



ST. OLAF CATHOLIC CHURCH ■ MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA ■ 612-332-7471 ■ WWW.SAINTOLAF.ORG

‘Tis the Gift to be Simple by Fr. Patrick Kennedy

My friends,

“Simple Gifts” is a song written and composed in 1848 by Joseph Brackett who was an elder in the Shaker Community. At first glance, and upon hearing the title of the song, one might be led to believe this is a song about things. Yet, on hearing the music and pondering the words, nothing could be further from the truth. The song is about a simplicity of life. It is about a freedom gained from being unencumbered by things weighing us down. It is about being in the right place emotionally and spiritually. When we find ourselves there, this place offers us the enjoyment of delight and love.

This weekend, we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. It is the story of the Magi’s trek from the East. Unbeknown to them, something, whatever it was, stirred their hearts to begin the long caravan to Bethlehem. They brought with them the treasures of their livelihood. Packed on the camels’ backs were the things of their trade. The food they carried was native to the place they lived. They moved through the desert, guided by the sky. They watched, they discussed, and then made their way forward. The prominence of one bright star was nature’s GPS allowing them to stay on track and not get lost.

Then, when they were far off, they saw in the distance, the Holy City, Jerusalem. As they approached, people watched them come. Curiosity seekers wondered what they were

doing. Truth be told, so did they. Not sure of where to go, they stopped. They had stature and prestige. It gained them an audience with King Herod. They asked him where they might find the newborn King of the Jews.

Leaving Herod perplexed, they searched in earnest. The bright star fixed itself over the place where they found Jesus. They dismounted and unpacked the luxurious gifts they brought for this new King. They approached and entered the place where he was. They did him homage and laid the gifts at his feet. They must have been surprised. The house they went to was unadorned. Nothing fancy. In fact, if this baby was indeed a king in the making, you would not have known it from the lack of royal trappings usually afforded one so regal.

Nobody knows what the conversations were about between the Magi and Mary, Joseph, and their respective families attending to them. One can only imagine both the Magi and Jesus’ family were incredulous at what they were witnessing. They were gracious, but probably uncomfortable. Deep down, they had to wonder what was going on.

When the visit finally ended, and the Magi began their journey back to the place they came from, Scripture reports they went home

by another route. Intuitively, they did not go back to Herod and report what they saw. But, no doubt, they talked all the way back about the budding feelings they experienced while they were in the presence of the Christ Child. In those conversations, they must have articulated the new sense of freedom they found. These wise people were wise because they deeply pondered things and experiences.

What the Christ Child must have given this caravan of seekers in return for the beautiful treasures laid at his feet was a profound wisdom not consciously discerned in their lives up until then. The power of his innocence and the absence of anything tangible indicating his regal status, confounded them at first. But then, it moved them deeply. Without uttering a word, this little child expressed the same sentiments expressed by Joseph Brackett 1800 years later.

“‘Tis the gift to be simple, ‘tis the gift to be free, ‘tis the gift to come down where we ought to be, and when we find ourselves in the place just right, ‘Twill be in the valley of love and delight.”

For the Magi, this reality was their Epiphany. One can only believe, when the Magi realized what the child gave them in return, they were never the same again.





EVENTS AND OTHER INFORMATION

Additional Information at www.saintolaf.org/events



THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE

Additional Information at www.saintolaf.org

GIVING THANKS FOR GIVING TREE GIFTS!

A warm thank you to all who participated in the Giving Tree Gift requests this season in support of St. Olaf Samaritan Ministry. The kindness and generosity shown by parish members, visitors, families, and workplace groups is greatly appreciated. Samaritan Ministry volunteers and staff begin each day of service in prayer and reflection. We always remember our donors and benefactors in a particular way because we could not carry out this mission without you. May the light of Christ shared in this sacred season be carried throughout the whole year. Many thanks!

BOOK CLUB

Book Club meets on January 6 at 2:30pm. *Waiting for Christ: Meditations for Advent and Christmas*; Based on writings of Blessed John Henry Newman, edited by Christopher O. Blum (Augustine Institute)

DISCUSSIONS THAT ENCOUNTER, JANUARY 10, 6:30PM

Participants will be viewing segments of the award winning PBS special "Race: The Power of an Illusion" and participating in small group discussions about each of the viewed segments. 6:30pm dinner, 6:45pm program begins. There is no charge. All are welcome!

DURUFLÉ REQUIEM – POPUP CHOIR, JANUARY 12, 7:30PM

Timothy Peter, director; William Chouinard, organist; singers from the Twin Cities' top performance choirs. Tickets \$5-20 at the door. Info at www.facebook.com/PopUpChoir

BREAKFAST TOGETHER IN FLEMING

We look forward to greeting you at our pancake breakfast Sunday, January 13. Come to Fleming Hall after the 8:00 and 10:00 Masses and before the Noon Mass. Volunteers will be setting up, flipping cakes, and spreading cheer. All are welcome – parishioners, family, friends. Participate as a guest and/or a volunteer. Thank you! No charge – free will offering. Fran Rusciano Murnane, FRMurnane@SaintOlaf.org or 612-767-7635.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

Did you forget? Think it's too late? Definitely not! There is still time to pledge a dollar amount on a regular basis – weekly, monthly, quarterly or to make an annual, one-time gift to St. Olaf. Go to SaintOlaf.org, and click on "Give" at the top of the page. Follow directions on the left for "First Time?" or "Quick Give." Or please call, and I'll be happy to help you. Thank you! Fran Rusciano Murnane, FRMurnane@SaintOlaf.org or 612-767-7635.

ANNUAL BUDGET AS OF WEEK #25

CONTRIBUTIONS	ACTUAL	BUDGET	DIFFERENCE
Week #25	57,562	26,000	31,562
YTD THROUGH #25	611,080	686,000	-\$74,920

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 2019

9:00AM CENTERING PRAYER
 10:00AM RCIA
 12:00PM MASS/CONFESSIONS
 2:00PM AFRICAN CHOIR REHEARSAL
 4:00PM MASS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 6, EPIPHANY

6:00AM MASS
 8:00AM MASS
 9:00AM NURSERY OPENS
 9:30AM SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION
 10:00AM MASS
 12:00PM MASS
 2:30PM BOOK CLUB
 4:00PM MASS

MONDAY, JANUARY 7

7:00AM MASS/CONFESSIONS
 7:30AM SAMARITAN MINISTRY HOSPITALITY
 12:00PM MASS
 12:00PM AA

TUESDAY, JANUARY 8

7:00AM MASS/CONFESSIONS
 12:00PM MASS/CONFESSIONS
 6:30PM CHOIR REHEARSAL (SUN 4:00)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9

7:00AM MASS/CONFESSIONS
 7:00AM AA
 12:00PM MASS
 12:00PM AA
 6:30PM PARISH CHOIR REHEARSAL
 7:30PM ALANON

THURSDAY, JANUARY 10

7:00AM MASS/CONFESSIONS
 7:00AM SAMARITAN MINISTRY HOSPITALITY
 12:00PM MASS/CONFESSIONS
 6:30PM DISCUSSIONS THAT ENCOUNTER

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11

OFFICE CLOSED ON FRIDAYS

7:00AM MASS/CONFESSIONS
 12:00PM MASS
 12:30PM ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

SATURDAY, JANUARY 12

9:00AM CENTERING PRAYER
 10:00AM RCIA
 12:00PM MASS/CONFESSIONS
 2:00PM AFRICAN CHOIR REHEARSAL
 4:00PM MASS
 7:30PM POPUP CHOIR CONCERT