

The Nativity of Our Lord Dec 25, 2021



SAINT MICHAEL AT INDIAN CREEK

18316 County Hwy N
Tomah, WI 54660

SAINT PAUL

408 W. River Street
New Lisbon, WI 53950

ST. JAMES

100 Bartell Street
Camp Douglas, WI 54618

**DIOCESE OF LACROSSE • IN FULL
COMMUNION WITH THE HOLY SEE**

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Youth Ministry

PCCW

POSTION OPEN

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Baptism and Marriage

Please call the parish office to arrange a time to meet with the priest and to schedule. Allow 6 months preparation time for marriage.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

7.30 am St Paul before Friday morning Mass @ St Pauls

5.30pm St James Saturday evening

Or call Parish Office to schedule your confession

Home visits & Sacrament of the Sick

Please call Father Letona at 608-562-3125 for information.

Merry
Christmas!

AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH

JOHN 1:14

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Merry Christmas my dear brothers and sisters!

We have faced difficulties in nearly all facets of our lives, we have seen fear on every side. The worst parts of our broken human nature seem to be multiplying and coming out in full force in acts of wonton violence and reckless hate. Families and friendships have been strained, if not outright broken, as our capacity to bear burdens has been worn thin by the events of a pandemic. Many are holding on to grudges and deep seated frustrations and are lost.

Through all of this a hand reaches out to us, to lead us and bring us peace, a hand so small and delicate, the hand of a newborn babe reaching out from a humble straw-filled feeding trough (manger) in a backwater outpost of the Roman Empire in the land of Judah.

It is the hand of the infant Savior, Jesus Christ. His hand seemed so insignificant to the eyes of the world. In the same way going to a Mass to celebrate the birth of the Savior (Christ's Mass) seems so insignificant to those who have no faith. But isn't that just like our God? To use what seems the most insignificant and useless things to effect change in the world.

In the prophet Isaiah we read: "The Lord has bared his holy arm, in the sight of all the nations; All the ends of the earth will behold the salvation of our God" (Isaiah 52:10). The people of God were awaiting a messiah who would be a great general and lead a glorious revolution against the oppressors of the world through the force of arms. "The prophecy finds fulfillment in the tiny arm of the baby Jesus coming out of his manger crib" (Barron, *Catholicism*, p.30.)

The infant Jesus, God in the flesh, born of Mary ever Virgin, "entered a world that was distorted by sin, by deep-seated opposition to God" (*Catholicism* p.30). In other words, the baby Jesus didn't enter a world that was all hunky-dory, it was a mess. It was such a mess that when He was born "the demons screamed and the pharisees schemed."

Today, many look to a number of things to save us in this troubled time: more money, more things, more shouting, more arguing, more anger, more politics... (and less church), the list can go on. Basically, we still scream and scheme.

That little hand of the baby of Bethlehem would grow to heal, cast out devils, raise the dead, and be stretched out on a cross and be pierced by a nail. Then, in the culmination of His task on earth, being raised from the dead, He appears once again, Risen, and reaches out His wounded hand and says "Peace be with you." He was born for this.

My dear friends, whatever you personally have been dealing with, whatever your struggles or frustrations, look to the crib of Bethlehem, and see the in the gentle face of the newborn King, and in His outstretched little hands, the beginning of your salvation. Have you ever held a baby? Do not their little hands grasp your fingers? Let His little hand grasp yours, let Him humble your pride, soften your anger, let Him bring peace to your heart. I know we all desire peace and some measure of joy in these days. Find it in Him. They say: "Know Christ, know peace; no Christ, no peace."

When you open presents, be grateful to the givers of those gifts, but also remember that the greatest gift is God coming to us in Jesus Christ. No supply chain crisis can break that. As you look at the warm hearth, the lights and Christmas tree, see in those things the warmth of God's love, the light He brings to a darkened world, and the life poured out on the Tree of Life, the Cross.

Ponder these words:

"O Holy Night! The stars are brightly shining.

It is the night of the dear Savior's birth!

Long lay the world in sin and error pining

Till he appear'd and the soul felt its worth.

A thrill of hope the weary soul rejoices

For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!

Fall on your knees Oh hear the angel voices Oh night divine Oh night when Christ was born

Oh night divine Oh night divine"

Merry Christmas to all,

Father Robert Letona

Legends of Christmas

On a cold December night long ago, a snowstorm raged throughout the forest. Seeking shelter from the terrible storm, a little child crept under the thick, strong boughs of a sturdy fir tree. He remained protected there until the storm had passed. The next morning the grateful child thanked the fir tree. After learning it had been the Christ Child who had been safe under the branches during that bitter cold night, the fir tree wept with joy. The fir tree's tears froze upon its boughs as icicles, which glistened and shone in the bright winter sun.

From ancient times to our present age, the Catholic Church has celebrated four Masses for Christmas. In fact, the name "Christmas" comes from the old English name for the Nativity of the Lord, "Christ's Mass."

Vigil Mass

This Mass retains much of the "Advent flavor." The Gospel reading is the Genealogy of the Messiah from Saint Matthew. At this Mass, we just "turn the corner" on Christmas, and some of the Advent mood still lingers. This is definitely seen as a Christmas Mass, and fulfills the obligation for the holy day.

Mass during the Night (Midnight Mass)

The official name for this liturgy is Mass during the Night. Since historically this was considered the first Mass of Christmas, it had been celebrated in the first hour of that day itself, that is, midnight. As might be expected at a night-time Mass, the theme of darkness is contrasted with the "splendor of the true light." Isaiah speaks of "the people who walked in darkness," and Saint Luke's scene has the shepherds "keeping the night watch over their flocks." The Gospel then ends with the angelic chorus, "Glory to God in the highest ..." and we rightly sing that at our Christmas liturgies.

Mass at Dawn

It is not surprising that light appears in this Mass at Dawn: from the Introit: "Today a light will shine upon us"; from the Collect: "your incarnate Word, the light of faith, which illumines our minds"; from the Responsorial Psalm: "A light will shine on us this day." The Lord Jesus is acclaimed as Savior in the first two readings. The Gospel from Luke has the shepherds leaving the fields, traveling to Bethlehem, to meet the Holy Family.

Mass during the Day

This is the most profound of the formularies. We see themes of universality, glory and mystery in the readings. "All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God," the Son is the "refulgence of [the Father's] glory." The Gospel is no longer a story of Christ's birth — it is the mysterious Prologue (beginning) of Saint John's Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God ... and the Word became flesh."

Christmas Cheer

Formed.Org

Dec 24 - Dec 25

Distract and teach at the same time with these wonderful Christmas stories

Kristoph & the First Christmas Tree: A Legend of St. Boniface

The Story of Christmas: An Audio Drama About the First Christmas

The Story of the Nativity: The Truth of Christmas

Nicholas: The Boy Who Became Santa

For the Adults

The Mystery of Christmas by Fr. Larry Richards

Christmas in Rome: A Celebration of the Nativity

FORMED Now! The Magi

Mary of Nazareth

The Fourth Wise Man

Saint of the Day for Dec 24

Story of Christmas at Greccio

What better way to prepare for the arrival of the Christ Child than to take a brief journey to Greccio, the spot in central Italy where Saint Francis of Assisi created the first Christmas crib in the year 1223.

Francis, recalling a visit he had made years before to Bethlehem, resolved to create the manger he had seen there. The ideal spot was a cave in nearby Greccio. He would find a baby—we're not sure if it was a live infant or the carved image of a baby—upon which to lay him, an ox and an ass to stand beside the manger. Word went out to the people of the town. At the appointed time, they arrived carrying torches and candles.

One of the friars began celebrating Mass. Francis himself gave the sermon. His biographer, Thomas of Celano, recalls that Francis "stood before the manger...overcome with love and filled with a wonderful happiness..."

For Francis, the simple celebration was meant to recall the hardships Jesus suffered even as an infant, a savior who chose to become poor for our sake, a truly human Jesus.

Tonight, as we pray around the Christmas cribs in our homes, we welcome into our hearts that same Savior.



Sharing our Family traditions With yours

I asked a few people to share their family traditions

"Our biggest tradition, is everyone putting on their antlers, and whatever other "hats" we have and just being together on Christmas day." Kris Madejczyk

"Wrapping up Baby Jesus from our creche before Christmas and have the youngest child open the first gift of Christmas, Baby Jesus and place him in the manger." Faith and Formation Group

"My favorite Christmas carol is 'Mary, Did you know?'" Wendy Murphy

"Every year we bake these I call them

Katie Connors, Cut-outs

1 C Butter 1 C Sugar 3 Eggs 1 1/2 tsp Vanilla

Cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Add eggs and vanilla continue mixing well.

3 1/2 C flour, sifted 2 tsp Cream of Tarter 1 tsp Baking Soda
Sift soda and cream of tarter with flour into butter egg mixture. Chill for 3 hours. Roll out on floured board and cut out favorite shaped cookies. Bake for 8-10 minutes at 375 degrees." Sheila Marx

"A must bake for the Joan Connor household are these Frozen Cookies (Ice Box Cookies)

2 C Brown Sugar 1 C shortening 2 Eggs 1 tsp salt 1
tsp Vanilla 1 tsp baking soda dissolved in 2 teaspoon hot water
1 tsp Cream of Tarter 1 C NutMeats

4 C flour adding one cup of flour at a time combine all ingredients into a bowl. Once combined well line a bread pan with parchment paper and press dough into pan. Chill overnight. Serve in slices." Joan Connor

"Stuffed shells, homemade bread sticks and salad with homemade cheesecake for dessert. Very Italian dinner for Christmas" Lori Heindl

Please share your family traditions for next years bulletin



Puer natus est nobis,
et filius datus est
nobis :
cuius imperium su-
per humerum eius :
et vocabitur nomen
eius, magni consilii
angelus.

“For a child is born to us, a son is given to
us; upon his shoulder dominion rests.

They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-
Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of
Peace.” (Isaiah 9:5)