



MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY

Sunday, December 31, 2023

**The Holy Family of
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph**

Gathering: The First Nowell BB 112

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 98)

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

Preparation It Came Upon The Midnight Clear
BB 105

Mass Parts Storrington Mass

Communion Silent Night BB 81
Away In A Manger BB 76

Recessional: Angels We Have Heard On High BB 87



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!

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. Thanks for being attentive and respectful! F. Albert.



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

✠ 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 17, 2023

Offertory \$9,084.66
Fuel \$1,741.14

**COLLECTION AMOUNTS FOR
DECEMBER 24 and 25, 2023**

WILL APPEAR IN THE JANUARY 7, 2024 BULLETIN



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.

UPCOMING SECOND & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

December 31 No Second Collection
January 1 Mary, Mother of God
January 7 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

CLOTHING DRIVE

Kimberly's 18th Annual Holiday Give Away!!!

I'm back!!! Despite having a toddler now and baby #2 on the way, I'm preparing for another collection!!! We will be collecting clothing and nonperishable food items on **January 6 and 7** at Holy Angels Church in Plaistow (in the Parish Hall), from **12:00 to 4:00 PM** each day. 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. I couldn't do it without you!

God bless,
Kimberly Clenord

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

If you would like an "end of year" financial statement of your contributions to the parish for 2023, **please call Jackie** at the Parish Office at 603-382-8324. **Financial Statements are issued on a request only basis.**

NEW HAMPSHIRE CATHOLIC APPEAL

Thank you on behalf of Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish for making a donation to the New Hampshire Catholic Appeal. If you have not made a donation to the Appeal, you can do so by filling out a donation envelope found in the pews or at the church entrance. You can make an online gift by visiting www.catholicnh.org/about/get-involved/giving/nhca/. You can also use your smartphone with the QR code below.

Our Parish target is \$46,740.00. **As of November 13, 2023, we have reached our goal!** Thank you again for your support of our NH Catholic community and these important diocesan ministries.



MASS SCHEDULE FOR SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

This year, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God is NOT a holy day of obligation. However, for those who want to celebrate the feast, Masses will be held on:

Sunday, December 31 at 4:00 PM in Plaistow
and on
Monday, January 1 at 9:00 AM in Newton

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

The Parish Office will be closed on Monday, January 1.

MARRIAGE IN THE CHURCH

Did you know that all Catholics are required to be married in the Church as a condition of the validity of their marriage?

Any Catholic married in a civil ceremony (JP) or in any religious ceremony other than a Catholic one (unless specifically excepted by the Bishop) is not living out the Sacrament of Marriage in its fullness according to the teaching of the Church. Contact Father Albert in the Parish Office for more information and assistance – there are ways in which your situation may be resolved!

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!



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 ✠

Monday, January 1

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

6:00 PM Evening Prayer *Newton*

Tuesday, January 2

6:00 PM Grief Share Group *Plaistow*

Wednesday, January 3

Holy Angels Church Open
All Day For Prayer

Thursday, January 4

8:30 AM – 8:30 PM Eucharistic Adoration *Newton*
10:00 AM Prayer Shawl Ministry Meeting *Plaistow*

Saturday, January 6

12:00 to 4:00 PM Clothing Drive *Plaistow*
3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation *Plaistow*

Sunday, January 7

10:00 AM Religious Ed – K to 6 *Plaistow*
12:00 to 4:00 PM Clothing Drive *Plaistow*
6:00 PM Evening Prayer *Newton*

EVENING PRAYER

Join us in **Newton** for Christmas Evening Prayer on **Monday, January 1 at 6:00 PM**, for Epiphany, **Sunday, January 7 at 6:00 PM**, and for the Baptism of the Lord on **Monday, January 8**.

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.



The Vigil Light in front of the Blessed Mother icon at Mary Mother of the Church will burn this week in memory of **Wallace & Francis Antczak** by the Burge family



✠ MASS INTENTIONS ✠

Saturday, December 30~ The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14; Col 2:12-21; Lk 2:22-40 (Vigil)
4:00 PM People of the Parish
Plaistow

Sunday, December 31 ~ The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14; Col 2:12-21; Lk 2:22-40
8:00 AM Wallace and Francis Antczak by the Burge family
Newton

10:00 AM Rochelle Justin by Charlie and Lisa Angwin
Plaistow

Sunday, December 31 ~ The Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God

Nm 6:22-27; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21 (Vigil)
4:00 PM People of the Parish
Plaistow

Monday, January 1 ~ The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Nm 6:22-27; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21
9:00 AM Lea Roberts (10th Anniversary) by her husband, Paul
Newton

Tuesday, January 2 ~ Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church

1 Jn 2:22-28; Jn 1:19-28
8:00 AM All Souls Intentions
Plaistow

Wednesday, January 3 ~ The Most Holy Name of Jesus

1 Jn 2:29—3:6; Jn 1:29-34
6:30 PM Robert Hoppler (Month's Mind)
Plaistow

Thursday, January 4 ~ Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious

1 Jn 3:7-10; Jn 1:35-42
8:00 AM Barbara Metcalf by Cathy Smith
Newton

Friday, January 5 ~ John Neumann, Bishop

1 Jn 3:11-21; Jn 1:43-51
No Mass

Saturday, January 6 ~ André Bessette, Religious

1 Jn 5:5-13; Mk 1:7-11 or Lk 3:33-38 (Day)
Is 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Mt 2:1-12 (Vigil)
4:00 PM In Honor of St. Benedict and Our Lady of Lourdes by George Giraldo
Plaistow

Sunday, January 7 ~ The Epiphany of the Lord

Is 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Mt 2:1-12
8:00 AM Suzanne Busch by Jim Edwards
Newton
10:00 AM Bill Lueders (20th Anniversary) by Carole Lueders
Plaistow



WELCOME IN CHRIST!

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish invites all to a deeper love of Jesus and to a fullness of communion with the Church. The **rites of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA)** is a process where adults and older children are welcomed into the Catholic Church. Some have never been Baptized, others never received Eucharist or

Confirmation, and others arrive at our door after a long faith journey.

Do you know someone who is thinking about becoming part of our Catholic community? Are you the non-Catholic spouse of a parishioner who is wondering about full communion with the Church? Are you an adult Catholic who for whatever reason, “missed” one or more of the sacraments of initiation while growing up? Do you have children over 7 years of age who were never Baptized, or older children who “missed” sacraments?

The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (and its adapted form for children) welcomes all kinds of people into the Catholic family. The RCIA is for any adult who is: unbaptized and recognizes a need for spirituality in their life, or Baptized and raised in another Christian tradition but interested in learning about the Catholic faith, or Baptized in the Catholic faith, but never received any formal religious training.

Children of all ages are welcome and participate in age appropriate meetings for their RCIA experience.

Contact Father Albert or Cathy Smith in the Parish Office at 603.382.8324 for more information.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

The Compassionate Friends provide support for bereaved families after the loss of a child, grandchild, or sibling—any age, any cause. Visit our website at www.tcfnewburyport.org.

VITA NOVA – MEN’S RETREAT

Join other Catholic men for fellowship and spiritual growth as they explore *Surrendering To Divine Providence* on **January 5-7, 2024**. For more information, go to www.vitanova.org/catholic-mens-retreat.

HOLY ANGELS CEMETERY CLOSED

Holy Angels Cemetery in Plaistow is closed from December 2023 until Spring 2024. 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.

ADORERS NEEDED AT 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 is a great source of grace for us as a parish family. We have many who have made the commitment to spend an hour each week with our Eucharistic Lord. Adoration takes place each Thursday in Newton from 8:30 AM to 8:30 PM. We also need people at all times so we can have 2 people at each hour. 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 a 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.

NEED A SACRAMENT?

There will be a meeting for all ages for anyone needing one or more of the Sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist). This meeting will include the parents of the children who will receive Confirmation/Eucharist this Spring. The meeting will be on **Sunday, February 4 after the 10:00 AM Mass**, downstairs in the church hall. Any questions? Call Cathy Smith at (603) 382-8324, Ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

✦ 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



MONTHLY FOOD DRIVE

**Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus
St. Jude Council #6617**

The Knights of Columbus and Saint Luke the Evangelist Food Pantry would like to thank our parishioners for the ongoing support to feed those in need. Over the last two months, support has been provided to 135 families. That represents 118 children under the age of 18 and 111 adults over the age of 60, for a total of 370 individuals served. Shopping lists and bags are provided on the 3rd week of every month with the general collection of non-perishable items happening the following (4th) weekend. Food donations can also be left in the plastic totes at the rear of either church or brought to the Parish Office any time they are open. Prefer not to shop? Gift cards or checks can be made out to Saint Luke Food Pantry anytime. Your generosity and support are greatly appreciated!

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
HAPPENINGS**

Thank you: Thank you to Knight Jim Edwards who donated a 12 foot Christmas Tree to Mary Mother of the Church in memory of his special friend, Suzanne Busch, who recently passed away.

Pasta for a Purpose: The Knights had a goal to raise \$1,400 to buy a new freezer for our food pantry. The event on November 18th was a huge success and we beat the goal by a wide margin. Thank you to Chef Rudi for a great meal and to all the volunteers, those who attended, and those that made donations. Vivat Jesus! (Jesus Lives)

**THE KNIGHTS OF
COLUMBUS
ST. JUDE COUNCIL
#6617**



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

A Men's AA Step Meeting is 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.

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. Cursillo weekends are being offered at the Sarto Center in Hookset, NH. To find out more, contact Mark Collopy at 603-833-7341 or explore www.nhcursillo.org.



GIVE BACK REUSABLE BAG PROGRAM

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, has been chosen by **Shaw's**, 4 Plaistow Road, Plaistow, NH to participate in the *Give Back Where It Counts Reusable Bag Program*. For the entire month of December, for every \$3.00 bag purchased at **Shaw's in Plaistow**, they will donate \$1.00 to St. Vincent de Paul. The bags will be displayed near the self-checkout or ask a customer service representative for help.

**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 handout.

Our next meeting on **Wednesday, January 17 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, O LORD, and answer me
for I am poor and needy.**

**SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST PARISH
LITURGICAL CALENDAR ADVENT-CHRISTMAS, 2023- 24**

GIVING TREE GIFTS DUE DECEMBER 9/10 – Advent 2

ADVENT 1 Sunday, December 3	Regular weekend schedule 6:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer (Newton) 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Newton)
Thursday, December 7	Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM Patronal Feast of the USA Holy Day Vigil Liturgy 6:30 PM (Plaistow) No 8 am Liturgy or Eucharistic Adoration at Newton
Friday, December 8	Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM Patronal Feast of the USA Holy Day Liturgy 8:00 AM (Newton)
ADVENT 2 Sunday, December 10	Regular weekend schedule Advent Penance Service St. Michael Exeter 3 PM 6:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer (Newton) 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Newton)
Wednesday, December 13	LAST DAY TO RETURN GIVING TREE GIFTS AT PARISH OFFICE
ADVENT 3 Sunday, December 17	Regular weekend schedule 6:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer (Newton) 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Newton)
ADVENT 4 Sunday, December 24	Regular weekend schedule

Giving Tree gifts due today!

**PARISH OFFICES CLOSED: DEC. 22 & 26
PARISH OFFICE RESUMES REGULAR HOURS AS OF JAN 2**

<p>CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE <i>(A Holy Day of Obligation)</i></p> <p>Sunday, December 24 VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY 4:00 PM Liturgy (Plaistow) 6:30 PM Liturgy (Newton)</p> <p>Monday, December 25 SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD 9:00 am Liturgy (Newton)</p>
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Monday, December 26	NO MASS at Newton
Thursday, December 28	No Adoration at Newton
FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY Sunday, December 31	Regular weekend schedule
Christmas Octave January 1 is NOT a Holy Day of Obligation this year.	
CHRISTMAS OCTAVE Sunday, December 31	SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS 4:00 PM Vigil Liturgy (Plaistow)
Monday, January 1	SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS 9:00 am Liturgy (Newton)
Saturday, January 6	3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Plaistow) 4:00 PM Vigil Liturgy- THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (Plaistow)
Sunday, January 7	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)
Monday, January 8	8:00 am Liturgy, BAPTISM OF THE LORD (Newton) 6:00 PM Christmas Evening Prayer (Newton)

BAPTISM IS ONE OF THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Sacraments are celebrations and milestones in our relationship with God and are a must for a Catholic to go through in his/her life. Participating in sacraments is also God's way to show us His graces and love that invites us to salvation with Him.

WHY ARE CHILDREN BAPTIZED?

Children receive baptism primarily to remove original sin but also as a way to initiate a child into the family of the Church. Infant baptism has been debated for centuries. First, let us appeal to the Bible. John 3:5 says, "Jesus answered, 'Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.'" Note that Jesus says "no one" can enter heaven in that passage. In the spirit of brevity here is the short answer straight from the Catechism: "The practice of infant Baptism is an immemorial tradition of the Church. There is explicit testimony to this practice from the second century on, and it is quite possible that, from the beginning of the apostolic preaching, when whole "households" received baptism, infants may also have been baptized," (Acts 16:15,33; 18:8; 1 Corinthians 1:16). (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1252)

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF SPONSORS OR GODPARENTS?

Sponsors or Godparents for Catholic Baptism are like Sponsors for Confirmation. They assist in the faith development of the person being baptized. Sponsors or Godparents can also be helpful through their prayers and example, helping the child's parents fulfill their own promise to raise the child in the faith. Therefore, the faith of the Sponsors is important in fulfilling the baptismal promise of being raised in the Catholic faith. Sponsors must be able to show the value of the community of faith by their own example as active and committed members of the Church.

WHEN ARE BAPTISMS CELEBRATED?

Since Baptism incorporates a person as a member of the Body of Christ, the ideal time for the Sacrament's celebration is when the community gathers on Sunday (or Saturday evening) for Mass.

The Rite of Baptism during Mass consists of a welcome for the candidate at the beginning of Mass, and the actual Baptism immediately following a Profession of Faith. Baptisms are scheduled for the 4:00 pm vigil Liturgy on Saturday (Plaistow), or the 8:00 am (Newton) or 10:00 am (Plaistow) Liturgies on Sunday.

There are certain Liturgical celebrations (Christmas, RCIA dates, First Eucharist dates) and Liturgical seasons (notably Lent) when Baptism is not celebrated. There are unusual circumstances when Baptism is celebrated outside of Mass. Accommodations are made to help you and your family celebrate with our Parish family in an appropriate way. The Parish assists parents in these special cases.

A Baptism preparation session for parents is required to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism. Call the Parish Office at (603) 382-8324 for more information.





Bringing Home the Word

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph (B)

December 31, 2023

Family Values

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Some of the most popular television programs depict family interactions. Unfortunately, many of these families are dysfunctional, and those that are not often appear to be vapid, boring, even unrealistic. Today's readings offer examples of genuine family values and the kind of relationships for which most people yearn.

Sirach describes the tender care that bonds parents and children. First it is the parents who care for the children. Over the years the roles reverse, and adult children care for elderly parents.

Sunday Readings

**Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14 or
Genesis 15:1–6; 21:1–3**

Those who honor their father will have joy in their own children, / and when they pray they are heard.

**Colossians 3:12–21 or
Colossians 3:12–17 or
Hebrews 11:8, 11–12, 17–19**

And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection.

**Luke 2:22–40 or
Luke 2:22, 39–40**

The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom.

The family is the basic community, where one first learns the hard lessons of unselfishness and forgiveness. The psalm response also describes a model family. The husband will experience success in his work and enjoy the blessings of family life with his wife and their children. Paul provides a list of values to which family members should commit themselves: “compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another” (Colossians 3:12–13). Finally, the Gospel reading provides a glimpse into the lives of the Holy Family. Here they are—a refugee family with Joseph as the protector.

In a way, these are all “holy families.” Prayer is important in the first reading; fear of the Lord is rewarded in the psalm; Paul calls the people “God’s chosen ones” (Colossians 3:12). This feast is not meant to be only a look into the past at the Holy Family. It is an opportunity for us to look into the present and do our part to make our own families holy. †

***These are family values:
compassion, kindness,
humility, gentleness,
and patience, bearing
with one another and
forgiving one another.***

A Word from Pope Francis

All parents are guardians of their children’s lives, not the owners, and they must help them to grow, to mature.... This is the mission to which the family is directed: to create conditions favorable to the harmonious and full growth of its children, so they may live a good life, worthy of God and constructive for the world.

ANGELUS, ROME, DECEMBER 27, 2020



REFLECTION
QUESTIONS
QUESTIONS
REFLECTION

- What already makes your family holy?
- What might make it holier?

Born into the Ordinary

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

After the birth of Christ, we need not look to the extraordinary, the spectacular or the miraculous to find God. God is now found where we live—in our kitchens, at our tables, in our wounds, and in each other's faces.

That is hard to believe and always has been. When Jesus was on earth, virtually no one believed he was the Messiah, precisely because he was so ordinary, so unlike what they imagined God to be. They had expected a superstar, a king, someone who would turn the world rightfully upside down. Preaching meekness and gentleness, Jesus didn't live up to those expectations. In terms of his appearance, Jesus apparently wasn't worth describing. He looked like everyone else. Even after the resurrection, he is mistaken for a gardener, a cook, a traveler.

Things haven't changed much in two thousand years. Seldom does Christ meet expectations. We, like his contemporaries,



are constantly looking beyond the ordinary, beyond the gardener, the cook, and the traveling stranger, to try to find a miraculous Christ. It is for this reason that we fly off to Fatima or Lourdes to see a spot where the Blessed Virgin might have cried but fail to see the significance of the tears shed at our own breakfast table. We are intrigued by a Padre Pio who had the wounds of Christ on his hands but fail to see the wounds of Christ in those suffering around us or in our

own emotional and moral wounds. We pray for visions, but seldom watch a sunset. We marvel at the gift of tongues but are bored listening to babies. We look for Christ everywhere, except in the place where the incarnation took place: our flesh. Love is a thing that happens in ordinary places—in kitchens, at tables, in bedrooms, in workplaces, in families, in the flesh. God abides in us when we abide there. Through the Incarnation, God crawls into ordinary life and invites us to meet him there. †

From *Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Advent and Christmas*, 2005

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, so that all families,
and the family of humankind,
may grow in the ways of holiness,
we pray—Be born in us,
be born in our world.

The Redemptorists

A New Year's Resolution

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

I am a two-time cancer survivor. After the second diagnosis, I was stunned and went home, sat down in prayer, and then wrote my own creed.

I am going to strive to be productive for as long as I can.

I am going to make every day and every activity as precious and enjoyable as possible.

I am going to strive to be as gracious, warm, and charitable as possible.

I am going to strive to be healthy as long as I can.

I am going to strive to accept others' love in a deeper way than I have up to now.

I am going to strive to live a more fully "reconciled" life. No room for past hurts anymore.

I am going to strive to keep my sense of humor intact.

I am going to strive to be as courageous and brave as I can.

I am going to strive, always, to never look on what I am losing but rather to look at how wonderful and full my life has been and is.

And I am going to, daily, lay all of this at God's feet through prayer. Amen.

Life has never been more precious, nor more enjoyable. Happy New Year. †

From *Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Advent and Christmas*, 2019

WEEKDAY READINGS

January 1–6, 2024

Monday, Mary the Holy Mother of God:
Nm 6:22–27 / Gal 4:4–7 / Lk 2:16–21

Tuesday, Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen:
1 Jn 2:22–28 / Jn 1:19–28

Wednesday, Christmas Weekday:
1 Jn 2:29–3:6 / Jn 1:29–34

Thursday, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton:
1 Jn 3:7–10 / Jn 1:35–42

Friday, St. John Neumann:
1 Jn 3:11–21 / Jn 1:43–51

Saturday, Christmas Weekday:
1 Jn 5:5–13 / Mk 1:7–11 or
Lk 3:23–38 or 3:23, 31–34, 36, 38

Bringing Home
the Word 
December 31, 2023

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