

MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY

Sunday, December 26, 2021

The Holy Family of
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

8:00 AM
10:00 AM

Gathering: Hark, The Herald Angels Sing BB 91
Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 98)

*All the ends of the earth have seen the
power of God. (2x)*

Preparation Away In A Manger BB 90
Mass Parts Heritage Mass
(Begins at # 891 in 2022 Missalette)
Communion O Little Town of Bethlehem BB 87
Christ, Be Our Light BB 598
Recessional: Angels We Have Heard On High BB 82

✠ PARISH TITHING ✠

Our Parish needs to take in \$9700.00 each week in order to make ends meet. This amount represents an adjusted budget offertory of \$8500.00 per week plus the combination of budgeted Property and Fuel second collections (\$4800.00 per month divided into 4 weeks or \$1200.00 weekly). Your weekly contribution helps ensure that the Parish remains a vibrant community. Please remember to submit your weekly gift even if you will be away. Consider signing up for electronic giving (see below). Especially in these trying times, your Parish depends on your responsible stewardship and support!

December 8, 2021

Immaculate Conception \$ 990.00

DECEMBER 12, 2021

Offertory \$8,528.81
Fuel \$1,669.15

FOR OUR RECORDS

We need your help to keep our records current. If there are any births, deaths, marriages, moves, or address changes in your family, please notify the Parish Office at 603-382-8324 or by email at jtremlay@stluketheevangelist.net. If you're new to our parish, registration forms are available at the entrances of both churches. Registration forms can also be found on our website at <http://stlukenh.org>.



Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish uses **Parish Giving** to provide parishioners with an opportunity to make your offertory and other contributions through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Parish Giving is a simple, secure, and convenient way to manage your stewardship without weekly envelopes and without worries. This program is available to parishioners at no cost. Log on to the St. Luke the Evangelist Parish website at <http://stlukenh.org>, click on the Parish Giving logo, and follow the easy registration instructions.

RESTROOM BREAKS DURING MASS

Attention Parents

Please be sure to accompany your young children when they need to use the restroom during Mass. This is for their safety and your peace of mind!



Out of respect for the Lord and in consideration of fellow parishioners, please remember to silence or turn off your cell phones during Mass. Thank you!

UPCOMING SECOND & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

December 19	Retired Religious Fund
December 25	Christmas
December 26	No Second Collection
January 1	Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
January 9	Property Management

Suggested Weekly Contribution Based on Income

Annual Income	5% Commitment annually/ weekly	3% Commitment annually/ weekly
\$100,000	\$5,000/\$100	\$3,000/\$60
\$75,000	\$3,750/\$75	\$2,250/\$45
\$60,000	\$3,000/\$60	\$1,800/\$36
\$50,000	\$2,500/\$50	\$1,500/\$30
\$40,000	\$2,000/\$40	\$1,200/\$24
\$30,000	\$1,500/\$30	\$900/\$18
\$25,000	\$1,250/\$25	\$750/\$15
\$15,000	\$750/\$15	\$450/\$9

Suggested Weekly Contribution Based on a Percentage Increase

Your Current Offertory Contribution	25% Increase	30% Increase	40% Increase
\$75.00	\$93.75	\$97.50	\$105.00
\$50.00	\$62.50	\$65.00	\$70.00
\$40.00	\$50.00	\$52.00	\$56.00
\$35.00	\$43.75	\$45.50	\$49.00
\$30.00	\$37.50	\$39.00	\$42.00
\$25.00	\$31.25	\$32.50	\$35.00
\$20.00	\$25.00	\$26.00	\$28.00
\$15.00	\$18.75	\$19.50	\$21.00
\$10.00	\$12.50	\$13.00	\$14.00
\$5.00	\$6.25	\$6.50	\$7.00

✠ PARISH NEWS ✠

COVID UPDATE

By mandate of the Bishop of Manchester on June 6, all restrictions and procedures put in place during the pandemic are no longer in effect.

The choice to wear or to not wear a mask is left up to individuals and their discretion. Those persons who have not been vaccinated should be especially mindful of their own safety and the safety of others, especially those vulnerable to communicable disease.

A hand sanitizer station will remain at the main entrances of the church doors for the time being for parishioners' convenience.

Anyone who has been recently exposed to COVID 19 or any other communicable disease should not attend public services of any kind. Those sick should remain at home until such time as they are healthy.

Liturgy online or on TV...

Boston Catholic Television catholic.tv
Sunday Mass from Notre Dame
catholic.tv/masses/notre-dame-mass
Salt & Light TV saltandlighttv.org
Eternal Word Television ewtn.com

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

On January 1, 2022, we will celebrate the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Liturgies are at **4:00 PM on Friday, December 31 in Plaistow** and at **9:00 AM on Saturday, January 1 in Newton**.

GIVING TREES



Thanks to all who took ornaments from the Giving Tree this year. You have helped to make the Christmas season brighter for children of the community and for many people who are struggling to make ends meet. Your generosity is truly appreciated!

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

If you would like an "end of year" financial statement of your contributions to the Parish for 2021, **please call Jackie** at the Parish Office at 603-382-8324. **Financial Statements are issued on a request only basis.**



VIGIL LIGHT

The Vigil Light in front of the Blessed Mother Icon at Mary Mother of the Church will burn in loving memory of **Deceased Knights** by a fellow Knight

The Sanctuary Candle in Holy Angels Church will burn this week in loving memory of **Paul Antkowiak** by his family



SANCTUARY CANDLES

The Sanctuary Candles in both Newton and Plaistow may be offered in memory or honor of a loved one. The suggested offering for each is \$10.00. Please call the Parish Office at 382-8324.

VIGIL LIGHT

The Vigil Light in front of the Blessed Mother Icon in Newton may be offered in memory or honor of a loved one. The suggested offering for each is \$10.00.

PLEASE HELP US!

As you leave church, kindly take your Bulletin with you - or return it to the basket at the entrance of the Church, return your music book and Mass card to their proper place, and pick up after yourself as you leave. Our Ushers are wonderful and diligent, but they should not have to face a Foxboro aftermath as each Mass ends! Thanks for being attentive and respectful! F. Albert.

WHILE AWAY THIS WINTER...

We appreciate all of you who remember to send in your Parish Offertory during the Winter even when on vacation or visiting other parishes. Thank you for remembering that our expenses also continue through the Winter months. We invite others to consider doing the same before or even after you return home.

✠ WEEKLY CALENDAR ✠

Sunday, December 26

6:00 PM Vespers *Newton*

Monday, December 27

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED
NO DAILY MASS

Wednesday, December 29

Holy Angels Church
Open All Day For Prayer

Thursday, December 30

NO ADORATION IN NEWTON

Saturday, January 1

3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation *Plaistow*

Sunday, January 2

10:00 AM Religious Ed – PreK to 8 *Plaistow*

6:00 PM Vespers *Newton*

PRAYER LINE

St. Luke's offers a prayer line as a resource for those seeking prayer assistance. To submit your prayer request please call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 314 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.



Find us on:
facebook®

St. Luke the Evangelist is now on Facebook! Go to www.facebook.com/stlukenh.org/ or **St. Luke the Evangelist Parish – Newton/Plaistow** and give us a Like! Please invite fellow parishioners & friends to do the same.

From the Pastor's Desk



HOLY ANGELS CEMETERY CLOSED

Holy Angels Cemetery in Plaistow is closed from December 1, 2021 until Spring 2022. This decision comes as result of the real dangers of snow and ice in the Cemetery and the costs to Parishioners to inter during the winter months. Please contact the Parish Office with any questions.

✠ MASS INTENTIONS ✠

Saturday, December 25 ~ Nativity of the Lord

Is 52:7-10; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18

9:00 AM People of the Parish
Newton

Sunday, December 26 ~ The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28; 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24; Lk 2:41-52

8:00 AM Joseph A. Krafon by his family
Newton

10:00 AM Jesselyn Driscoll by her family
Plaistow

Monday, December 27 ~ John, Apostle and Evangelist

1 Jn 1:1-4; Jn 20:1a, 2-8

No Mass

Tuesday, December 28 ~ The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

1 Jn 1:5—2:2; Mt 2:13-18

8:00 AM Chuck Angwin by Lisa and Charlie Angwin
Plaistow

Wednesday, December 29 ~ Thomas Becket, Bishop and Martyr

1 Jn 2:3-11; Lk 2:22-35

6:30 PM Patricia Zakiewicz
by Joe and Ann Marie Sheehan
Plaistow

Thursday, December 30 ~ Sixth Day Within The Nativity Of The Lord

1 Jn 2:12-17; Lk 2:36-40

8:00 AM Jack Cotter by Bonnie Lajoie
Newton

Friday, December 31 ~ Sylvester I, Pope

1 Jn 2:18-21; Jn 1:1-18 (Day)

Nm 6:22-27; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21 (Vigil)

4:00 PM People of the Parish
Plaistow

Saturday, January 1 ~ Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Nm 6:22-27; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21 (Day)

Is 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Mt 2:1-12 (Vigil)

9:00 AM Lea Roberts by her husband, Paul
Newton

4:00 PM Lena Dionne (2nd Anniversary) by her family
Plaistow

Sunday, January 2 ~ Epiphany of the Lord

Is 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Mt 2:1-12

8:00 AM Marie Lessard
by Janice and Joseph Bettencourt
Newton

10:00 AM Joseph Fitzpatrick by his family
Plaistow



Mass Times for travel

masstimes.org

"come to me all of you"
— Matthew 11:28

CLOTHING DRIVE

KIMBERLY'S 16th ANNUAL HOLIDAY GIVE AWAY!!!

We are back and better than ever!!! Not to mention the addition of my little princess Rayna (who will be cheering Mommy and Daddy on from the safety of our home)!

This year's clothing drive will be back to our pre-COVID ways. We will be collecting clothing on **January 8th and 9th** at Holy Angels Church (downstairs in the back of the church) from **12:00 to 4:00 PM** each day.

We will be accepting donations for Catie's Closet, Ruth's House, Emmaus House, Epilepsy Foundation, and Wish Project. We are accepting CLEAN clothing of any size, any season, any decade. Any donations of underwear must be new and packaged.

We will also be accepting non-perishable food items for St. Luke's Food Pantry.

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to volunteer, please contact me at: kimberly-andrade@comcast.net.

Thank you so much for your continued support throughout the years! May God continue to bless you all, and I wish you and your families a safe and healthy holiday season!

Kimberly Clenord

MEN OF SAINT JOSEPH

Saint Luke Parish invites interested men to step forward to become leaders in a newly formed Men of Saint Joseph Group meeting here in Newton-Plaistow. If you are interested, please contact Father Albert at fr.albert@stluketheevangelist.net or call the Parish Office.

AMAZONSMILE FOUNDATION

AmazonSmile.com is the same market platform as Amazon.com, but with the added benefit of allowing customers to donate 0.5% of the price of items purchased to a charitable organization. Please register today to start shopping and donating at www.amazonsmile.com. For questions, please call the Parish Office at 603-382-8324. Be sure to choose:

St Luke the Evangelist Parish, Plaistow.

The **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** is the process by which people become members of the Roman Catholic Church. Be a good agent of welcome and evangelization! If you or someone you know is interested in inquiring about becoming a member of the Roman Catholic Church, contact Cathy Smith in the Parish Office.

ADULT CONFIRMATION

Are you an adult who has been Baptized and received Eucharist, but has not celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation? The adult Confirmation process is an opportunity to complete the Sacraments of Initiation. If you would like to prepare for Confirmation, or if you have questions, call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

YOUTH CONFIRMATION

Students in Junior High or High School who have not celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation and would like to prepare to receive the sacrament, contact Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305, or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

We are truly blessed to have times for Adoration of Our Lord in our Parish. This time of prayer and intercession is not only a source of great grace for the individual, but it is a great source of grace for us as a parish family, as well.

We have many who have made the commitment to spend an hour each week with our Eucharistic Lord, **but** we need more people so there will be at least two people at each hour. We are also looking for people who would be able to substitute.

**Newton – Thursday
8:30 AM – 8:30 PM**

If you can commit to one hour a week in Adoration of our Lord, or if you can be a substitute, please contact Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

**The Church in Plaistow is open all day on
Wednesdays for people to stop by and pray
before the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle.**

✠ PARISH DIRECTORY ✠

Parish Office	603-382-8324
Parish Prayer Line	603-382-8324 x 314
St. Vincent de Paul Society	603-382-8324 x 315
St. Luke's Food Pantry	603-819-4949
Preschool	603-382-9783
Presentation of Mary Convent	603-382-2744

Fr. Albert Tremblay	fr.albert@stluketheevangelist.net
Cathy Smith	csmith@stluketheevangelist.net
Joyce Szczapa	jszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net
Jackie Tremblay	jtremblay@stluketheevangelist.net
Val Barczak	mvmbarczak@comcast.net
Parish Council	parishcouncil@stluketheevangelist.net

❖ Community News ❖



ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST FOOD PANTRY

Thank you for your generosity towards the hungry of our area!

Non-perishable food or personal care items are always needed – donations can be dropped off at Church or are welcome at the Parish Office during regular business hours.

Cash donations for food are always welcome – make checks payable to **St. Luke the Evangelist Food Pantry**. All donations to the Food Pantry go toward helping the needy of our communities. **Call the Pantry at 819-4949 for more information.**

Thank you so much for your continued support of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. We've had a busy Autumn, and Winter shows no sign of slowing down our effort to help our neighbors and friends in need.

If you are interested in learning more about this great group of volunteers, contact our Secretary, Jim Edwards, at jimmy69180@hotmail.com or 603-642-5236. Meetings are both live and virtual.

If you seek assistance or need information about the Society, call (603) 382-8324, ext.315.



WINTER WEATHER CLOSINGS

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish Office, Holy Angels Cemetery Office, Saint Luke Food Pantry and the Parish Liturgical schedule complies with the longstanding inclement weather policy of Saint Luke Religious Education Program and Holy Angels Pre-School-Kindergarten: **If the Timberlane and/or Sanborn regional school districts close because of inclement weather, ALL Parish Offices and Parish programs will be closed or suspended. All activities by any Parish or non-Parish groups will be cancelled for that day/evening on both campuses.** In the event of a weather related closing, the scheduled weekday Liturgy will not be held and the intention (if any) will be moved to a conveniently available date.

Sunday (or Saturday evening) liturgies can never be cancelled, but all are advised to use prudence when deciding to travel to Church during winter storms.



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

A Men's AA Step Meeting is being held on Sunday mornings from 7:00 to 8:00 AM at the St. Luke the Evangelist Parish Hall (Holy Angels.) Masks are required. Bring your own coffee. For more information, call Joe at 617-921-9899.

The Knights of Columbus, St. Jude Council wish our brothers and sisters in Christ a Blessed and Holy Christmas.

May you be blessed with
The gladness of the season, which is joy,
The heart of the season, which is love
And with the spirit of the season, which is peace,
And believe in the Love our Lord has for you.



THE KNIGHTS OF
COLUMBUS
ST. JUDE COUNCIL #6617
www.kofc6617.org



CHRISTMAS MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY

4:00 PM – Holy Angels, Plaistow

Gathering:

O Come All Ye Faithful BB 92

Psalm Response:

All the ends of the earth have seen the
power of God. (2x)

Preparation of the Gifts:

It Came Upon The Midnight Clear BB 96

Mass Responses: Heritage Mass

Communion:

Silent Night BB 77

Away In A Manger BB 90

Angels We Have Heard On High BB 82

Recessional:

Joy To The World BB 80

6:30 PM – Mary, Mother of the Church, Newton

Gathering:

O Come, All Ye Faithful BB 92

Psalm Response:

All the ends of the earth have seen
the power of God. (2x)

Preparation of the Gifts:

It Came Upon The Midnight Clear BB 96

Mass Responses: Heritage Mass

Communion:

Silent Night BB 77

Away In A Manger BB 90

Angels We Have Heard On High BB 82

Recessional:

Joy To The World BB 80



9:00 AM – Mary, Mother of the Church, Newton

Gathering:

O Come, All Ye Faithful BB 92

Psalm Response:

All the ends of the earth have seen
the power of God. (2x)

Preparation of the Gifts:

It Came Upon The Midnight Clear BB 96

Mass Responses:

Heritage Mass

Communion:

What Child Is This / Child Of The Poor
BB 93-94

Recessional:

Joy To The World BB 80



JOIN THE CHOIR!

Why not join the Choir? We have lots of fun, work hard, and singing is a great way to worship! You don't have to know how to read music to join – come on down!

If you are interested in joining the Choir, talk to any choir member or call the Parish Office at 603-382-8324.

SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST PARISH

LITURGICAL CALENDAR ADVENT-CHRISTMAS, 2021-22

GIVING TREE GIFTS DUE DECEMBER 11-12 – Advent 3

ADVENT 1
Sunday, November 28 Regular weekend schedule
 6:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer (Newton)
 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Newton)

ADVENT 2
Sunday, December 6 Regular weekend schedule
 6:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer (Newton)
 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Newton)

XMAS MASS SIGN
 UPS TODAY

Wednesday, December 8 Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM
 Patronal Feast of the USA
 Holy Day Liturgy 8:00 AM (Newton)
 Holy Day Liturgy 6:30 PM (Plaistow)

ADVENT 3
Sunday, December 12 Regular weekend schedule
 6:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer (Newton)
 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Newton)

Monday, December 14 **LAST DAY TO RETURN GIVING TREE GIFTS AT PARISH OFFICE**

ADVENT 4
Sunday, December 19 Regular weekend schedule
 6:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer (Newton)
 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Newton)

Thursday, December 23 No Eucharistic Adoration in Newton

**PARISH OFFICES CLOSED: DEC. 23 (NOON) & 30 (NOON),
 PARISH OFFICE RESUMES REGULAR HOURS AS OF JAN 3**

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

(A Holy Day of Obligation)

Friday, December 24 VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD
 4:00 PM Liturgy (Plaistow)
 6:30 PM Liturgy (Newton)

**Saturday, December 25 SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY
 OF THE LORD**
 9:00 am Liturgy (Newton)

Sunday, December 26 8:00 am Liturgy, Feast of the Holy Family (Newton)
 10:00 am Liturgy, Feast of the Holy Family (Plaistow)
 6:00 PM Christmas Evening Prayer, Newton

Thursday, December 30 No Adoration at Newton

Friday, December 31 4:00 PM Vigil Liturgy, SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF
 GOD OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS *(A Holy Day of Obligation)*
 (Plaistow)

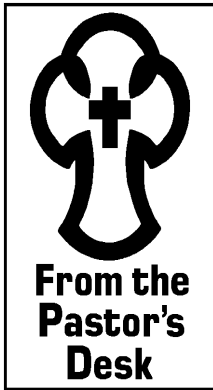
Saturday, January 1 9:00 am Liturgy SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD
 OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS *(A Holy Day of Obligation)* (Newton)

Saturday, January 1 3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Plaistow)
 4:00 PM Vigil - THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (Plaistow)

Sunday, January 2 8:00 am Liturgy, THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (Newton)
 10:00 am Liturgy, THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (Plaistow)
 6:00 PM Christmas Evening Prayer (Newton)

Saturday, January 8 3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Plaistow)
 4:00 PM Vigil - BAPTISM OF THE LORD (Plaistow)

Sunday, January 9 8:00 am Liturgy, BAPTISM OF THE LORD (Newton)
 10:00 am Liturgy, BAPTISM OF THE LORD (Plaistow)
 6:00 PM Christmas Evening Prayer (Newton)



WELCOME YULE!

With the Christmas holiday feast upon us, a word of greeting to parishioners, and of welcome to visitors to our Saint Luke Community

On behalf of the Pastoral Staff and the community of the Parish of Saint Luke the Evangelist, I extend to you and your families the blessings of the Christ who came to live among us, and who lives with us through the movement of the Holy Spirit, and who will come one day among us again.

Our Parish community is vibrant and growing as we gather together to celebrate Christmas. Even in the shadows of the continuing tragedies of the world; even in the shadows of personal heartbreak and economic worries, the Spirit of the Lord fills us with hope and faith in His loving and compassionate plan.

During your time with us, I pray you find in our liturgical worship the same welcoming spirit that has so long been the hallmark of our community. May the blessings of Christ, who is our light and our life, rest with you.



Some Reminders...

Tuesday, January 1 is the Octave Day of Christmas and the Solemnity of Mary, Θεοτόκος - the Mother of God. We will celebrate with a Vigil Liturgy on **Monday, December 31 at 4:00 PM** at Plaistow, and on **January 1 at 9 am** in Newton. Please note that there is no public evening prayer in Newton on January 1.

January 6 is the **Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord**. We will follow our usual Sunday Liturgy schedule, and we will gather to sing Christmas Evening Prayer on **Sunday, January 6** at 6:00 PM in Newton.

The Christmas season will close this year with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord on **January 13**. We will follow our usual Sunday Liturgy schedule, and we will gather to sing Christmas Evening Prayer on **Sunday, January 13** at 6:00 PM in Newton.

Happy & Blessed Christmas!

The Birth Date of Jesus ?



The opening of the third millennium harmonizes with the traditional date for the first Christmas. Without a doubt, the birth of Jesus is the most important human event in our history, because the Incarnation sets into motion God's saving plan for the world. But there is plenty of doubt as to exactly when the actual birth of Jesus took place.

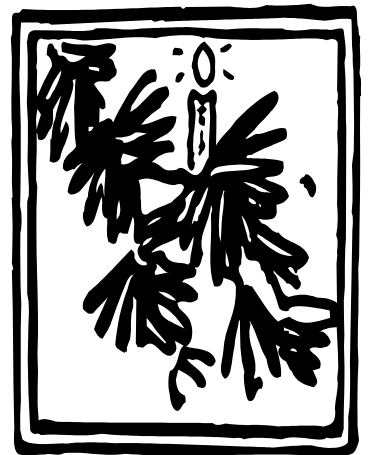
There is no clear historical record of the date or year of Jesus' birth. Although two of the canonical Gospels record significant events surrounding the event, neither records a date.

Two main theories surround the date of December 25 to commemorate the Nativity of the Lord. The first theory looks to a 3rd century Roman pagan celebration coinciding with the winter solstice. As the days began to lengthen each year, December 25 became the festival of the re-birth of the "unconquered sun." Christians, who believed that Christ was the real unconquered source of light and the "Son" of God, celebrated the birth of Jesus on the same day. It is not the first time in the history of Christianity that believers "baptized" a former pagan observance.

The second theory looks to the passion of Jesus. According to early conjectures by faithful Christians, the actual date of Jesus' death was March 25. Some Christians began to believe and promote that Jesus died on the date of his conception, because in the ancient world it was considered a good omen if a famous person died on the date of their birth. For this reason, Christians celebrated March 25 as the Annunciation (the Church still does!), and counting forward nine months, we arrive at a birth on December 25.

The traditional year of Jesus' birth was fixed in the mid-sixth century by *Dionysius Exiguus*, a monk and scholar who set the calendar according to the system we know today as "A.D. - *anno Domini*" - the year of our Lord. However, Matthew and Luke both say Jesus was born during the reign of Herod the Great, which scholars calculate from 37-4 B.C. Oddly, then, Jesus was in all likelihood born "before Christ" - our best guess falls in the years 6-4 B.C.

Although the actual birth of Jesus cannot be known, what is important is that he was born, and the Christian Church on Christmas celebrates the arrival of a child promised by prophets and destined to achieve God's ultimate victory over sin and death by his own death and resurrection.



OUR COMMUNION: OUR PEACE AND OUR PROMISE

In our life together as Catholic Christians, we are coming to the conclusion of the long period of Ordinary Time. As we also join together as a Diocese to celebrate and to contemplate the great gift that is the Holy Eucharist, it is an ideal time to revisit some of our practices during worship at Liturgy, so we can be more attentive to the memorable words of Jesus, the Master Teacher.

We believe as a Church that Jesus is always present in our world, but he is especially present when we gather for worship. The primary day for gathering is Sunday, when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. When we come together for Sunday Liturgy, we believe as Catholics that Jesus is “truly present” in the Word, in the Sacrament, and in the Assembly and in the person of the priest.

Jesus tells us to eat his flesh and drink his blood. We must avoid an overly literalistic understanding of these words. We do not literally eat flesh or drink blood. Jesus’ command to eat his body and drink his blood can only make sense if we understand the words body and blood as designating the whole person, the real glorified Jesus as he exists today.

How do we approach this great moment? It should be with reverence and with the knowledge that the Lord calls each of us and all of us as a community to enter into the mystery of the Lord’s dying and rising. A few things are important about our reception of communion:

The Church calls us to fast from all food and drink at least one hour before receiving. This is more of a spiritual exercise than ascetical practice.... when fasting, our minds, bodies and spirits are better prepared to receive the gifts God gives us.

We all “receive” communion from the hands of another. “Taking” communion is not part of the Catholic perspective on the sacrament of the Eucharist. We are fed by Jesus, we are needy and unworthy. That feeding comes through the ministry of another of our brothers or sisters. The Bishops of the United States have authorized 2 methods of receiving communion under the form of the host: on the tongue, or in the hand. One should determine one’s preference, and after responding “Amen,” open the mouth or have a “throne” made with one’s two hands open to receive the Body of the Lord. **THE HOST IS THEN IMMEDIATELY CONSUMED.**



In the United States, our Bishops’ Conference has made it clear that a sign of adoration before receiving the Eucharist is a wonderful way of showing reverence and awe before the Holy Gifts God gives to us. A simple bow of the head or genuflection, or any sign of reverence is suggested as an option. **HOWEVER, ONE RECEIVES THE EUCHARIST STANDING, JOINED IN PROCESSION WITH THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY GATHERED - IN COMMUNION WITH THE CHURCH.** Any gestures or actions which detract from this communion are distracting and a serious sign of disunion with the Assembly gathered and praying together.

The assembly is encouraged by the Church to receive from the cup, after having the cup withdrawn for centuries. This in no way detracts from the belief that the “whole Christ, body, blood, soul and divinity” is present in either element of the Eucharist. **THE CHURCH’S RETURN TO A COMMON CUP FOLLOWS THE VERY WORDS OF JESUS, “TAKE AND EAT... TAKE AND DRINK...” AND THE INSTRUCTIONS AND ADMONITIONS OF THE GREAT CHRISTIAN TEACHERS SUCH AS PAUL AND AUGUSTINE. RECEIVING FROM THE CUP MEANS DRINKING AFTER RESPONDING “AMEN” TO THE MINISTER.**

There is no scientific evidence at all of any person “catching something” from this act. In fact, you are more likely to catch cold from sitting next to a family member at home than from sharing in the cup at communion time. **RECEIVING UNDER BOTH FORMS IS A FULLER AND BETTER SIGN OF OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE EUCHARISTIC ACTION. EATING AND DRINKING FULFILLS IN THE BEST WAY POSSIBLE THE COMMANDS OF THE LORD JESUS.**

Receiving from the cup means just that. **SELF-INTINCTION (DIPPING THE HOST INTO THE CUP YOURSELF) IS NOT PART OF OUR OBSERVANCE AND BREAKS THE COMMUNAL SHARING OF THE EUCHARIST IN A SERIOUS WAY.** While intinction is used in some places, it is not a preferred way of receiving communion according to our U.S. Bishops, and **NEVER** in the Catholic Church is a communicant allowed to complete this action on his or her own. We receive communion as a holy gift from God. Our conduct in receiving should show how important we believe that gift to be.

CHILDREN WHO ARE NOT OF THE AGE TO RECEIVE (7 BY LAW IN THE CHURCH) SHOULD NOT RECEIVE COMMUNION. This means that parents have to keep an eye on little ones - while still respecting their desire to “join the procession.” **DO** bring up children in the communion procession, and have them cross their arms over their chest, and the priest or minister of communion will simply bless them. Parents should never “share” communion they have received with their young children. While on the surface a pious act, it breaks up the unity supposed by the sharing of the Eucharist. When they have reached the proper age and are prepared, children are admitted to communion for the first time. That day is a highlight in the lives of many a Catholic boy and girl, as well it should be.

To eat Jesus’ body and drink His blood is to enter into a true encounter with the person of Jesus. This is the full meaning of the Eucharist. It is a dynamic meeting with the Risen One. But it is not a solitary experience. We do not come to the Eucharist simply as isolated individuals, but rather as persons who are members of a community, as persons who are the Body of Christ. The Eucharist is not just Jesus with me, but Jesus with us, and all of us with one another. And we are not together hiding from the world: We are Christ's body in the world God created, every day, every hour of our lives.

In a word, Jesus' presence is not static: He is not satisfied just to be there. He is there to act dynamically in order to change our lives. In the Eucharist we meet Christ, and are challenged by his presence in the assembly of his people. He is present to make us whole people. He is there to bring harmony and peace into our lives, our families, our country, our world. He comes to make us experience ourselves as his body in the world.



The Gospel at Home

This Week's Gospels: Luke 2:1-14 and Matthew 2:1-12

Christmas celebrates God's becoming one of us and one with us. Jesus comes as an infant, placed in the care of a struggling but loving family. The Feast of the Epiphany, a word that means "manifestation," celebrates how Jesus was revealed as far more than the king of the Jews. He is revealed as God's Son. Matthew's story of the visit of the Magi from the East makes it clear that Jesus came to all people who seek God.

Exploring the Gospel Message

Seeds (Preschool): Your young child is happy because Christmas is finally here. The cover of their lesson for the week is a picture of the whole Nativity story. Display the picture where everyone can see it. Take time to let your young child tell the story to the whole family.

Promise (Grades K-1): Christmas has arrived. Use this week's lesson booklet to connect the classroom with your home. Have your child show you the picture drawn of baby Jesus in the manger on page 1. Your youngster also learned about the Magi and helped them find their way through a maze puzzle. Ask your child what message can we all share at Christmas. Sing "Silent Night" together—or some other familiar carol.

Good News (Grades 2-3): The lesson booklet your child brings home this week contains a simple and beautiful rendering of the Christmas story. Before one of the family meals during the Christmas feast, take time as a family to share the story together. Talk together about why the incarnation is so important to Christians and how your family can honor Jesus as the Magi did.

Venture (Grades 4-6): Because Christmas can be busy and even a bit stressful, it may be difficult to find time to share as a family. Make an extra effort to talk about the Christmas story as a family. Your youngster also spent some time in class looking ahead to 2022. How can your family make the new year one filled with little "epiphanies" that help you learn more about your faith and help you share your faith with others?

Visions (Grades 7-8): This week in class, your son or daughter studied all the feasts that are part of the celebration of Christmas. Ask him or her to share with the family what these feasts are. The Epiphany feast celebrates Jesus' revealing himself to all nations as a Savior for all people. Talk together about the journey of the Magi, and why it is such an important part of the Christmas narrative. Ask your young person to share the picture of the Magi by the Chinese artist He Qi (Woo Chee). Talk about how the artist gives a clear vision of the event.

Pray Together

Pick one of the feast days during the season to attend Mass together as a family. Use the opportunity to pay a visit to the manger scene at your parish church and pray together in your own words that God will help you always trust in his promises and care for those in need. In that way your family will keep the Christmas spirit alive all year long.



Anointing of the Sick

Celebrating the Sacrament

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is a celebration in which those who are seriously ill or infirm are surrounded and supported by other members of the Christian community, whether at home or in the house of the church (for those who can leave their beds and come here). In song and in silence, with scriptures and prayers, we strengthen the bonds of love and faith that are stronger than the most lethal disease and more powerful even than death. The sacrament may be celebrated in the context of a Mass, or on its own, depending on the needs of the person who is sick.

The celebration opens with brief introductory rites that help us remember that God is with us and that we are the body of Christ. Then follows a liturgy of the word, in which we hear scriptures that shed light on the meaning of sickness and suffering and the

compassion of our God, who suffers with us. Depending on the needs of the person who is sick, one brief passage or two or three readings and a psalm may be used.

Then the rite continues. The gathered church surrounds the person who is sick with the prayer of faith. In response to God's word, a litany is prayed. Then, the priest does the laying on of hands, an ancient sign of the moving of the Holy Spirit to heal and save. Others may join in this ancient prayer gesture. This is done in silence. Then a prayer is said over the oil of the sick. Finally, the priest anoints the head and the hands, and sometimes other parts of the body (the feet, for example, or the part of the body that is in pain) of the one who is sick. While anointing the sick person's head, the priest says "Through this holy anointing, may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit." And all answer "Amen!" While anointing the hands, the priest says, "May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up." And again, all answer "Amen!" If other parts of the body are anointed, no words are said. A final prayer is then said.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist, or simply the giving of communion, may follow. Or the rite ends with a blessing. If you or someone you know needs the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick anointing, please call the Parish Office at 603 382 8324.



Bringing Home the Word +

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph (C)
December 26, 2021

The Joyful Family

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

In Francesco Mancini's *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, he paints the realistic details that make this scene as ordinary as any family playing with their child in a park. Mary has a bowl of water in her hand, perhaps ready to offer a drink to Jesus after he tastes the strawberry or to clean his stained fingers. A silver bowl of food for the baby rests on a white baby blanket. Perhaps it was just placed there by Joseph, for Jesus has finished his vegetables and now Dad

offers dessert! A traveling basket sits in front of a water jug. These instruments show that they are a pilgrim family, and the Egyptian obelisk in the background indicates their destination.

The circumstances are precarious yet joyful, even playful, in their following of God's path. This was just one of the trying times for the Holy Family, which would eventually include losing the Child Jesus in the Temple. As their whole focus in this painting is on Jesus, imagine their fear when they can no longer find the heart of their family.

This is a fantastic image of the joys and challenges of family life. There is joy in having Jesus in our midst, and no sacrifice is too great when he is present. But when he is lost from the center, fears and anxieties enter.

The words of Colossians sum up this attitude, making one think that Paul had a good idea of what virtues family life require! Let's work in our families to have Jesus at the center, and once he is there, to "put on" all the virtues that his presence inspires. +

*There is joy in having Jesus
in our midst,
and no sacrifice is too great
when he is present.*

A Word from Pope Francis

The works of mercy reawaken in us the need, and the ability, to make the faith alive and active with charity. I am convinced that, through these simple, daily actions, we can achieve a true cultural revolution....If every one of us, every day, does one of these, this will be a revolution in the world!

General audience, October 12, 2016



Sunday Readings

**Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 or
1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28**

My son, be steadfast in honoring your father; do not grieve him as long as he lives.

**Colossians 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or
1 John 3:1-2, 21-24**

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Luke 2:41-52

And Jesus advanced [in] wisdom and age and favor before God and man.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Does one of the virtues mentioned by St. Paul catch my attention?
- Should I pray for and practice that virtue a little more?

God's Opinion

By Kathleen M. Basi

When my first child was born, my mother sent me a card that read, "Babies are God's opinion that the world should go on."

I doubt I'm the only one reading these words who spends a lot of time gnashing my teeth over everything that's wrong with the world: questionable leadership, out-of-whack priorities in our communities, poor choices made by those I love. Not to mention the endless hordes of refugees no one wants to shelter, the suicide bombers, and regimes lusting for more power.

Sometimes being a Christian feels like running around trying to plug holes in a sinking ship.

Yet there's one situation in which all that disappears: when a child is born. New life awakens us to the essential goodness of humanity, the potential for good that each of us is born with. In the presence of babies, we lower our voices. We slow down and breathe in the scent of innocence. We shower families with gifts and meals in recognition of the beautiful thing that has just occurred.

Christmas signifies the most important birth of all. The celebration of Jesus' Nativity is an annual reminder that no matter what terrible things are happening at this moment, we still inhabit a beautiful world, filled with goodness and hope, joy and light.

This season brings out the best in us. Yes, there are fights in the store over door busters—but there are also people



ringing bells for those who need a hand, churches gathering gifts for the needy, choirs caroling at nursing homes, and meals being prepared for and served to those with nowhere else to go.

In this season, we see the works of mercy in action.

Come January, everyone will be worn out. Societal attention will return to football, and then basketball and baseball, and once again we'll have to brainstorm ways to mobilize the masses to make time for the things that really matter.

For now, though, we are collectively tuned in and aware of the world in a way that sensitizes us to the needs of others. This December let's hit "pause" on real life and take a moment to look

around and recognize the power of what is possible in these busy weeks—the great good that humanity is capable of when we put our minds to it. Let's take time to reflect with awe and joy upon the magnitude of the gift given to us by God in the Incarnation, and the way one person can change the world.

The birth of this particular baby is a powerful sign that God most assuredly thinks that the world should go on. +

*Let's pause and think
to ourselves:
what a wonderful world.*

PRAYER

*Lord, through your Word we
receive the knowledge and
wisdom of God. May your Spirit
lead me to your sacred Word
and guide me in my search for
knowledge and truth.*

*From Joyful Meditations for Every Day of Advent
and the 12 Days of Christmas, Rev. Warren J.
Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney*

WEEKDAY READINGS

December 27–
January 1, 2021

Monday, St. John:

1 Jn 1:1–4 / Jn 20:1a, 2–8

Tuesday, The Holy Innocents:

1 Jn 1:5–2:2 / Mt 2:13–18

Wednesday, Christmas Weekday:

1 Jn 2:3–11 / Lk 2:22–35

Thursday, Christmas Weekday:


1 Jn 2:12–17 / Lk 2:36–40

Friday, Christmas Weekday:

1 Jn 2:18–21 / Jn 1:1–18

Saturday, Blessed Virgin Mary:

Nm 6:22–27 / Gal 4:4–7 / Lk 2:16–21

Bringing Home
the Word 
December 26, 2021

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