

The Epiphany of the Lord



Guide us to Thy Perfect Light

† O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.



OUR LADY OF GRACE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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1st Reading

Isaiah 60:1-6

Responsorial Psalm

Psalms 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13

2nd Reading

Ephesians 3:2-3A, 5-6

Alleluia

Matthew 2:2

Gospel

Matthew 2:1-12

A reflection for the feast of the Epiphany

To whom do we give our allegiance? Who receives our homage? Before whom do we bend our knee?

The magi, wise and influential advisors in the Persian royal court, reading the signs in the stars, come to Bethlehem to find the newborn king of the Jews (Matt. 2:1-12). The king they will find is *very* different than the current king of the Jews.

King Herod is a tyrant. The historical record confirms that he was as cruel and violent as Scripture tells us he was. As is true of every cruel dictator (or schoolyard bully), his is a fragile ego. When he is in the midst of one of his fear-based tantrums there is no telling what kind of suffering he will inflict upon his people. When Herod is troubled, so is all Jerusalem. No one is safe from the violence that Herod might unleash when his power is threatened.

This small child who was born in a barn and spent his first night sleeping in a feeding trough represents a very different kind of king. In this child a radiant and glorious light will shine for all people (Isa. 60:1-6). As the psalm for this day's liturgy tells us, this king will "govern [the] people with justice" (Ps. 72:2). As a ruler, this king "rescues the poor when they cry out, the oppressed who have no one to help. He shows pity to the needy and the poor and saves the lives of the poor" (Ps. 72:12-13). This is the kind of ruler we should want. It is certainly the kind of ruler that we need.

Jesus—the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Prince of Peace—is the only one worthy of our ultimate allegiance. The magi, these foreigners, may not have fully understood who or what they would encounter, but they did come to understand that it was before the infant Jesus that they should bend their knees; to him they should offer their gifts. To King Herod they turned their backs, disobeying him as "they departed for their country by another way" (Matt. 2:12). That is the way to deal with cruel and violent rulers and the cruelty and hatred within us; we must find another way.

In times that are plagued by political conflict and animosity, amidst the fear and confusion of a pandemic that has cost so many their lives and others their livelihoods, we may be tempted to bend our knees and give allegiance to someone or something other than God. We might be tempted to surrender our wills and offer our loyalty to someone who promises to protect us from an unknown and threatening future. We might want to embrace some political ideology in the hopes that it will cure every ill. That never has and never will turn out well.

Only God—the Father as we have come to know him in the Son through the power of the Holy Spirit—is worthy of our worship, our allegiance, our homage. There are no modern day political leaders worthy of our ultimate allegiance or unflinching loyalty. However, as people of faith we know that there are criteria that we should use to evaluate our (imperfect) leaders: Do they seek to give relief to the poor? Do they show compassion to the afflicted? Do they have pity on the suffering and the lowly? We must also evaluate our own lives in this regard. Who receives our homage? Before whom do we bend our knees?



Christmas Week Mass Schedule

| Date | Time | December/January |
|-------------|-------------|---|
| 24 | 4:00 | Vigil of the Nativity of The Lord |
| 24 | 12am | Midnight Mass |
| 25 | 9:00 | The Nativity of The Lord |
| 26 | 8:30 | The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph |
| 26 | 10:30 | The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph |
| 27 | 8:00 | St. John, Apostle Evangelist |
| 28 | 8:00 | The Holy Innocents Martyrs |
| 29 | 8:00 | St. Thomas Becket, Bishop, Martyr |
| 30 | 8:00 | No Mass |
| 31 | 4:00 | Vigil, Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God |
| 1 | 4:00 | Not a Holy Day of Obligation this year- No Mass |
| 2 | 8:30 | No Mass |
| 2 | 10:30 | The Epiphany of The Lord |



January Mass Schedule 2022

| Date | Time | Name | Intention/Request |
|------|-------|---|--|
| 1 | | No Mass | |
| 2 | 8:00 | No Mass | |
| | 10:30 | Barbara Zanni | 1st Ann. By Family |
| 8 | 4:00 | Anna B. Cardillo | B'day Rem. By Patricia Cardillo |
| | | Louise Spremulli Chiarmonti | By Joe & Eleanor |
| | | Anthony & John Spremulli | |
| 9 | 8:30 | Stephen Kedelski, Jr | 1st Ann. By Family |
| | 10:30 | Angelina & Michael Capobianco & sons Michael & Louis | By Peter, Susan & Family |
| 10 | 8:00 | Bernardino Marraffino | By Family |
| | | Nonna Assunda Marraffino | |
| 11 | 8:00 | Alice Kane, Walter Doyle, & Alice Couto | By Dorothy Sacchetti |
| 15 | 4:00 | John Ginolfi | B'day Rem. By Linda & Vincent Castaldi |
| | | Ann Gower | Ann. Rem. |
| 16 | 8:30 | Frances Grasso | 10 yr Rem. By Family |
| | 10:30 | Matthew Dilorio | Mem. By Tony Sciarra |
| 17 | 8:00 | Jesse Gomez | By Wife Marcia & Children |
| 18 | 8:00 | Mary Ann Cecere | 2nd Ann By Don & Don, Jr. |
| 22 | 4:00 | Preston Walker | By Robert & Paul |
| 23 | 8:30 | Anna Carbone | B'day Rem. By Family |
| | 10:30 | Carmine Pezza | By Family |
| 24 | 8:00 | Anna Carbone | B'day Rem. By Family |
| 29 | 4:00 | Marie Rose Costabile | 19th Ann. By Family |
| 30 | 8:30 | Frances Grasso | 10th Ann. By Husband & Family |
| | 10:30 | Anthony & Betty Antoscia | Mem. By Pat & John Raposa |
| | | John & Marie Raposa, Loretta Iudicianni | |
| | | Shirley DiPippo, Ben Marcoccio | |
| | | Jason Pisani | |

All-powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at His coming and call us to His side in the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

“View from the Pew” by George W. Reilly

“Fun Christmas Facts to Get You in the Holiday Spirit”

* If you gave all the gifts listed in the "Twelve Days of Christmas," it would equal 364 presents. If you sing the famous festive tune and count up all of the gifts that are bestowed upon the lucky singer in the lyrics—French hens, turtle doves, calling birds, and so much more, you would end up with 364 presents, just about one for every day of the year.

* Eggnog dates back to medieval times and a drink called "posset." It is made with sweetened and spiced milk curdled with ale or wine and served hot, according to Healthline.com.

* Tinsel was once made of real silver, a much pricier adornment. According to the BBC, tinsel has its origins in the early 1600s in Nuremberg, Germany, where people "used thin strands of real silver in their trees to reflect candlelight, as they used to put real candles in their trees." And since silver was expensive, being able to use tinsel was something of a status symbol.

* The Statue of Liberty is the largest Christmas gift ever given. Standing over 150 feet tall and weighing 225 tons, the Statue of Liberty is an impressive figure. Since it was considered a holiday gift when it was given to the U.S. by France in 1886, it is officially the largest Christmas present in the world. Merry Christmas Lady Liberty.

* Thomas Edison and his business partner Edward H. Johnson invented Christmas lights. According to the Library of Congress, Edison created the first strand of electric lights in 1880, which he hung outside his laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey, during Christmastime that year. However, Johnson, his partner at Edison Illumination Company in 1882, became the first to wrap a strand of red, white, and blue bulbs around a Christmas tree. And the rest, as they say, is history.

* The first tree at New York City's Rockefeller Center in 1931 was an unadorned 20-foot tree from construction workers who were laboring at the center's construction site. A second tree went up two years later, this time a 50-footer with lights, sparking the annual tradition. Today, the towering tree is decorated each year with over 25,000 lights, according to *Time.com*.

* Christmas Day boasts the lowest number of relationship breakups. If you and your significant other make it to Christmas Day, you can probably take the day off from worrying that you are going to break up, according to a study conducted by Facebook.

And it is the most popular time of year to propose. According to *The Washington Post*, wedding experts and social media data indicate that Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are the two most popular days of the year to propose marriage.

* A record number of babies is conceived around Christmas. Studies have shown that September is the most popular time for babies to be born in the U.S. Check the calendar and that means that those little ones were conceived around the holiday season when couples are feeling rather, er, cozy. That eggnog always works.

* There are nearly 750 different versions of "Silent Night" which has long been a staple of the holiday season, when the hauntingly beautiful carol can be heard almost everywhere you go. So it makes sense that it is, in fact, the most recorded Christmas song in history.

* The tradition of putting up Christmas trees is more than 500 years old that can be traced back to Germany. According to History.com, "Germany is credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition as we now know it in the 16th century when devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes." The custom did not come to the U.S. until the late 1700s or early 1800s, via German settlers in Pennsylvania and took a long time to catch on.

* Mariah Carey wrote "All I Want for Christmas Is You," her now-ubiquitous Christmas pop song, in 15 minutes. Her collaborator Walter Afanasieff told *Billboard*, "That's why it's so popular—because it's so simple and palatable!"

* Children have been leaving cookies and milk out for Santa since at least 1896. No one knows exactly why it is now customary to leave out cookies and milk for Santa Claus, but, per National Public Radio, the first recorded reference to the tradition is from a Santa-themed magazine for children that was published in the late 19th century. A young girl wrote to *St. Nicholas: An Illustrated Magazine for Young Folks* that she and her brother were planning to leave the snack out for their Christmas visitor in case he was hungry.

Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night. Stay safe during the holidays.



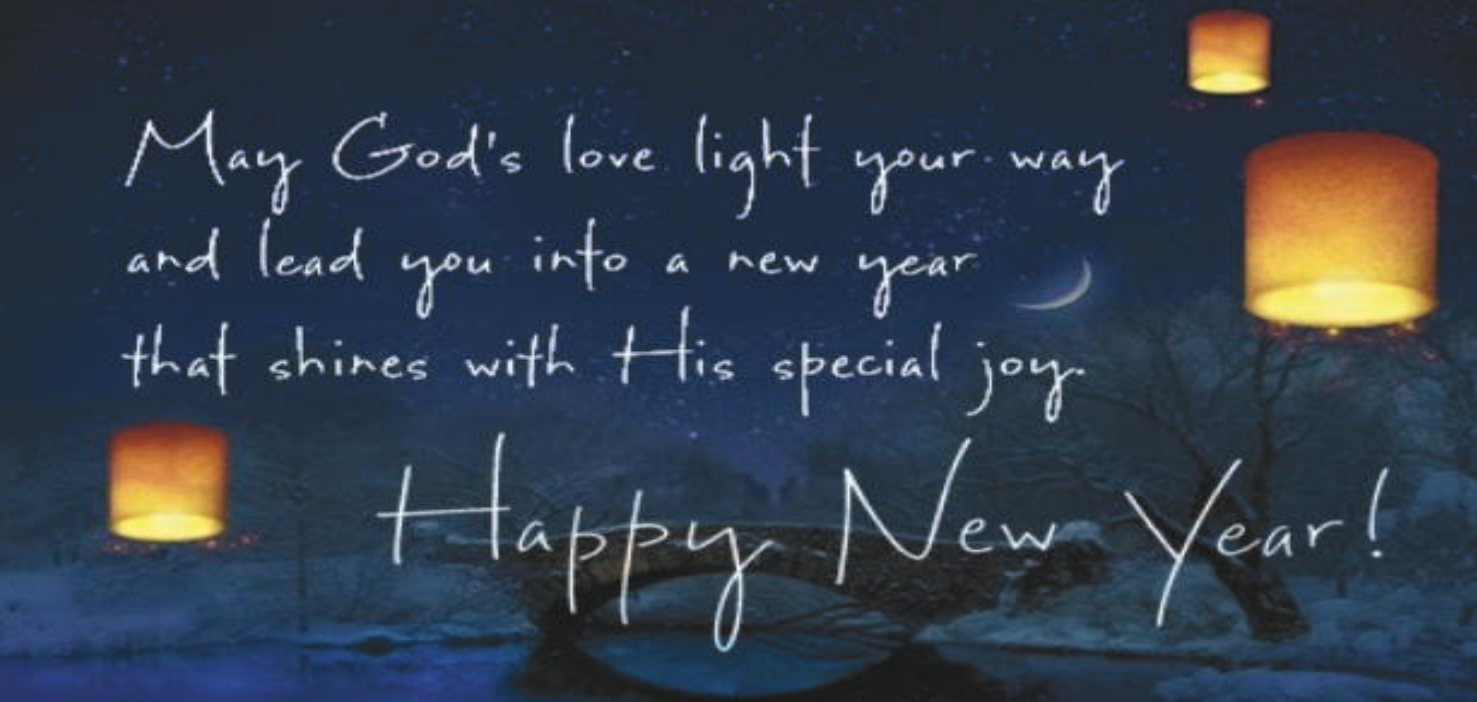
Happy New Year

**NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION:
THE POPE FRANCIS LIST**

1. Don't gossip.
2. Finish your meals.
3. Make time for others.
4. Choose the 'more humble' purchase.
5. Meet the poor 'in the flesh'.
6. Stop judging others.
7. Befriend those who disagree.
8. Make commitments, such as marriage.
9. Make it a habit to 'ask the Lord'.
10. Be happy.

Paradiso

Credit: appleinsider.com



May God's love light your way
and lead you into a new year
that shines with His special joy.

Happy New Year!

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|----------------------|-----------------|
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