

# Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.



## Parish Life! from OSV



News and resources for your parish

January 2007

Welcome to Parish Life from Our Sunday Visitor! Each month you'll find timely content, insightful information and inspiration delivered right to your mailbox. We'd love to hear from you as well, so please e-mail us with questions or topics you would like to see discussed in future editions to [yyoung@osv.com](mailto:yyoung@osv.com).

### Getting Ready for Lent by Lorene Hanley Duquin

Lent is coming! As a parish staff member, Lent can range from energizing to exhausting. Here are some helpful ideas on how to make this Lent more meaningful for you and the other members of your parish staff.

Make your Lenten resolutions early. Don't wait until Ash Wednesday to decide what you need to do or need to give up to strengthen your spiritual life.

It's sometimes difficult to give yourself totally to God in the parish where you work. There are too many distractions and you may find yourself in a "work" mind-set rather than a "spiritual" mind-set. Try attending Mass or a Lenten activity in another parish as a simple participant — not as someone in charge. This new view from a different pew may give you a broader perspective and a spiritual boost.

Look at the ways your staff members pray together before and after meals, before and after meetings, or throughout the day. Lent is a perfect time to start new prayer traditions or to give your existing prayer experiences a boost. Pick a spiritual book that the whole staff can read and discuss this year during Lent. The new insights and faith sharing experience will strengthen the spiritual foundation of the staff.

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- We've Got Your Numbers! When Shouldn't You Tithe? from OSV Newsweekly
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### This Day in Catholic History: February 7

***The Pope approves a national patroness of the United States, 1847*** Every country has a patron saint. At the Sixth Council of Baltimore, the 23 American bishops in attendance chose the Blessed Virgin Mary,

Suggest that your staff participate in a joint sacrificial experience for Lent. One possibility might be to pool money each week so that you can provide Easter dinner or new clothing for a needy family in your parish.

Lent is a good time to smooth things over in a joint spirit of personal sacrifice and reconciliation, if there are tensions or personality clashes on your staff. Gently try to encourage forgiveness and fresh beginnings.

Pace yourself. There are a lot of pressures on you and the other staff members during Lent. Remember that an important part of authentic spirituality is maintaining a good balance between physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs.

[Visit OSV's web section: Lent -- The Road to Easter](#)

### **The Catholic Answer: How does the Catholic Church view Islam?**

The attitude of the Church toward Islam was stated clearly by the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (Nostra Aetate, No. 3; see also Lumen Gentium, No. 16) when it taught: "The Church has a high regard for the Muslims. They worship God, who is one, living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has also spoken to men. They strive to submit themselves without reserve to the hidden decrees of God."

The council declared in the same document the lamentable history of Christian-Muslim relations: "Over the centuries many quarrels and dissensions have arisen between Christians and Muslims. The sacred council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding." These often painful historical quarrels and dissensions remain very much a part of the modern consciousness of Muslims and many Christians and color their reaction to events even today. — *From the pamphlet "Islam: A Catholic Perspective" (Our Sunday Visitor)*

[More from The Catholic Answer](#)

under her title the Immaculate Conception, as the patroness of the United States. Blessed Pope Pius IX's approval came seven years before his proclamation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

For more information see **America's Church: The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception**, by Gregory W. Tucker (Our Sunday Visitor, 2000)

— *From Thomas J. Craughwell's **America's Great (and not so great) Catholic Moments: A Perpetual Calendar***

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## We've Got Your Numbers!

More than a million people were received into the Catholic Church in the United States in 2005?! There were 943,264 infant baptisms, 80,817 adult baptisms and 73,684 already baptized received into full communion with the Church.

And if there seem to be a lot of sacramental celebrations in your parish, you're in good company. Throughout the United States in 2005, 832,643 first Communions, 630,448 confirmations, 212,456 marriages and 438 ordinations were celebrated!

For more statistics and more information about the infrastructure and outreach of the Church in the United States, see **The Catholic Almanac** (Our Sunday Visitor).

[Selected material from The Catholic Almanac is available online.](#)

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## When Shouldn't You Tithe? from OSV Newsweekly

This article from the Jan. 21 issue of Our Sunday Visitor newspaper poses a question that could have a large impact on parish giving. Is it moral for a Catholic who is bankrupt to continue to tithe? Catholic theologians say a lot of it depends on how the parishioner accumulated the debt.

[Simply register or login or read this article!](#)

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## Definition: Stewardship

In a recent online survey, 72 percent of responding parishes defined themselves as a stewardship parish. While working with parishes nationwide, we've found a variety of definitions for the word "stewardship." The Catholic Encyclopedia defines stewardship as, "a biblically-based concept which implores Christians to use what they have — money, time, talent and service — in such a way that it honors God as the Creator of all things visible and invisible and contributes in a conscious way to the building of God's kingdom on earth."

Since all resources are ultimately belong to our Creator, how might your parish use them more, or better, in the new year to bring people closer to Christ? To help your parish renew commitment to stewardship, review all parish activities for the past year and make a list of the different ways the parish consciously used its gifts of money, time, talent and service in order to build God's kingdom. Give thanks for all that has been accomplished and for all those people who were involved! And then make plans to start at least one new stewardship project this year.

[For more information about stewardship, visit us on the web.](#)

## Upcoming Events

East Coast Conference

February 16-17, 2007 in  
Washington, D.C.

## Let us know what you think!

We hope you've enjoyed your first parish enewsletter! Let us know what you think--we appreciate your comments, questions, suggestions, and requests! Email [yyoung@osv.com](mailto:yyoung@osv.com).

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