, noted

Savannah writer, when discussing this mystery with fellow author Mary McCarthy, who held the latter opinion, commented, "If the bread and wine are only symbols, to hell with it."

In conclusion he said that Faith Foundation is a lifelong experience. We need to evangelize by living like Jesus and "Go forth to make disciples of all nations."

Top: Bill Wade, Grandson Richard Guerard and Mary Lawrence Kennickell. Middle: Cardinal Rodriguez and Bill Wade. Bottom left: Bishop Malone. Bottom right: Bishop Boland

# CATHEDRAL PARISH HONORS OUR PRIESTS

How often do we say thank you to our priests who do so much for us? That is why we have a special day set aside to honor the Priesthood in the United States. On October 26, 2008, we celebrated Priesthood Sunday to honor Christ as Priest and the men who were called to be his priests here on earth.

Once again this year, here at the Cathedral we marked the occasion by honoring our priests in special ways.

Parishioners gifted the priests with "Spiritual Bouquets" consisting of notes of appreciation and family prayer offerings. Bulletin notices announced the program and pulpit

talks encouraged participation by all. Note cards and envelopes, were provided by the Serra Club of Savannah, and boxes marked for each priest were available in the vestibule of the Cathedral for several Sundays for parishioners to deposit the notes.

A Priest Appreciation Supper, put on by the CCW, honored Bishop Boland, Msgr. O'Neill and Fr. Clark; however Fr. Firmin was unable to attend. The supper was well attended by over 80 parishioners who personally said "Thank you Father." Once again this year, Priesthood Sunday was truly a celebration of love and appreciation!



# A Pilgrimage of Faith

by Connie and Philip Keating

September 30th marked the start of our pilgrimage as new members of the Roaming Catholics Travel Club, the brain-child of Fr. Mike Ingram of Holy Spirit parish, Macon. The pilgrims were a diverse group numbering almost fifty, including three priests and four nuns. We were, mainly, a fairly elderly group with enough ailments to keep Our Lady busy at both Fatima and Lourdes.

The first leg of our trip was via Air France to Paris; then after a brief layover in Paris, enlivened by a bomb scare, it was on to Portugal. Our hotel was on the outskirts of Lisbon which is both an ancient and beautiful city. Situated at the mouth of the Tagus, it was the point of departure for many of the great Portuguese mariners. The entire Iberian Peninsula was conquered and ruled by the Moors for 400 years from the mid-8th Century. This has left a profound effect upon the psyche, gene pool and architecture of the Peninsula.

Our next destination was Fatima to the north. Between May and October 1917, the Blessed Virgin appeared to three young children and exhorted them to pray for world peace. We toured the precinct, attended Mass and participated in the evening Candlelight Rosary Procession. There were, perhaps, 2000 pilgrims from all four corners of the earth, an impressive manifestation of the universality of the Catholic Church.

Next morning we were off to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in the northwest corner of Spain. We stopped en route at the ancient university town of Coimbra, where St. Isabel, Portugal's patron, is buried. Then on to Santiago de Compostela, a place of pilgrimage for over a thousand years. My brother



has been making his way across France each summer for the past five years, following the medieval pilgrimage route, the Way of St. James (*Camino de Santiago*), to Santiago de Compostela, where St. James who is said to have spread the gospel to Spain, is buried. He is depicted in three manifestations in the magnificent cathedral: as apostle, as pilgrim and as "slayer of the Moors." From Santiago to Madrid was a two day journey into the geographical center of Spain with an overnight stop in the ancient university town of Salamanca, with its magnificent cathedral. The next day, still en route to Madrid, we visited the walled city of Avila

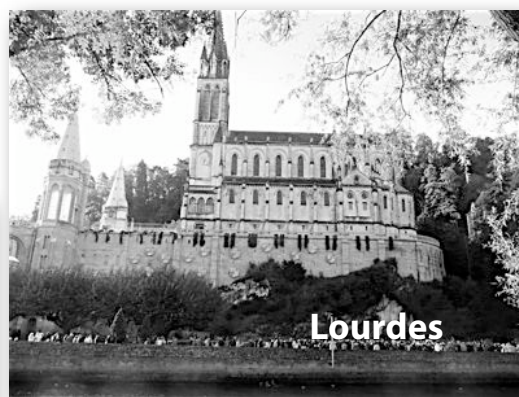
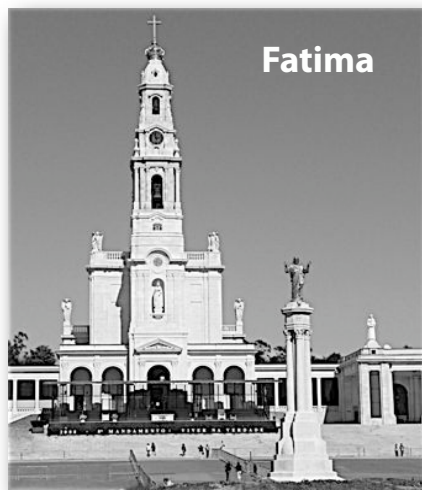
and attended Mass at the convent of St. Teresa, the founder of the Carmelite order.

Madrid is a very impressive, modern and sophisticated city of three million. The high spots of our stay there were a visit to the Prado,

with Degas, Velazquez, and El Greco and an evening of Flamenco, a sort of Spanish Riverdance.

From Madrid to Lourdes was a full days drive, skirting the Pyrennes round their northern end at San Sebastian. We arrived in Lourdes in time to participate in the awe inspiring Candlelight Procession. This year, 2008, is the 150th anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady to Bernadette Soubirous. Despite the lateness of the season, there were 30,000 pilgrims in the precinct. In Lourdes, we attended Mass, visited the Grotto, witnessed the Blessing of the Sick and participated in the procession of the Blessed Sacrament. It was a week particularly set aside for French pilgrims and all of the dioceses in France were there in force but we added our "Hail Marys" to their Je Vous Salue Maries.

Finally on October 10, the pilgrimage over, we were bussed to Toulouse, flew to Paris, on to Atlanta and then home to Savannah. We were exhausted but happy to be home. It had been a memorable and fulfilling trip.



# Coming Home for the Holidays

by Terry Simmons

Not many people these days live close to their childhood homes. I am extremely blessed that my childhood home is only 48 miles from my current home on Hilton Head Island. For the first time in about six years, I will be spending the Christmas holiday in Savannah. The family will be gathering there this year to share the joy of the season together again in our childhood home, where Mother still lives. So many memories of past Christmas celebrations will keep us reminiscing, and most likely laughing, for days.

There won't be room for all of us under one roof, since as families do, ours has expanded, and the little house on Ossabaw Road simply can't accommodate all of us overnight. But fortunately my aunt and uncle own an apartment in downtown Savannah, just a square, a historic cemetery and a short walk away from the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. Now, there is a blessing... not having to find a parking space at the Cathedral on Christmas Eve!

After being away for several years, the most anticipated event on my schedule will be attending midnight Mass at the Cathedral. This year, my best friend will be joining me. I have long told him of the glorious experience of being in the Cathedral late on Christmas Eve, waiting for the Mass to begin...the music, the crowds, the

candlelight, and the decorations. There is simply nothing like that experience that I can think of which would make me feel most truly at home.

Of course, it goes without mentioning that I will be very much looking forward to seeing what Brother Robert has come up with this year in the area of decorations and the magnificent Nativity scene. The smell of fresh greenery and incense, along with the candlelight and music, will be the highlight of my church going year. After being at the Cathedral for midnight Mass, you truly feel like you have been to church. So, what a blessing this Christmas season will be for me and my family. I hope and pray that as many people as possible will have a similar joyous experience and no matter where the holiday is spent, they will have a sense of feeling at home, safe and loved by those around them.

For me, being home is equal to being loved. God the Father showed his love to all of us by sending His own son to be born in a manger in Bethlehem and then to a home in Nazareth where He was surrounded with loving family. I receive that blessing each time I am given the chance to return home. Maybe home is not a house for everyone necessarily, but no matter where, it feels like home if love is there.



Scott Winchel's Diaconate Ordination is scheduled for December 26, the Feast of St. Stephen, one of the first deacons as well as the first martyr in the Christian church, at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Savannah. Scott was previously scheduled to be ordained to the diaconate on August 9th at St. Mary on the Hill Church in Augusta, Georgia. However, the Lord had something else in mind. Scott took some extra time in his discernment and did a retreat in preparation for the diaconate. He is thankful for our prayers and support especially this year, during his time of discernment and journey toward the priesthood.

**Please plan to join Scott on December 26, 2008 for his special day.**



## CATHEDRAL PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council is a representative body, which seeks to assess the spiritual and temporal needs of the parish and encourage participation of all members in the spiritual and apostolic life of the parish. It also exercises a vital role in the decision making process of the parish in open and free dialogue with the priests and representatives of the parish community to reach a consensus.

The Council membership consists of ex-officio, elected and appointed members, along with elected representatives of particular parish organizations. The Rector, Pastoral Assistant and Deacon are ex-officio, non voting members of the council. Six lay representatives are elected by the parish at large to serve two-year terms, and two additional members are appointed by the Rector to serve two-year terms. Each year in May, three members are elected and one member is appointed. The Parish Council Committees are: Religious Education, Worship, Parish Life, Christian Service, Property, and Finance.

Membership of the Parish Council for 2008-2009 includes:

Continuing Members: Charlie Ganem, Mary Clark Rehtiene,, Tommy Taylor, and Sharon Wallace.

Terms Expiring May 22, 2009: Bill Wade, Carol Letcher,

Mary Lawrence Kennickell, and Bob Tomhave.

Non Voting Members: Monica Kerr representing the Cathedral Council of Catholic Women, Kathy Dziuban representing the Cathedral Pro-Life Committee, and Karen Gelow representing the Cathedral Heritage Ball Committee.

Ex-Officio - Non Voting: Rev. William O. O'Neill, Bro. Robert Sokolowski and Deacon Dewain E. Smith

Bill Wade is the Chairman and the Vice chairman is Charlie Ganem

### Committee assignments:

Religious Ed: Tommy Taylor	Worship: Charlie Ganem
Parish Life: Sharon Wallace	Christian Service: Bill Wade
Finance: Bob Tomhave	Property: Mary Clark Rehtiene

The council meets the last Monday of the month at 7:00 PM and parishioners are invited to attend.

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Msgr. William O. O'Neill, *Publisher*  
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