

Welcome!

On behalf of the Pastoral Staff and the community of Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish, 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.

This special edition of our *Bulletin* was prepared for all who visit Saint Luke the Evangelist over the holiday – especially for those who visit us from near or far, and for those who are searching for a Church home.

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.

Father Albert, obl. SB
Pastor

✠ 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, 2022

Immaculate Conception \$ 886.71

December 11, 2022

Offertory \$7,106.96
Retired Religious \$4,279.00



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.

COLLECTION NOTE

Because of an upcoming change in the Diocesan collection schedule, a Diocesan-wide NH Catholic Appeal will replace certain collections mandated in years past. The Parish **will not** take up a second collection for the **Seminarian Fund (January 8)**. If you use envelopes, please discard these from your box. They will also be removed from the Parish Giving Website.



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 COLLECTIONS

December 25	Christmas & Needs of Parish
January 1	Mary, Mother of God
January 8	Property Management
January 15	No Second Collection

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

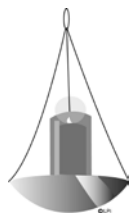
Your Current Offertory Contribution	25% Increase	30% Increase	40% Increase
\$75.00	\$93.75	\$97.50	\$105.00
\$50.00	\$62.50	\$65.00	\$70.00
\$40.00	\$50.00	\$52.00	\$56.00
\$35.00	\$43.75	\$45.50	\$49.00
\$30.00	\$37.50	\$39.00	\$42.00
\$25.00	\$31.25	\$32.50	\$35.00
\$20.00	\$25.00	\$26.00	\$28.00
\$15.00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

✠ PARISH NEWS ✠

CHRISTMAS EVENING PRAYER

Join us for Christmas Evening Prayer at **6:00 PM in Newton** on:

Sunday, December 25, 2022
Sunday, January 1, 2023
Sunday, January 8, 2023



The Sanctuary Candle in Holy Angels Church will burn this week in loving memory of **Deceased Members of the Fogel Family & Frank Kelcourse** by Elaine Kelcourse

CANDLES

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

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 tremblay@stluketheevangelist.net or call 603-382-8324. If you are new to our parish, registration forms are available at the entrances of both churches. You can also find a registration form on our website at <http://stlukenh.org>.

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!



CLOTHING DRIVE

Kimberly's 17th Annual Holiday Give Away!!!

Another year, another collection!!! I am so happy to be able to continue what started as a confirmation project 17 years ago, and now has become a well known annual event! We will be collecting clothing and nonperishable food items on January 7th and 8th at Holy Angels Church Hall (downstairs from 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, Wish Project, and Saint Luke's Food Pantry. We are accepting CLEAN clothing of any size, any season, any decade. Any donations of socks or underwear must be new and packaged.

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 ST. JOSEPH

Our ministry aims to emulate St. Joseph and become better husbands, fathers, sons and brothers. There are no dues and the Men of St. Joseph do not participate in projects or other volunteer efforts as a group, but instead, gather together for sharing among men to help them be a better person, a better family man, and a better member of the Church. Join us on Saturday morning, **January 21, 2023 from 8:00 to 9:00 AM** in the parish hall on the Plaistow campus.

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:

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish, Plaistow.

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 25

6:00 PM Christmas Vespers *Newton*

Monday, December 26

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED
NO DAILY MASS IN NEWTON

Wednesday, December 28

Holy Angels Church
Open All Day For Prayer

Thursday, December 29

NO ADORATION IN NEWTON

Saturday, December 31

3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation *Plaistow*

Sunday, January 1

6:00 PM Christmas Vespers *Newton*

NO ADORATION

There is NO Adoration in Newton on Thursday, December 29. Adoration in Newton will resume on Thursday, January 5, 2023.

RESTROOM BREAKS DURING MASS

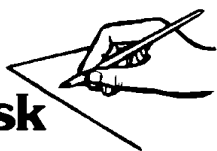
Attention Parents

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!

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.

**From the
Pastor's Desk**



HOLY ANGELS CEMETERY CLOSED

Holy Angels Cemetery in Plaistow is closed until Spring 2023. 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 24 ~ The Nativity Of Our Lord

Is 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 (Vigil)

4:00 PM People of the Parish

Plaistow

6:30 PM People of the Parish

Newton

Sunday, December 25 ~ The Nativity Of Our Lord

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

9:00 AM People of the Parish

Newton

Monday, December 26 ~ Stephen, the First Martyr

Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59; Mt 10:17-22

No Mass

Tuesday, December 27 ~ John, Apostle and Evangelist

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

8:00 AM Matthew A. Kiman (1st Anniversary)

by the Parish

Plaistow

Wednesday, December 28 ~ The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

1 Jn 1:5—2:2; Mt 2:13-18

6:30 PM Carl Jesionowski by his sister, Sonia Tatarka

Plaistow

Thursday, December 29 ~ Thomas Becket, Bishop and

Martyr

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

8:00 AM Joseph Krafton by Barbara Metcalf

Newton

Friday, December 30 ~ The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary,

and Joseph

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Col 3:12-21; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

NO MASS

Saturday, 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 Eleanor Harrison by Joe and Ann Marie Sheehan

Plaistow

Sunday, January 1 ~ Mary, Mother of God

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

8:00 AM Lea Roberts by her husband, Paul

Newton

10:00 AM Eva Raymond and Stephen and Elaine

Huberdeau by Linda Huberdeau

Plaistow



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.**

EARLY BULLETIN DEADLINES

We have one more early bulletin deadline for the January 8 bulletin: **Thursday, December 29 at 12:00 Noon.**

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

The Parish Office will be **closed on Monday, December 26.** The office will reopen at 8:30 AM on Tuesday, December 27. Our regular office hours are Monday through Thursday from 8:30 AM to 12:00 Noon and from 1:00 to 4:30 PM. The office is closed on Fridays.

THE GOD MINUTE

Every morning a small group of priests, religious, and lay people start their day in prayer. Soft music, sacred scripture, and a thoughtful reflection are weaved into a 10-minute prayer called "The God Minute." It's then uploaded for you to access and pray along with us on your own time. And it's free. Listen with your coffee in the morning, while driving to work, or taking a walk. See how easy and beautiful prayer can be! www.thegodminute.org

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.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Among believers and spiritual seekers from many religious traditions, there is a growing awareness of the importance of spirituality. To respond to this growing awareness, there is need for qualified, compassionate spiritual experts who can accompany and help others explore their faith. Merrimack College's graduate programs in spirituality prepare you for a life of spiritual exploration, engagement, and service. You will acquire the theological knowledge and ministerial experience you need to enrich your own faith and to support others in their spiritual journey. Designed to fit your schedule and meet your needs, our spirituality programs offer evening classes as well as five tracks based on your professional goals and interests. You must choose one of the master's tracks or certificate programs by the time you have completed two of the core courses and/or the year-long seminar or practicum.

The application deadline for the Spring 2023 course is **January 5, 2023.** For more information, go to www.merrimack.edu/spirit.

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 ❖



SAINT JUDE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS MONTHLY FOOD DRIVE

The Knights of Columbus of our Parish are sponsoring a monthly food drive to support the Saint Luke the Evangelist Food Pantry. A list of items needed, along with a paper shopping bag, will be distributed at the end of Masses on the 3rd weekend of each month to those who wish to participate. We ask that you bring back the non-perishable food items the following weekend (4th weekend of the month). You are also welcome to drop off donations at the Parish Office during normal business hours or at one our Parish churches. Monetary donations are also welcome (make checks payable to Saint Luke Food Pantry), or gift cards to local supermarkets. Thank you for reaching out to help families in our community who need assistance. The Knights and the Food Pantry appreciate your generosity and support.

28TH ANNUAL ST. JUDE GOLF OPEN

The Knights of Columbus are seeking a potential recipient(s) for the 2023 Open which will be held in early June. The Open provides help to an individual(s) or family(s) who are facing financial hardship through no fault of their own. Do you know of anyone in the area that may benefit from the 2023 Open? If you do, please contact the Grand Knight, Peter Richards at 603-382-4315 or pmpjps6@comcast.net for additional information.

CURSILLO

If you have a desire to know Jesus more closely, a Cursillo is for you. The Cursillo weekend is a short course in Christianity. The purpose of the weekend is to facilitate a meaningful personal encounter with Christ and his body, the Church. The three day weekend is also the bridge connecting the faithful with the supportive post-Cursillo community, where we live our faith joyfully with our fellow Christians. Cursillo weekends are being offered at the Sato Center in Hookset, NH. To find out more, contact Mark Collopy at 603-833-7341 or explore www.nhcursillo.org.



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.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

St. Vincent de Paul Society



Your "Dropped Dollar" Hard At Work

Thank you for your continued support of the St. Vincent de Paul Society! Please know that your "dropped dollars" are being used wisely to help the poor in our area. Your generosity does not go unnoticed.

Drop-a-Dollar in the St. Vincent de Paul box on your way out of church.

Remember ~ 100% of your donation is used to help those who need a hand up, not a hand out.

Our next meeting on **Wednesday, January 18 at 7:00 PM**. We meet downstairs in the Church Hall in Plaistow. **New members are always welcome!**

If you seek assistance or need information about the St. Vincent de Paul Society, call 603-382-8324 x315.

Hear, OH LORD, and answer me for I am poor and needy.



THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, COUNCIL #6617

WISH YOU, YOUR FAMILY, AND YOUR FRIENDS A VERY MERRY AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS!



CHRISTMAS MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY

4:00 PM – Holy Angels, Plaistow

Gathering:

O Come All Ye Faithful BB 93

Psalm Response:

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

Preparation of the Gifts:

Silent Night/Night Of Silence (Choir)

Mass Responses: Heritage Mass

Communion:

The Holly And The Ivy (Choir)
Ding Dong Merrily On High (Choir)
Angels We Have Heard On High BB 84

Recessional:

Joy To The World BB 82



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

Gathering:

O Come, All Ye Faithful BB 93

Psalm Response:

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

Preparation of the Gifts:

O Little Town Of Bethlehem BB 89

Mass Responses:

Heritage Mass

Communion:

What Child Is This BB 96
It Came Upon The Midnight Clear BB 98

Recessional:

Joy To The World BB 82

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

Gathering:

O Come, All Ye Faithful BB 93

Psalm Response:

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

Preparation of the Gifts:

Silent Night BB 79

Mass Responses: Heritage Mass

Communion:

It Came Upon The Midnight Clear BB 98
Angels We Have Heard On High BB 84

Recessional:

Joy To The World BB 82

ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST PARISH

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

If you would like an "end of year" financial statement of your contributions to the parish for 2022, **please call Jackie** at the Parish Office at 382-8324. **Financial Statements are issued on a request only basis.**

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Spiritual Renewal at Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish has a long history. These days, adults can attend Bible study groups which focus on discussing the meaning of the Holy Word of God in their lives, Adult Education classes, or seminars presented on various topics in Scripture, Church history or theology. Daily rosary is offered before Mass each day.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT ST. LUKE'S

Our Religious Education Program represents more than religious instruction for children. We believe in extending the classroom experience to the worship life of the community, to the life of the child at school, at home or with friends, and into the larger community of Newton-Plaistow and beyond. This year, nearly 225 children and more than 30 adult volunteers are engaged in the business of faith formation through classroom education and community service. Our Catechists and classroom aides participate in a comprehensive continuing formation program that involves them in three special sessions per year where topics such as classroom management, Catechist roles, theology, and Christian morality are discussed with a facilitator. For more information, please call Joyce at 603-382-8324.

HOLY ANGELS PRE-SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN

Holy Angels Preschool and Kindergarten will soon be accepting registrations for the 2023-2024 school year. We have flexible hours and we offer Kindergarten Enrichment after the public Kindergarten day ends. All teachers are licensed and certified and we offer a welcoming environment. We are based upon a "hands-on learning" approach which promises a well-rounded beginning education for your child. We are located in the Parish Center of Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish in Plaistow, NH. Please call Jeannie at 382-9783.

CHRISTMAS SEASON LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Monday, December 26	No Daily Mass
Thursday, December 29	NO ADORATION IN NEWTON
Saturday, December 31	4:00 PM Vigil Liturgy, SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD, OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS (Holy Day of Obligation) (Plaistow)
Sunday, January 1	SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD, OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS (Holy Day of Obligation) 8:00 AM (Newton) 10:00 AM (Plaistow) 6:00 PM Christmas Evening Prayer (Newton)
Saturday, January 7	3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Plaistow) 4:00 PM Vigil - SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD Plaistow
Sunday, January 8	SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY 8:00 AM in Newton 10:00 AM in Plaistow 6:00 PM Christmas Evening Prayer (Newton)
Monday, January 9	8:00 AM Liturgy, BAPTISM OF THE LORD 6:00 PM Evening Prayer

✠ PARISH DIRECTORY ✠

Parish Office
Parish Prayer Line
St. Vincent de Paul Society
St. Luke's Food Pantry
Preschool

382-8324
382-8324 x 314
382-8324 x 315
819-4949
382-9783

Fr. Albert Tremblay
Cathy Smith
Joyce Szczapa
Jackie Tremblay
Val Barczak
Parish Council

fr.albert@stluketheevangelist.net
csmith@stluketheevangelist.net
jszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net
jtremblay@stluketheevangelist.net
mvbarczak@comcast.net
parishcouncil@stluketheevangelist.net

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 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.

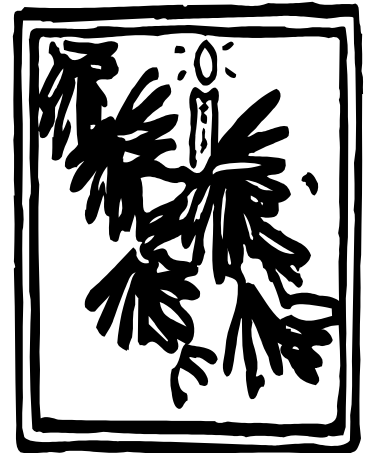
There is no clear historical record of the date or year of Jesus' birth. Although two of the canonical Gospels record significant events surrounding the event, neither records a date.

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.



The Gospel at Home

This Week's Gospel: Luke 2:1-14 and Luke 2:16-21

God blessed us by becoming a member of the human family. This is what Christmas celebrates. The Holy Family and God's incarnation is why there is something so very human about this feast, something that touches us in a way deeper than mere nostalgia. 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 lovely family. We are reminded at Christmas that our families are shrouded in the same holiness that Jesus' family is. We look to their lives together as an example of how to love each other through celebrations and struggles. We also remember that Mary is the human Mother of God. When we say Mary is the Mother of God, we are saying that we believe Jesus is God.

Exploring the Gospel Message

Seeds (Preschool): Your child will be bringing home new characters to add to their manger scene. Place the scene where everyone can see and enjoy it. Invite your child to move the figures around to tell you about the night of Jesus' birth and the visit from the Magi. Remind your child to thank Mary and Joseph for their sacrifices that allowed Jesus to come into their family.

Promise (Grades K-1): Ask your child to show you the connect-the-dots picture of Christmas on the front page of the lesson booklet. Together you can place the figures from the Magi story into the manger scene your child has made. Be sure to visit the manger in your parish church during Christmas time. While you are there, thank Mary for being a wonderful mother to Jesus. Say a prayer there that everyone will hear the Good News of Jesus.

Good News (Grades 2-3): This week's lesson focuses on the point that Jesus is the Son of God and the son of Mary. Have your child lead

your family in acting out the Christmas and the Mary, Mother of God plays in the lesson booklet. Talk to your child about how Mary fulfilled her calling to be Jesus' mother with her whole heart. Assure your child that you try your best to follow Mary's example. Share why this story is important for all of Jesus' followers. Your child has made a manger scene. Display your child's work where all in the family can enjoy it.

Venture (Grades 4-6): Christmas time is often filled with various activities, and it may be difficult to find time to share as a family. Try to set aside time with your child to talk about the Christmas story. It is good to remember that Jesus Christ came so that all people could be saved. Talk about all the elements of Jesus' birth—Mary's saying yes to God, the journey to Bethlehem, the vision of the angels, the shepherds at the manger, and the visit of the Magi. Talk about the ways you can make sure that Jesus is at the center of your family's Christmas.

Visions (Grades 7-9): Read together as a family the Christmas story presented as a play in this week's lesson. Talk about why the shepherds were the first to hear of the great mystery of Jesus' birth. Consider doing the same for the Mary, Mother of God account from this week. Your youngster's class learned the Greek word *Theotokos* as it refers to Mary. Ask your young person to explain the word to your family. Play the Story Cards Game from this week's lesson.

Pray Together

Pick one of the feast days during the season (not a Sunday) to attend Mass together as a family. Use the opportunity to pay a visit to the manger scene at your parish church and pray that you will always be faithful followers of Jesus and always bring joy to the world.





Bringing Home the Word

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) (A)

December 25, 2022

The Gift that Gives Forever

By Ron Rolheiser, OMI

The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord” (Luke 2:10–11).

The fact of a savior born for us does not bring us immediate festive joy. Our world remains wounded; wars, selfishness, and bitterness linger. Our hearts remain wounded; pain lingers. For a Christian, just as for everyone else, there will be incompleteness, illness, death, senseless hurt, broken dreams, cold, hunger, lonely days of bitterness, and a lifetime of longing.

The Incarnation does not promise heaven on earth. It promises heaven in heaven. Here on earth, it promises us something else—God’s presence in our lives. This presence redeems because knowing that God is with us is what ultimately empowers us to give up bitterness, to forgive, and to move beyond cynicism and bitterness. When God is with us, then pain and happiness are not mutually exclusive, and the agonies and riddles of life do not exclude deep meaning and deep joy.

We need to celebrate Christmas heartily. Maybe we won’t feel the same excitement we once felt as children—when we were excited about tinsel, lights, Christmas carols, and special gifts and special food. But something more important is still available, namely the sense that God is with us in our lives, in our joys as well as in our shortcomings.

The word was made flesh. That is an incredible thing. It should be celebrated with tinsel, lights, and songs of joy. If we understand Christmas, then carols will flow naturally from our lips. +

This article is an excerpt from the *Daybreaks* series, published by Liguori Publications for the seasons of Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter. Fr. Ron Rolheiser has authored several in this series of seasonal devotionals. To learn more and review our complete list of *Daybreaks* authors, visit Liguori.org.

A Word from Pope Francis

The power of this Child, Son of God and Son of Mary, is not the power of this world, based on might and wealth; it is the power of love. It is the power that gives new birth, forgives sin, reconciles enemies, and transforms evil into good. It is the power of God.

URBI ET ORBI, ROME,
DECEMBER 25, 2019



Sunday Readings

Isaiah 52:7–10

All the ends of the earth can see /
the salvation of our God.

Hebrews 1:1–6

[God] spoke to us through a son,
whom he made heir of all things
and through whom he created the
universe.

John 1:1–18 or 1:1–5, 9–14

The light shines in the darkness, and
the darkness has not overcome it.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What blessings have I received today?
- How can I be a blessing to someone else?

The Gift of Love and the Value of Thanks

By Paige Byrne Shortal

Did you come to church today to please someone else? Perhaps your parents or grandparents or your spouse? Whether you came willingly or under pressure, I hope I'm not being presumptuous when I acknowledge your gift. Coming to church to make someone else happy is an act of love, and you might be giving them their favorite Christmas present.

I'm a convert and find myself fascinated by people who grew up in the Church and then stopped going to Mass. I tend to ask them a lot of personal questions: What takes the place of church for you? Who do you pray to? What do you use as a guide when you make moral choices? If you have children, how will you teach them right from wrong? Who (or what) will you turn to if you are suffering or someone you love is suffering? What gives you meaning and purpose in this life?

Paul Tillich said there are no atheists; that we all make something or someone our god. We must just make sure our god is one who is worthy of the investment of our lives. Today the Christian community celebrates the birth of God, who promises an abundant return on our investment.

I've learned that it's possible to grow up going to church and still not know much about Jesus. A priest friend admitted he didn't really know Jesus until he was in the last years of preparing for ordination. He decided he'd better do



something about it so he sat down and read the Gospel of Matthew straight through. I decided I wanted to do the same. Be warned! This is life-changing stuff.

On a lighter note, here's a true story from my husband's family. There were two older relatives who attended Midnight Mass after many years away from the Church. One whispered, "Hey, that's a woman reading up there." And the other responded, "Yeah, and either that's English or my Latin is better than I thought."

After my oldest had been on his own for a while, he called one night to tell me he had discovered he could not sit down to a nice meal without saying Grace. He

didn't want to say the traditional "Bless us, O Lord..." but he did feel the need to say "thank you."

Later, a month or so after Christmas, I began to get the calls: "Did he get the package, the check? I haven't heard from him." So I called him and suggested that while thank-you notes did require more organization than exists in the lives of most young bachelors, they are part of a "Grace Way of Life." You don't eat thanks, wear it, use it, or spend it before you say it—"thank you"—to the giver.

What do I want my last words to be? Not "Give me more!" or "Not fair!" or "No!" I would like to be the kind of person whose last words are simply: "Thank You."

Merry Christmas. +

***On Christmas, we celebrate
the birth of God, who
promises an abundant
return on our investment.***

**PRAYER**

***Lord Jesus, so that there may
be peace among the nations,
within communities and families,
and in our hearts,
we pray—Be born in us,
be born in our world.***

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

December 26–31

Monday, St. Stephen:
Acts 6:8–10; 7:54–59 / Mt 10:17–22
Tuesday, St. John:
1 Jn 1:1–4 / Jn 20:1a, 2–8
Wednesday, Holy Innocents:
1 Jn 1:5–2:2 / Mt 2:13–18

Thursday, Octave of Christmas:
1 Jn 2:3–11/Lk 2:22–35
Friday, Holy Family: Sir 3:2–6, 12–14 or
Col 3:12–21 or 3:12–17 / Mt 2:13–15, 19–23
Saturday, Octave of Christmas:
1 Jn 2:18–21 / Jn 1:1–18

Bringing Home
the **Word** 
December 25, 2022

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