

EUCHARIST INTENTIONS

Among the intentions for those who gather for the Eucharist this week will be:

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2006

7:00AM HEALING FOR JOHN BOREK – Mother
 9:15AM EILEEN BAREIS – Cathy & John Wise

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2006

7:00AM ANNA HUDSON – Perry & Jackie Stolt
 9:15AM FUNERAL MASS FOR ANITA PAYCOFF

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2006

9:15AM ROCCO PELLEGRINO – Mom & Dad

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2006

9:15AM JOSEPH CANNITO – Family

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2006

9:15AM CARMELA IULIANELLO –
 Di & Robert O'Hara

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2006

2:00PM WEDDING:
Renee DePrez & Christopher Carey

5:00PM LEO FOX & ADRIENNE GRISHABER –
 Mary Lohmaier

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2006

7:30AM AGNES RYAN –
 Stan & Joanne Douglas
 9:00AM RICK TANTALO – Wife, Catherine
 10:30AM JAMES KELLER –
 Daughter, Joyce Hollander

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**This week the Tabernacle Light
 will burn in loving memory of
 Joseph Cannito**

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PRESENTING THE GIFTS AT MASS

If you are attending a Mass being celebrated for a loved one, please tell the ushers before Mass so that you may carry the gifts at the offertory. You and your family may also offer to do this at other times when you are present. Your assistance in this matter will be greatly appreciated by the ushers.

Pastor's Perspective

Many of you asked about the story I shared in Sunday's homily. I am happy to reprint it here. Hope it touches you as it did me.

There is a story about a father and a daughter at an airport saying good-bye as she left. She said, "Daddy, our life together has been more than enough. Your love is all I ever needed. I wish you enough".

They kissed good-bye and he walked over toward the window where a stranger was seated, and said, "Did you ever say good-bye to someone knowing it would be forever?"

"Forgive me for asking", said the stranger, "but why is this a forever good-bye?"

"I am old and she lives much too far away. I have challenges ahead and the reality is, her next trip back will be for my funeral."

"When you were saying good-bye I heard you say, 'I wish you enough'. May I ask what that means?"

He began to smile. "That's a wish that's been handed down for generations; my parents used to say it to everyone. When we said 'I wish you enough', we were wanting the other person to have a life filled with enough good things to sustain them."

I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright. I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun more. I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive. I wish you enough pain so the smallest joys in life appear much bigger. I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting. I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess. I wish you enough 'Hellos' to get you through the final 'Good-bye'.

Peace,

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**In respect for the prayerful celebration
 of the Eucharist, please turn off all cell phones
 and pagers. Thank you.**

PLANS FOR THE WEEK SEPTEMBER 17, 2006

SUNDAY

8:30-11:00am Breakfast Club – Gym

MONDAY

4:30-5:30pm Religious Education Classes

6:30-7:30pm Religious Education Classes

TUESDAY

9:00-11:00am MOMS Group – Rm 3

1:00pm Recovery – Rm 3

4:30-5:30pm Religious Education Classes

6:00pm St. Rita Society Pot Luck Dinner – Gym

7:00pm Social Action Ministry – Parish Office

WEDNESDAY

7:00-8:30pm Finance Committee – Parish Office

7:30pm Contemporary Choir Rehearsal – Rm 3

7:30pm Caregivers Support Group – Rm 1

THURSDAY

7:00-8:30pm Homebound Ministers training - Rm 1

7:00-8:30pm Choir Rehearsal – Rm 3

FRIDAY

2:00-3:00pm Jesus Rosary – Church

We welcome the newest member of our parish family who was baptized this weekend:

Aidan Jeffrey Jacobs

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BIBLE READINGS:

17 Sun **24th Sunday in Ordinary Time** Is 50:4-9a

Ps 116:1-6,8-9 Jas 2:14-18 Mt 8:27-35

18 Mon 1 Cor 11:17-26,33 Ps 40:7-10,17 Lk 7:1-

10

19 Tue 1 Cor 12:12-14,27-31a Ps 100:1-5 Lk

7:11-17

20 Wed **Sts. Andrew Kim Taegon, Paul Chong**

Hasang and Companions 1 Cor 12:31-

13:13 Ps 33:2-5,12,22 Lk 7:31-35

21 Thu **St. Matthew** Eph 4:1-7,11-13 Ps 19:2-5

Mt 9:9-13

22 Fri 1 Cor 15:12-20 Ps 17:1,6-8,15 Lk 8:1-3

23 Sat **St. Pio of Pietrelcina** 1 Cor 15:35-37,42-

49 Ps 56:10-14 Lk 8:4-15

24 Sun **25th Sunday in Ordinary Time** Wis

2:12,17-20 Ps 54:3-8 Jas 3:16-4:3 Mk

9:30-37

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ALTAR SERVERS SCHEDULED

Next Weekend ~ September 23 & 24

Saturday, 5:00pm:

Neil LaVigne, Nick Wynne, Chris Gilbert

Sunday, 7:30am:

Michael Hohl, Mike Hansen, Sam Dauria

Sunday, 9:00am:

Chris D'Ambrose, Nick D'Ambrose, Juliana Cruz

Sunday, 10:30am:

Mike Macikowski, Chris Macikowski, Phil DeMarco

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SACRISTAN:

Week of September 17

Shirl Mintz

LINENS:

Week of September 24

Thelma Benwitz

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BREAKFAST CLUB NEWS

Join us in the parish center every Sunday morning from 8:30-11:00am. We offer full service with a complete breakfast menu and a special of the day!

Next Week's Special: Egg and Sausage Bake

served with served with fresh fruit, warm buttered toast and a free bottomless cup of coffee for a donation of \$3.95.

PARISH SUPPORT

Last Week	Weekly Goal	Variance
\$13,896	\$14,330	- \$434

Year to Date	Year to Date Goal	Variance
\$139,648	\$157,630	- \$17,982

(Our fiscal year is 7/1/06 - 6/30/07)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

* Monthly Mortgage Payment - \$5,836

Current Parish Center Mortgage Balance -\$453,130

BUDGET NOTE:

As of July 1, 2006 our new financial goal is \$14,330 per week. This figure reflects a \$560 increase over last year. Year-to-date we are at a negative figure of \$17,548. Even after staff cuts, we have incurred increases in utilities, school subsidy and home owners insurance (just to name a few). It will be enormously helpful if you can make up any weekends you were away over the summer. You might also consider making your contributions automatically by joining the ACT Program (automatic contribution transfer). This makes for better budget planning. Thank you for your continued support.

Stepping Stones to Stewardship

“For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.”

2 Corinthians

8:12

Stewardship Live It!

SACRAMENT NEWS

SACRAMENTAL REGISTRATION 2006-2007

Registration for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation is underway now. Registration forms are available in the back of church, parish office and Religious Education Office. Sacramental preparation is a parish-based process which means it does not take place in the Catholic School or the Religious Education Program. Once you have registered, you will receive a letter letting you know when the parent meeting will take place. Children who are seven years old are eligible for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation.

FIRST RECONCILIATION PARENT MEETINGS!

There will be parent meetings for the start of the First Reconciliation Sacrament Program on:

**Wednesday, September 27
and Thursday, September 28
in Church at 7:30pm.**

The September 27 meeting is designed for parents who are going through this process for the first time. The September 28 meeting is geared to the parents repeating this sacrament. You only need to attend one meeting. If this is your third child going through this process, you may bypass the meetings if you choose and pick up the materials at the Religious Education Office located in school after Monday, October 2.

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Save the Date ~ Our Parish Health Ministry is offering a presentation on *“Dealing with the Challenges and Moods of Teenage Years”* for adults and teens, to be held at St. Paul’s Church on Sunday, October 1 from 4:00-6:00pm and presented by Dr. Barbara Gracious, psychologist who works with adolescents.

I want to take this moment to thank you all for what you’ve done to help make our parish a vibrant faith community. Your presence and support are most appreciated.

Fall is a busy time for families: kids returning to school, to homework, to sports, to scouts, to music lessons...and for adults, all this and more. I love the renewed tempo of fall – not because of its busyness, but because the signs of faith in action are more evident all around. With religious formation classes beginning and numerous parish committees swinging back into action, we again become a very active Church, joyfully carrying out Christ’s mission.

With all of this renewed activity, I am reminded of the ongoing support we receive from Bishop Clark and his team at the diocesan offices that help make much of this possible. They train our catechists and fix our computers. They advise us on the maintenance of our buildings and train our ministers. They help us with our insurance, our pensions, and our personnel policies. They provide Catholic school tuition assistance and youth retreats. They take care of the poor, the troubled, the battered and the addicted through 10 regional Catholic Charities agencies. They support CYO sports leagues as well as jail, hospital and college chaplains. And the list goes on and on.

Soon you and I will be receiving a letter from Bishop Clark asking for our support of this year’s Catholic Ministries Appeal (CMA). We must be generous. The sacrificial gifts of Roman Catholics like you and me throughout the Diocese provide about half of the diocesan budget – which in turn supports ministries and programs like the ones mentioned above. Soon, the Bishop will call on us to reflect on the many gifts we have received from God and how we ought to return a portion back to God by responding generously to this year’s appeal. I know that you will prayerfully consider his request.

Gratefully,
Fr. Chuck

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BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS

Our Parish Health Ministry Committee will be offering free Blood Pressure Screenings after all Masses next weekend in Room 1.

CALLING ALL KIND HEARTS
Visitation to the Sick and Shut-Ins

If you have felt the call to visit the sick or the shut-ins of our parish community, we invite you to a three-part training, open to parishioners of Holy Spirit, Holy Trinity, St. Paul and St. Rita parishes. The sessions are as follows:

Thursday, September 28: Introduction to Pastoral Visitation, facilitated by Rose Leisenring (St. Rita) and Marianne Antczak (St. Paul).

Thursday, October 5: How to Visit Those in Hospitals, Adult Care Facilities and Homes, facilitated by Rosemary Gumina (Holy Trinity) and Linda Flannery (St. Paul)

Thursday, October 12: Creating a Safe Environment, led by Drew Desmarais (St. Rita) required only for those who have not previously attended CASE training or had the simple, but mandatory background check required by the Diocese of Rochester.

Each of these three sessions are offered in the morning from 9:30 to 11:00am at Holy Trinity and again in the evening from 7:00-8:30pm at St. Rita Church. Choose which time is best for you.

To register, or for more information, please call Rose Leisenring (671-1100), Rosemary Gumina (872-5304), Linda Flannery (265-9727), or Marianne Antczak (671-2100 x 24).

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ST. RITA SOCIETY NEWS!

All women of the parish are invited to a
POT LUCK SUPPER AND AUCTION
Tuesday, September 19
at 6:00pm in the Parish Center

Please bring a dish to pass:

A-F Appetizer G-L Salad
M-T Casseroles U-Z Dessert

Also bring your own place setting and 1 or 2 wrapped items to be auctioned. This is a wonderful opportunity to be with old friends and to meet new ones. Hope to see many women there! Need a ride? Call Carol at 671-7832.

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MOMS GROUP

Moms, Are You Looking for
a Little Peace, Quiet, and Sharing?

We meet each Tuesday when school is in session from 9:00 to 11:00am in Room 3. Childcare is provided. For more information contact Eileen at 671-5735 or Pat at 671-5373.

YOUTH GROUP FUNDRAISERS

- **2007 Entertainment Books – ON SALE NOW!**
Available for immediate use and filled with great discounts on all types of restaurants (formal & informal) and entertainment. Cost is \$25.00.
- **Niagara Chocolate Candy Bars** are \$1.00 each. Flavors are Chocolate Almond, Peanut Butter, Caramel, and Milk Chocolate.

The above may be purchased at the parish office or by calling Mary Jo at 671-1100 x18. All proceeds from fundraisers will be used toward youth programs and retreats. Your generosity and prayers for our youth help support them on their faith journey and they are most appreciative.

From the desk of Mary Jo DiDia, Youth Minister
671-1100 ext. 18 ~ mdidia@dor.org

If you are in grades 6-12 and interested in getting together with other youth who share the same faith and beliefs as you - join us for our Youth Group gatherings. Check out our website at www.saintrita.org for more information.

Sunday, September 24 4:30-6:00pm
Jr. High Youth Group gathering

Anyone in grades 6-8 are most welcome to attend. Meet at the Youth Center.

Sunday, September 24 6:30-8:00pm
High School Youth Group gathering

Anyone in grades 9-12 are most welcome to attend. Meet at the Youth Center.

Save the Date: On Sunday, October 1 from 4:00 - 6:00pm at St. Paul's Church, our Parish Health Ministry is offering a presentation for teens and adults on "Dealing with the Challenges and Moods of Teenage Years", presented by Dr. Barbara Gracious a psychologist who works with adolescents.

Anyone in grades 9-12 are most welcome to attend. Meet at the Youth Center.

MAKE A FRIEND! BE A FRIEND!! BRING A FRIEND TO JESUS!!!

Any Girl Scout wishing to complete the **Catholic Spirit Alive religious award** (for older Cadette or Seniors) are welcome to call Helena Kessler at 381-5561. For more information regarding the Roman Catholic Girl Scout programs please call Helena or by e-mail to hcmkessler@yahoo.com.

12th ANNUAL ROAST BEEF DINNER
Sponsored by the St. Rita Society
Saturday, September 30
Serving begins at 4:30pm
in the Parish Center

Enjoy a delicious meal that will include roast beef, mashed potatoes, gravy, vegetables, cabbage salad, bread, homemade dessert and beverage. The cost is \$8.00 per person and children under 5 are FREE. All food is cooked and served with a smile. Tickets are available at the Parish Office. Proceeds benefit a variety of Society projects and causes. Join us for a great meal!

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~ ANNUAL MEN'S RETREAT ~
7:00pm Friday, September 22 to
Noon on Sunday, September 24

At the Notre Dame Retreat House overlooking Canandaigua Lake. **The theme of this weekend is "Do Not Be Afraid; I Give You Peace"**. This is a great weekend to build on your relationship with our Lord. Talks will be given on Faith and the role it plays in our Church, Suffering, and Lives. Join the many men from many parishes who find this weekend as a rebuilding of the spirit.

For information or reservations call Peter Charleton at 248-5436 or Jim Lajoie at 248-9543. The suggested donation for this weekend retreat is \$120 per person for a single room or \$100 per person for a double room- both with a shared bath. If you cannot pay the suggested donation, pay whatever you can afford. We look forward to hearing from you. Please feel free to call Peter or Jim for additional information. All are welcome.

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HOPE House ~ A Ministry of Holy Trinity
Annual Garage Sale

HOPE will be having a garage sale on **September 21 and 22 from 10:00am to 5:00pm** and **September 23 from 9:00am to Noon**. On sale will be furniture, household items, children and baby items, plus much more. Follow the signs to the Peace and Unity Room where you may find treasures for a great price benefiting a worthy cause. ****Please no ski or exercise equipment or clothes****

HOPE will begin accepting donations on **Sunday, September 17 from 2:00 to 4:00pm** and **continue Monday and Tuesday 10:00am to 2:00pm**. Volunteers willing to help set up, work the days of the sale, and clean up should call **HOPE House at 265-6694**.

CAREGIVERS
SUPPORT GROUP

will meet on

Wednesday, September 20
at 7:30pm in Room 1

This gathering is for anyone who is presently caring for a loved one at home, in the hospital or nursing home. More people are finding themselves taking care of sick relatives . . . a little time out will help you! Come for support, prayer and reassurance.

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Catholic Courier ~ Bishop Clark has mandated the mailing of the Catholic Courier to every Catholic household throughout the Diocese of Rochester. If you receive bi-monthly envelopes you will see a green envelope marked "Catholic Courier Offering". Using this envelope helps us to meet our yearly Courier bill of over \$18,000. Thank you.

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When Your Adult Child Does Not Attend Mass!

How do parents handle a situation when their out-of-town children come home for the holidays, but choose not to join them at Mass? Why do our adult children opt not to attend Mass? Come and share in an honest and heartfelt discussion of these questions on **Tuesday, September 26 at 7:00pm at St. Cecilia's parish** (Culver Road). This discussion will be led by Dan Hull from St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry.

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Do You Knit? ~ Each year before Christmas we have our annual Mitten Sunday. We collect mittens, hats and scarves for those less fortunate. If you knit and would like to get a head start on some items it would be greatly appreciated. Any questions please call Marie at 671-6726.

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SPECIAL PRESENTATION ~ Thursday, September 21 at 7:00pm, Dr. Nancy Hawkins, IHM will be presenting "The Saints, Our Companions on the Journey" at St. Paul's Parish on Hard Rd.

This presentation explores the significant role the saints play in our lives as Catholics. Dr. Hawkins will look at what it means to be a saint, the wonderful doctrine of the communion of saints and various cultural celebrations of life after death. Everyone is welcome.

Magnificat ~ A Ministry to Catholic Women

Invites you to breakfast on September 30 from 9:30am to Noon at the RIT Inn and Conference Center. Guest Speaker will be Pat Smith. She has been instrumental in setting up three homes for those suffering substance abuse and she has recovered from a severe eating disorder. Come and hear the rest of her story! For more information please call Kathy at 436-11284

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ACT Now ~ Automatic Contribution Transfer

Sign-up cards are available in the back of Church to make your financial contributions to Saint Rita Church by automatic withdrawal. For information please call the parish office at 671-1100.

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All are invited!!!!

Come with your questions and concerns!

The Role of the Marriage Tribunal

Presented by the head of the Rochester Diocesan Marriage Tribunal ~ Mr. Emmett Walsh

Wednesday, September 27 from 8:30-9:30am at Christ the King School (Room 137). Part of the Coffee & Catholicism program that runs after the 8:00am Mass on Wednesdays at Christ the King.

What does the Marriage Tribunal do? Who serves on the Marriage Tribunal? Discuss misconceptions regarding the annulment process!

MILES OF SMILES FOR ST. RITA'S!

St. Rita School is putting its best foot forward at the 20th Annual Marathon on Saturday, September 30, 8 a.m. to noon at North Ponds Park in Webster. The Marathon is a spirit-filled event, serving as both a back-to-school "FUN-raiser" for St. Rita students, as well as an important FUND-raiser for the school. In fact, this is the school's primary fundraiser of the year. Students gather pledges in advance from family, friends, and neighbors, and then walk around the pond (up to 6 times – that's six miles!), followed by an early morning picnic at the park. All told, the students *are expected to walk close to 900 miles* at this year's Marathon!

Funds raised from the Marathon help to enhance the curriculum, pay for field trips and social events, and purchase technology and playground equipment for the school. Each year, the school also donates a portion of the amount raised to a worthwhile charity. This year's charity will be Daystar, a program run by the Sisters of St. Joseph, dedicated to protecting our community's most vulnerable infants from birth to three years by providing foster care, child care, respite care, advocacy, and family support in a safe and stimulating home environment.

How can you help?? Would you like to support a student? Sponsor Sr. Katherine Ann? Donate a prize for a top fundraiser? Please call Sister Katherine Ann at 671-3132 if you are interested.

Many thanks,
St. Rita School students

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MUSIC OPPORTUNITIES AT ST. RITA

Please consider joining a music organization at St. Rita's this year. Music is a wonderful way to contribute to the life of the church, as well as providing inspiration, enjoyment, and fellowship to those who participate.

THE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC GROUP

For: All who enjoy singing for the Lord! You don't have to read music to be a member of this group. We use instruments (guitar, keyboard, percussion, bass and melody instruments) so instrumentalists and singers are also welcome. We would love to see more young people join this group.

Provides music for the 5:00pm Saturday Liturgies. Rehearsals are Wednesday evenings twice monthly from 7:00-8:30pm.

Director: Chrisanne Yule (381-2721)

THE ADULT CHOIR

For: Adults with some choral ensemble experience, and a desire to learn and sing SATB (mixed voice) literature from all music styles – renaissance to contemporary.

Provides music for the 10:30am Sunday Liturgies and sings for special services and events. Rehearsals are on Thursday evenings from 7:00-8:30pm in Room 3.

Director: Chrisanne Yule (381-2721)

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

For: All children in grades 2-6 and those who have reading skills are most welcome!

We will again have 2 separate weekly rehearsals to accommodate different after school times. Pick the one that is best for you; Tuesdays from 3:45-4:30 or Wednesdays from 2:30-3:15. Stay tuned for first rehearsal dates.

Provides music once a month at the 9:00am Sunday Liturgies and at special seasonal services.

Director: Chrisanne Yule (381-2721)

THE "LITE" CHOIR

For: Women who love to sing but want less of a time commitment and "lighter" music than the regular choir. We are only committed to 1 evening rehearsal and one Sunday morning liturgy per month. Join us!

Provides music for the 9:00am Liturgy on one Sunday each month. Rehearsals are held on one Wednesday per month.

Director: Chrisanne Yule (381-2721)

**HISTORY OF THE SACRAMENTS – PART 1 By
William J Bausch**

The word "Sacrament" in ancient times referred to the old Roman custom of making an oath of allegiance. A soldier made his "sacrament" an avowal of allegiance to pledge his service to the empire. The word "Sacrament" in scripture translates into the word "mystery." The meaning refers to God's plan and activity, revealed in Christ for our salvation. It is a wide ranging word embracing all the ways that God has and does reach out to us in the world and particularly that world as revealed in Christ. As the church grew and developed in the first four centuries, many different interpretations of Christ came to the forefront, including the heresy of the Adoptionists. The key source of conflict centered on the nature of Jesus Christ. The Adoptionists said he was divine in nature and not human. There were others such as the Arians who said he was human and not divine. The Council of Nicea ended the discussion with a clear definition of Christ as being divine. This discussion was important because as sacramental theology progressed, the divine presence of God experienced through the risen Christ became the foundation of our sacramental system.

The African theologian Tertullian (d.c. 220) was the first to use the Latin term sacramentum in a Christian sense. He applied it by analogy to baptism as the initiation rite by which the Christian pledged his life to Christ. Then, by extension, it was applied to cover a great many rites and ceremonies common to the Church's liturgy. From the beginning, theologians saw a close correspondence between the outward rites and the inward, spiritual effect. In addition, they actually caused what they signified, i.e., insofar as God Himself used them to produce their spiritual effects. They were not human inventions, but revelations of God.

There was no doctrinal clarity brought to sacramental theology until the Medieval Period. In the twelfth century, Peter Lombard, whose Book of Sentences served as the standard textbook for many centuries, enumerated seven sacraments designated them as causes of grace instead of signs of grace. His theology found its way into the official documents of the Church. Thomas Aquinas, a Doctor of the Church, studied Lombard and taught sacraments from three different perspectives. The first category was Sacramentum et res, which meant that the person's interior character was changed. For example, the supernatural power one received from the sacrament enabled the recipient of baptism to conform his or her life to Christ. The second category was the Sacramentum, which was the outward ceremony. The third category was res tantum, which identified the spiritual benefit or grace flowing from the ritual action. As time went on, the focus turned on the phrase, "Ex Opere Operato", which meant that the grace of the sacrament was conferred automatically. This left the impression that the sacraments were magical. This impression helped to take away the symbolic power of the sacraments, leaving them as simple cause and effect.

**CUSTOMS AND RITUALS – SEPTEMBER, 2006
FROM CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA**

Alpha and Omega ~ The first (alpha) and last (omega) letters of the Greek alphabet are used in a monogram symbolically as the beginning and end of all things in God, the creator. In Revelation 22:13 the Evangelist John applies this title to Christ (cf Isaiah 41:4): "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End!" These two letters are found as symbols in works of art, such as banners or stained glass, and historically they are a traditional sign of Christ in his divinity and are so used today in our churches. In its context the sign also means the resurrection of all who persevere in grace into the finality of peace and eternal joy in the Lord.

Banns ~ The public proclamation of an intended marriage is given on three successive Sundays or holy days of obligation during Mass or at a service where the attendance is large. The banns are for the purpose of helping to determine if any impediments exist to the proposed marriage and should be published by the pastor of the two parties or where they have legal residence or a domicile. If the marriage does not take place in six months, the banns must be repeated. The question of banns is governed by canon law, which permits exceptions and dispensations according to the decision of the ordinary.

Catacombs ~ These were subterranean cemeteries that served a double purpose: that of burial for Christians who had died or been martyred, and a place to which Christians could resort to conduct devotions, administer sacraments, and celebrate the Eucharist in secrecy. There are some 25 catacombs that have been excavated, the majority located along the Via Appia and the Via Ardeatina, all within two and a half miles of the old Roman walls of Aurelius. The catacombs were dug into hill areas by burrowing into a midstratum called tufa granolare, a soft stone. The practice was to excavate a stairway and then open a narrow gallery. Off this gallery there were loculi cut into the wall, capable of holding from one to three bodies. These were sealed with a slab of stone when the bodies were placed within. Also leading from the gallery there were a number of cubicula, chambers or vaults. Along the walls, there were occasionally cut into the wall above a single tomb an arcosolium, a vault above a tomb. In these vaults it was customary to celebrate the mystery of the Eucharist, the Mass, using the top of the tomb for an altar surface. When a gallery became full, it was the practice to cut lateral galleries and continue on with each. In the fourth century, after the end of the persecutions, the catacombs became places of pilgrimage and have remained so until the present. The catacombs, however, are most notable because of the testimony of art and practice that they supply to modern ages. Chief of these testimonies are: that of the sacramental religion observed by these early Christians and the purity of the spiritual truth that is manifest.