

Saint Mary's Parish



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

—Isaiah 9:5

Christmas 2021

Reverend Fr. A. Edward Gretchko, Pastor

Weekday Mass Times: 6:30 p.m. Monday; 8:15 a.m. Tuesday-Friday

Weekend Mass Times: 4:30 p.m. Saturday; 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sunday

206 Cherry Road, NE Massillon, Ohio 44646 • www.stmarymassillon.com • 330-833-8501

MASS INTENTIONS**Saturday, December 18 — The Vigil of the Fourth Sunday of Advent**4:30 p.m. +Ed & Alice Ertle (*children*)**Sunday, December 19 — The Fourth Sunday of Advent**

(Readings: 12: Micah 5:1-4a/Ps 80:2-3,15-16,18-19/Hebrews 10:5-10/Luke 1:39-45)

8:00 a.m. The People of the Parish

10:30 a.m. +Anna & Titus Krempel (*Maryann Krempel/Snyder family*)**Monday, December 20 — Monday of the Fourth Week of Advent**

(Readings: 196: Isaiah 7:10-14/Psalm 24:1-2,3-4ab,5-6/Luke 1:26-38)

6:30 p.m. +Helen Schott (*family*)**Tuesday, December 21 — St. Peter Canisius, Priest & Doctor of the Church**

(Readings: 197: Song of Songs 2:8-14/Ps 33:2-3,11-12,20-21/Luke 1:39-45)

8:15 a.m. +Alice Valentine (*friend*)**Wednesday, December 22 — Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Advent**

(Readings: 198: 1 Samuel 1:24-28/(Ps) 1 Sm 1:1,4-5,6-7,8abcd/Luke 1:46-56)

8:15 a.m. +Harriet Louis (*Bingo Workers*)**Thursday, December 23 — St. John of Kanty, Priest**

(Readings: 199: Malachi 3:1-4,23-24/Psalm 25:4-5ab,8-9,10,14/Luke 1:57-66)

8:15 a.m. +Jo Kuivila, Dick Grant, Audrey & Bob Thieret (*family*)**Friday, December 24 — THE VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD**

4:00 p.m. The People of the Parish

7:00 p.m. +George Schneider (*family*)10:00 p.m. +Deceased Members of The Barahona Family (*family*)**Saturday, December 25 — THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD**

(Readings: 14: Isaiah 9:1-6/Psalm 96:1-3,11-13/Titus 2:11-14/Luke 2:1-14)

10:00 a.m. +Gene & Tim Valentine (*family*)**Sunday, December 26 — The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph**

(Readings: 17: Sirach 3:2-6,12-14/Ps 128:1-2,3,4-5/Col 3:12-21/Luke 2:41-52)

8:00 a.m. +Jennie "Ginger" Crone (*family*)10:30 a.m. +Mary Alice Miller (*Ann Hardy*)**FOCUSING ON THE GOSPEL****BY SISTER VERNA HOLYHEAD, SGS***Reprinted from "Living Liturgy" by Liturgical Press***Key words and phrases: "Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice."**

Elizabeth is so overwhelmed with joy when Mary comes to her, that her body reacts in two physical ways. First, the child she's carrying moves. Second, she cries out. The gospel writer is very specific with this action: she doesn't simply "greet" or "speak," as we may expect. Instead, she "cried out in a loud voice." There's a lack of inhibition in Elizabeth's joy that is unexpected, if not jarring. She expresses loud joy at not only seeing a member of her family whom she loves, but simultaneously making the connection that her cousin is *carrying her Messiah*. Do you think Mary was overwhelmed, or ran right into her arms?

SANCTUARY LAMP INTENTIONS**Candles Burning in Loving Memory of:****I. Frank Burkett, Sr.**
(*wife, Alfreda*)**II. Barbara Chapis**
(*Ron & Jane Sibila*)**III. Carol Mucci**
(*Marilyn Eckroate*)**IV. Rose Marie McPherson**
(*family*)**V. Shane Benton**
(*Weller Family*)**VI. Patrick Jordan**
(*Weller Family*)**VII. John Kessel**
(*Jewel*)**PARISH OFFICE CLOSED**

The parish office will be closed on Friday, December 24th, for the Christmas holiday. If you have an emergency, please leave a message and someone will return your call.

MUSIC FOR THE WEEKEND**The Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 18th & 19th***Readings begin on page 31 of the Missalette***Entrance Hymn:**

O Come, O Come Emmanuel—M 321

Song During the Preparation of the Gifts:

Emmanuel—H 90

Communion Processional Hymn:

Let all Mortal Flesh—H 355

Sending Forth Song:

Behold A Virgin Bearing Him—M 205

H—Hymnal M—Missalette

THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

Monday, December 20

6:30 p.m. Mass & Miraculous Medal Novena (C)

Tuesday, December 21

8:15 a.m. Mass & Miraculous Medal Novena (C)

6:30 p.m. Bingo (S) *(Doors open at 4:00 p.m.)*

Wednesday, December 22

9 am to 4 pm Eucharistic Adoration (PC)

Friday, December 24

Parish Office Closed

4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass (C)

7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass (C)

10:00 p.m. Christmas Midnight Mass (C)

Saturday, December 25

10:00 a.m. Christmas Mass (C)

C-Church PC-Parish Center LC-Labbe Center S-School

ATTENTION EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

Please take a moment and stop by the sacristy to pick up your certificate from the Diocese. All Eucharistic Ministers have been commissioned to continue in this ministry for the next three years.

SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK

This sacrament of mercy is provided to all in need of God's healing presence. Keep in mind that this sacrament is not necessarily "The Last Rites." Anyone who is terminally ill or facing major surgery may also receive this sacrament. Please contact Father Ed for an anointing.



Christmas Mass Schedule

Friday, December 24th 2021

Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m. 10:00 p.m.

Music begins 30 minutes before each Mass

Saturday, December 25th 2021

Christmas Day

10:00 a.m.

OFFERTORY INFORMATION

December 5, 2021..... \$17,309.00
 St. Mary's Parish uses WeShare for collection of electronic contributions. This system also allows parishioners to manage their giving with an online account. If you have any questions about this service, please call the Parish Office.

2022 CALENDARS



The 2022 religious calendars are here. Pick up one at any of the entrances. **Special thanks to Heitger Funeral Service for sponsoring the calendars again this year!**

ATTENTION LECTORS

The 2022 Lector Workbooks are here! Please stop by the sacristy and pick up your copy.

YEAR-LONG AND WEEK-LONG CANDLES



Are you looking for a nice way to honor your loved ones, living or deceased? You might consider honoring them with a candle here at St. Mary's Parish.

Our year-long candles are burning in the Sanctuary on the side altars in front of the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph. The

cost for these candles is \$100 per year. That price includes a candle and a nameplate with your intention printed and placed at your candle.

We also have week-long candles available for purchase. These candles are \$10.00 per week and burn in the sanctuary near the Tabernacle. These candles may burn for any special intention, which is then printed in the bulletin each week. If you are interested in purchasing any of these memorial lights, please call Nicole in the parish office.

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God



Friday, December 31st 2021

New Year's Eve Mass

4:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 1st 2022

New Year's Day Mass

10:00 a.m.

GOSPEL MEDITATION

ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

St. Augustine tells us that a "Christian is a mind through which Christ thinks, a heart through which Christ loves, a voice through which Christ speaks and a hand through which Christ helps." As we look around and out at the world, we do not have to search too far before we come face to face with inequity and injustice. There is so much unfairness, prejudice, anger, hatred, violence, and want. The stories of human heartache, people being hurt, deprived of life's necessities, loneliness, and sickness are far too commonplace. For many of the world's ills, the vices of greed, lust, pride, gluttony, and jealousy are clearly among the more significant root causes. Why doesn't God just step in and fix this mess? After all, God created this world, and one would hope that he would step up and take some measure of responsibility for it! Once we sit with this thinking for a while, we can begin to realize just how flawed it really is. God did take responsibility and God did fix the problem! God sent us Jesus Christ as the divine solution to the world's ills. It is not God who has shirked responsibility,



WE ARE GOD'S INSTRUMENTS

we have. We are the ones who continually fail to set our own personal needs, wants, and securities aside so that One more powerful than us can use us.

Mary had to set her needs aside in order for the Son of God to come into the world. Put simply, Mary listened and believed. Having opened herself to being an instrument of the Divine, God could use her as his mind, heart, voice, and hand. She became God's vessel so that God's greatness could reach the ends of the earth and peace could come upon the world. God's

fix for the world's difficulties is you and me. We are the ones who confess that Jesus Christ came into the world as the Son of God, the Prince of Peace, and herald of justice. All we have to do is believe, as did Mary, that what has been spoken to us by the Lord will be fulfilled. Then, we can step aside and be the Christians we claim to be. What a difference it would make if every person who professed to be Christian truly understood that the one and only vocation is to be God's instrument. What a beautiful, equitable, and just world it would be.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." - Lk 1:41-42

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2002, 1998, 1970-CCD

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FACT OF
FAITH

The Date of Christmas

BY FR. LARRY RICE

If you ask nearly anyone in the Western world the date of Christmas, chances are you'll be told its December 25. And if you ask them what Christmas celebrates, chances are you'll be told it's the commemoration of Christ's birth. But the question remains, was Jesus born on December 25? Well, the most diplomatic answer would be, "experts differ."

Given the popularity of Christmas in today's world, it's hard to imagine that Christmas wasn't always seen as particularly important. The earliest records we have of the Church observing the feast of Christ's birth date from the fourth century. By the time St. John Chrysostom was bishop of Constantinople in 398, most of the Christian world observed Christmas on December 25. The Church in Armenia was at that time marking Christmas on January 6; today much of the Orthodox Church follows this tradition.

But why was December 25 chosen? Many believe that the date was chosen to counter the Roman feast of Saturnalia. Certainly, in the history of the Church, and the history of Christmas in particular, there are plenty of examples of Christians shifting local pagan observances to Christian ones, effectively "baptizing" their culture and customs. This doesn't mean that Christmas is



A Nativity scene is displayed on Christmas on the grounds of St. Francis of Assisi Church in Haskell, N.J. (CNS photo/Octavio Duran)

some kind of disguised pagan festival, it simply reflects the very understandable human need to integrate our faith and culture and to allow our faith to transform every part of our lives.

Regarding the actual year of Christ's birth, we don't find much more clarity. Since the calendar is traditionally divided into epochs "before" and "after" Christ, one might presume that Jesus was born in the year one, or perhaps the year zero. Well, there was no year zero. And tradition has it that a sixth century monk names Dionysis Exiguus fixed the date at the year 1, but errors in his calculations have led scholars to believe that the actual year may be between 4 and 6 BC. Historical evidence, based on references from Luke's Gospel, might

lead us to concur. Astronomical research by Dr. William Bidelman at Case Western University makes a strong case for April or March of the year 2 BC.

Ultimately, for Christian believers, the precise date and year isn't of primary importance. For us, most important is the underlying fact, which we celebrate at Christmas: that God loved us enough to become human, to share our human experience, and achieve our redemption. Whenever we celebrate Christmas, we remember that Christ's Incarnation has changed our world—and our lives—forever.

Father Rice is the former Vocations Director for the Paulist Fathers. He currently serves as director of the University Catholic Center at the University of Texas-Austin.

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL NEWS

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

St. Mary School wishes you the Merriest Christmas! God gives us the most precious gifts each year: our students. We sincerely appreciate the time and generosity the families and parish shows us each day!



THE GIVING MANGER

When we returned from Thanksgiving break, grades K-2 heard the story The Giving Manger by Allison Hottinger in the library. It is a faith-based, fun, interactive family Christmas tradition that encourages acts of kindness, focuses on the joy of giving, and honors the real reason for Christmas: Jesus' birth.

After reading the story and explaining to the students how the Giving Manager works, we placed an empty manger in a prominent spot in the library. In the days/weeks leading up to Christmas, when a student received a kindness buck for performing a kind deed or act of service, they placed a piece of hay in the manger. The goal

is to complete as many kind acts as possible to fill the manger with enough hay, so Baby Jesus has a soft, warm place to lay his head on Christmas day.

When we return from Christmas break, the classes will see Baby Jesus lying in the giving manger they helped to make! This is a great family Christmas tradition. We are making it a St. Mary School Christmas tradition, but if you would like to make it a tradition in your family, please visit thegivingmanger.com.

We wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a blessed new year!



COUNTING DOWN

Starting on December 1st, second grade began the countdown to Christmas. Each day students come into the classroom and unwrap a gift to find out the theme of the day. There is an ELA and Math activity centered around the theme of the day. There is also an art activity to coordinate with the theme. So far second grade has made blankets with a snow theme, nativity ornaments, and gingerbread houses to name a few. We are having a blast counting down to Christmas!



CORONAVIRUS REMINDER

If someone in your house has Covid or suspects they have it, please call Mrs. Fink, the school nurse, and speak with her before sending your student to school. The quarantine guidance is different, if exposure occurs outside school.

Upcoming Dates

December 20 - January 3
CHRISTMAS BREAK

December 25—
MERRY CHRISTMAS!

January 1—
Happy New Year!

January 3—
Back to School

January 7—
End of Q2/
School Mass
Grades 5-8

January 10—
Family Night @
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