



St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church
Christmas 2021



“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” ~ Isaiah 9:6

May God grant you the light of Christmas,
which is faith; the warmth of Christmas,
which is love; the belief in Christmas,
which is truth; the All of Christmas,
which is Christ Jesus

Father Steve Reckker, Pastor

Father Art Baranowski

Father Jim Andres

Father Biju Parakkalayil

Father Michael Sullivan

Father Vito Martinez

Deacon Kurt Godfryd

Sister Valerie Knoche

And the Staff of St. Clement of Rome


A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve". The signature is stylized and cursive.



From the Pastor's Desk:

As we approached the Christmas season and the long-awaited end of another challenging year, I want to extend my most ardent prayers for you and your families. While this past year has continued to challenge us, we pray that the coming year is a year of renewal. We look forward to a renewed sense of safety, security, health and well-being for ourselves and those we love.

So much of the last few years has been a source of anxiety and division for our communities but now, we enter into a most blessed season. It is a season the resounds with the acclimation of the angels, "Glory to God in the highest and on Earth, peace to people of good will!" It is my prayer that we all find within us that good will that makes the peace of our Heavenly Father present to us now and throughout the coming year. With Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Blessed New Year ~ Fr. Steve



The Parish Office will be closed from noon on Dec. 24 and reopen Jan. 4th. Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!



Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year!

From Religious Education

**Celebrating Workshop
Build a Prayer Table**
Saturday, January 8
3:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.



Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds and the worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be Thy children, and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

New Year's Day Mass
Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God
Saturday, January 1 - 5:00 p.m.



Sharing Tree Thank You
Our Sharing Tree was a great success! Thank you to everyone who shopped for a bulb to contribute to the many organizations and the local families within our Romeo and Washington communities! We were able to provide gifts for 280 individuals! The love and support that our parish gave this Christmas is beautiful and is something that everyone should be proud of.



Another great example of people coming together to help one another!

Thank you to our parishioner Barbara Marshall and the Preceptor Delta Beta Sorority for making a huge difference for one of our friends from the JEMS homeless outreach. As many of you have seen in our bulletin we were looking for some used tires for a person living in his van. Christian Service was contacted with a wonderful gift of new tires for this gentleman. This group of woman decided to purchase two brand new tires for him. The tires were delivered last week and the man was overwhelmed with joy! What a great deed that was done. Thank you to these woman for their generosity and kindness! With the permission of this gentleman we just had to share the happiness of his picture! May God Bless him with warmth during these upcoming months.



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 Christ and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." - Lk 2:10-12

St. Clement of Rome

343 S. Main Street
 Romeo, Michigan 48065
 Phone: 586-752-9611
 Fax 586-752-1601
 Website: www.stclementromeo.org

PASTOR

Rev. Stephen C. Reckker

Weekend Assistant

Fr. Jim Andres, OFM CAP
 Fr. Art Baranowski
 Fr. Biju Parakkalayil

Deacon

Rev. Mr. Kurt J. Godfryd

Mass in Spanish

Fr. Michael Sullivan

Vicariate Hispanic Pastoral Minister

(North Macomb Vicariate)
 Sr. Valerie Knoche, I.H.M. 810-656-3282

Adult Education Coordinator

Mr. Russ Morgan 752-6984

Building Manager

Mr. Peter Bernadich 752-9611

Minister of Music

Mr. Bert Lord 752-9611

Religious Education Director

Mrs. Debbie Knoblock 752-6591

Middle School Youth Group

752-9611

Pregnancy, Counseling and Adoption

416-2300

Catholic Family Services

416-2300

Knights of Columbus

Mark DiPaola 586-292-5284

Email: GK7018@mikofc.org

Weekend Masses

Saturday - 5:00 p.m.

Sunday - 7:00 & 10:30 a.m.

Spanish - 1:00 p.m.

Holyday and Weekday Masses

As announced

Reconciliation (Confession)

By appointment

Baptism: Prior arrangements must be made.

Call the parish office.

Marriage: Arrangements must be made at

least six months in advance of the marriage

date.

Care of the Sick: Call the parish office at

any time to make arrangements for

Anointing, Communion calls or Visitations.

Funeral Luncheon Ministry: Please call

the parish office.

Registrations: New parishioners should

register at the parish office. Those moving

should notify the parish office.

Parish Council

Administration Commission

Charles Anglewicz.....752-9435

Christian Service Commission

Denise Kehren. 586-372-3576

Social Commission

Dorothy Kida752-9611

Rev. 11-18-21

WEEKLY EVENTS FOR December 27 - January 2

Monday, December 27

Parish Office Closed

Tuesday, December 28

Parish Office Closed

Wednesday, December 29

Parish Office Closed

Thursday, December 30

Parish Office Closed

6:00 p.m. - Rehearsal: McNally/
 Smith

Friday, December 31

New Years Eve

Parish Office Closed

3:00 p.m. - Wedding: Andrew

McNally/Samantha Smith

Saturday, January 1

**The Octave Day of the Nativity
 of the Lord; Solemnity of Mary,
 Mother of God**

5:00 p.m. - MASS - Int. Sandra
 Hamlin req by Darlene Hamlin
 & family

Int. Michael & Eileen Martin req
 by family

Int. Sophie Demczuk req by
 Kristin Palmeri

Sunday, January 2

Epiphany of the Lord

7:00 a.m. - MASS - Int. Margaret
 Bickmann req by Mike & Barb

Bickmann

10:30 a.m.-MASS - Int. St.

Clement Parishioners

1:00 p.m. - MASS (Spanish) - Int.

St. Clement Parishioners



Stewardship Ties

There is a lot of imagery around Christmas that has to do with adoption — or, more specifically, with a child being loved by another as if they belonged to that person and loved in such a profound way that in time, they do come to belong to that person.

We see this with Joseph and the infant Jesus. Joseph is not Jesus' biological father. But through a series of actions, and through his faithfulness in small, everyday matters, Joseph becomes the foster father of Jesus.

Perhaps we are parents who have adopted children, or we ourselves were adopted. We have also seen how, through a series of actions of love and sacrifice, someone can become the parent of a person who is not their "blood." A lot of times these families celebrate the day of the adoption. I've heard it called a "gotcha day," and it's marked joyously, like a birthday.

Most of us are not descended from the Israelites, God's Chosen People. But through a series of extraordinary actions of love and sacrifice, God has made Himself our parent, too. And through our own actions, and through faithfulness in small and everyday matters, we are His children.

But in this family, instead of blood ties, we have stewardship ties. It's not about who we look like, it's about how we treat one another. How we take care of one another.

So this Christmas, let's think about how we will celebrate our adoption. As much as it is Jesus' birthday, it's also our "gotcha day" — the day we received the gift of eternal family. — Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS



**Please Pray
for the Sick**



- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Florence Bauer | Ashleigh |
| Gary Bianchi | Motoligin |
| Thomas Breen | Ellen Myers |
| Mike Brosowski | Cody Nichols |
| Steve Bullock | Rocky O’Berry |
| Claudette Buria | Theresa |
| Maureen Burns | O’Connor |
| Adam Cole | Joe Olson |
| Connie Davis | Peter Osantowski |
| Elizabeth | Muriel Paquette |
| Decker | Paul Paquette |
| Nancy Degnan | Christine Pettineo |
| Lisa Elliot | Judy Polakowski |
| Christine Gamrat | Edmund |
| Thomas Gamrat | Radzilowski |
| David Gonczar | Jim Raska |
| Jacob Gordon | Richard Redd |
| Peter | David Reed |
| Grygorcewicz | Glenda Roberts |
| Henry Hainer | Karen |
| Amelia Hale | Rothenhauser |
| Donna John | Patricia |
| Ethan Kammer | Ruggirello |
| Jennifer Kelts | Paul Ruggirello |
| John F. Kern | Laura Staller |
| Glen Knoblock | Jennifer Stulz- |
| Daniel Knoche | Simunic |
| Matthew Knoche | Robert Szuba |
| Tom Krafft | Terri Turner |
| Sharon Lark | Jack Tytlawany |
| Ronald Lefchick | Andre |
| Bettie Lester | Vandavelde |
| Jim Libs | Carla Wicklund |
| Nancy Lukowski | Bubba Dan Wirick |
| Michalane | Michaela Wolford |
| Malack | Christine Yonkos |
| Domenico Maletti | Aldona Zynda |
| Sara Maletti | |
| Bob McFall | And those who |
| Bob Mickelson | care for them... |
| Andrew Miller | |



Merry Christmas and a very sincere Thank You for all the hard work that all our parishioners put forth in making this glorious holiday so special for our community! Once again, I'm so proud to be a part of our parish and to represent our parish as the Christian Service Coordinator. I look forward to the upcoming year with great things in store!

Cheers to a New Year!



As we end our year of 2021 we can reflect on what a hard year it has been. We struggled through the COVID pandemic and the many hardships it had brought our way to overcome. With this being said we must also reflect on the good things as well. It has made us all appreciate our family and friends and the love that we share with each other. It also reminds us of the people that we were made to be...kind, charismatic, and loving. We work hard at our parish in doing this and we are all examples of God's love. Let's continue this journey that our father has set forth for us. We look forward to this upcoming adventure and we WILL accomplish what he has planned for us! Thank you for all of your dedication to our parish and the love that you share daily! Strive to do your best and to be your best. God Bless us as we live our journey set forth!



God of love, Father of all, the darkness that covered the earth has given way to the bright dawn of your Word made flesh. Make us a people of this light. Make us faithful to your Word, that we may bring your life to the waiting world. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



HOLY FAMILY... Joseph's obedience to God was not a one time thing. His attention to the angel's warning kept Jesus from being murdered by Herod and led to the fulfillment of the prophecy that the Messiah would be a Nazorean. *Fidelity to God's will assures the best use of my talents, too!*



ANGELS... The word "angel" comes from the Greek word meaning "messenger." Like the bell, an angel communicates news from God to the people. Angels appeared both to Mary and Joseph, bringing news that Mary would give birth to Jesus. Angels also appeared to the shepherds in the fields to announce Jesus' birth.

For Those Who Have Died....

Thomas Gianino

Life has changed, not ended.....



Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.



Healing Prayer

Remember, the pain will pass. Your brokenness will heal. The sun will rise again in your soul. Peace will come. You will survive. You are not alone.... Ever. God walks with you. God holds you tenderly and close. God's grace will sustain you. You are loved. May you be blessed by God, God's Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Help us keep our sick list current. Please notify the parish office at 752-9611 when changes occur. We enjoy hearing the good news of recovery and extend our deepest sympathy for those who have departed.

Prayer before Christmas Dinner

God of all gifts, we thank you for the many ways you have blessed us this day. We are grateful for each of those who are gathered around this table. We ask you to bless us and our food and to bless those we love who are not with us today. In our gratitude and love, we remember Your humble birth into our lives and pray for those who are without enough to eat. We remember the stable in which You were born and pray for those who have no place to live. We remember Your challenging message of caring and giving and we pray for peace in families and nations throughout the world. We bless You and give You thanks in Your spirit who brings our hearts to live this Christmas day and forever. Amen



Please Pray for the Members Serving Our Country

- Cpt. Nicole Adenomas*
- MSG Omar Ambriz*
- CTM2 Jonathan Behm*
- Spc. William Boeve*
- Pvt. Dakota Burdo*
- Capt. John L. Fellows*
- Sr./AMN Michael P. Fellows*
- AIC Andrew Fons*
- Pfc. Brian Gaines*
- SSGT Adam S. Girardot*
- Sgt. James Griffie*
- Spc. Mark A. Lipinski*
- SSGT Ian McLaughlin*
- SSG. Brian Niebel*
- Maj. Catherine Peuterbaugh*
- Spc. Zacari Pytleski*
- MC1 Jeff Richardson*
- 2nd Lt. Stephen Rutherford*
- Chief Jacob Shey*
- E5 Rebecca Sovereign*
- Spc. Michael Stobak*
- Maj. David Stys*
- Pfc. Bill Thompson*
- Spc. Thomas Vani*
- Pfc. Evan Vanouwer*
- Sgt. Bradley Wing*
- L/Cpl. Robert Wing*



The Right to Life of North Macomb County wishes you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Thank you for your support throughout the year.



Parish and Family Life Ministry wish you a very Merry Christmas and New Year filled with joy and blessings!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your family from the Knights of Columbus



Poinsettia... Poinsettias are associated with Christmas as the lily is with Easter. In Mexico it blooms at Christmas time and is called the “**Flower of the Holy Night.**” Its name is from the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico, Dr. Joel Poinsett.

Coming Back to Church

Question: I have been away from the Church for a few years and really want to get active again, not so much for me, but for my children. Is this a bad reason to come back to Church?

Answer: If you are on your way to the supermarket, and you are forced to detour from your usual route because of road work, does the food you buy taste different? Is the meal less filling? Are the vegetables less tasty? Of course not. In our faith journey, there are many detours called sin. Some are greater than others, some are even a bit longer. But God's grace comes to us in ways we understand and recognize and need. Your children leading you back to the Church is not as important as the fact that you are back. This is an opportunity for you to renew, strengthen, and deepen your faith. Regardless of how we get to Church, or what draws us closer to God, the fact is we are there. Do what you need to do to get right with God and the Church. Go to confession, begin good family religious practices, and be involved in the ministries your parish offers. Be more than a lukewarm parishioner. Be the kind of Catholic you want your children to be.

Lord, hold our troops in Your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for the selfless acts they perform for us in our time of need. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen

Prayer of a Soldier's Mother

Oh, Sweet Mother Immaculate receive my earnest plea. To guide and guard my soldier son/daughter; take care of them for me. When danger stalks too close to them, their hand in yours to take, and lead them to a place secure; my child, do not forsake. But, most of all, dear Mother mine, their soul I trust to thee, that grace sublime in them may shine and God-like they may be. Amen.

Weekly Soup for the Homebound

Do you know anyone who is elderly and home bound, anyone who has undergone a recent surgery, or anyone who is struggling with health issues and would appreciate a weekly visit to drop off some soup? If so, contact Christian Services 586-651-0734 and we will add them to our SOS ministry. We are currently deliver soup weekly to 27 households. The SOS (serving others soup) ministry delivers soup that is donated from the Romeo Family Restaurant.

CHRISTMAS



Merry Christmas from the Rosary Makers

Wishing you and your family a Very Merry Christmas and God's Blessings in the New Year !



The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph



Families can be very difficult things to negotiate. This is true not only of our families of origin, the current family of which we are a part, the family of our Church, our society, and our global family as well. Everything human can be found in family stories. Those stories speak of wonderful life-giving successes as well as painful spirit-robbing abuses. Our greatest joys and our greatest wounds are usually connected with the experience of family. Our needs, experiences, and unresolved baggage often color what we bring to our familiar relationships. They contribute to our level of defensiveness, how guarded and protected we become, and what prejudices we believe.

In order to break the cycle of dysfunction we have to remember that it is not only by human effort that we negotiate the difficult and challenging events of our lives. There is a Divine Effort at work as well. For sure, the human effort can create quite a mess and easily destroy lives. This is true of any family with which we are associated. Today's Feast of the Holy Family serves to help us understand that there is a Divine Story being told as well. It is a story of perseverance in the face of hardship, determination in the face of despair, healing when we see nothing but wounds, and light where there is darkness.

Do we believe that God is always working, guiding, restoring, and leading? Unless we do, we will never be free from the imperfections and wounds that bind us and never be able to understand what it really means to forgive. Pope Francis tells us that the "light which comes from the Holy Family encourages us to offer human warmth to other families." While this is most certainly true, we can only really begin to do this when we realize that we are still works in progress, not anchored to the wounds and sins of our past, and still a leading star in God's continually unfolding story of love. The Holy Family persevered and radiated warmth because they knew they were not alone. We can too.



Loving God, during this holy season of Christmas, we ask for your blessing on all families. Let Mary's openness to your wondrous ways be an inspiration to place all trust in you. Let Joseph's courage provide hope during times of anxiety and uncertainty. Let Jesus' life ignite all families with a spirit of light and love. May the grace that encircled the Holy Family widen to embrace all families. For this we pray. Amen.



Thank You from the Rosary Makers

The Rosary Makers would like to thank all who have made contributions to our ministry. The donations have been used for supplies and shipping of rosaries to many missionaries, local churches, the Veteran's Mass, and distribution to St. Clement Parishioners.

Candy Canes



Some scholars believe a confectioner developed candy canes to represent Jesus. The shape of the "J" was for Jesus, or the shepherd's staff. The white color symbolized purity, while the red stripes indicated blood. Peppermint is similar to hyssop, the Middle Eastern mint mentioned in the Bible.



Come and join us for Family Winter Movie Night!

January 7, 2022 and 6:30 p.m.
in the Church.

We will watch Disney's Raya and the Last Dragon.

Snacks and refreshments will be served.
RSVP to the Religious Education office
(586)752-6591.



Special Christmas Eve Music

(begins 30 minutes before each Mass)

- 4:00 Mass - Rebecca Hnatyk, Cantor and Soloist
- 6:00 Mass - Rebecca Hnatyk, Cantor and Soloist
- 10:00 Mass -Adult Choir and Annie Dishnow Cantor

Special Christmas Day Music

(begins 20 minutes before each Mass)

- 9:00 Mass - Audrey and Olivia Brown Cantors and soloists
- 11:00 Mass - Audrey and Olivia Brown Cantors and soloists

Dec 26 - Musical preludes begin 15 minutes before Mass

10:30 Mass - Adult Choir & Tessa Magsoudi

Jan 2 - Musical preludes begin 15 minutes before Mass

10:30 Mass - Adult Choir and Suzanne Rauch, violin & David Hill, harp

Bring a Bell to ring during the singing of the Gloria



Vigil Lights

Special Intentions

- ~ Michigan and Utah
- ~ Family blessings
- ~ Safety for travelers



LAYPEOPLE By Edgar A. Guest (1881-1959)

Leave it only to the ministers, and soon the church will die; leave it to the womenfolk—the young will pass it by.

For the church is all that lifts us from the coarse and selfish mob, and the church that is to prosper needs the laymen on the job.

Now, a layman has his business, and a layman has his joys, but he also has the training of his little girls and boys; and I wonder how he'd like it if there were no churches here, and he had to raise his children in a godless atmosphere.

It's the church's special function to uphold the finer things, to teach that way of living from which all that's noble springs; but the minister can't do it singlehanded and alone, for the laymen of the country are the church's building stones.

When you see a church that's empty, though its doors are open wide, it's not the church that's dying—it's the laymen who have died; it's not just by song or sermon that the church's work is done, it's the laymen of the country who for God must carry on."



Wishing you a **MERRY CHRISTMAS** and a safe and blessed **NEW YEAR** from the R.C.I.A. and Adult Faith Enrichment



A Blessed and Merry Christmas to All From the Funeral Luncheon Committee

Follow the K of C on Facebook
www.facebook.com/Knights7018

Mass Times on the Road... Traveling?
Need the nearest Catholic Church and Mass times? www.masstimes.org



There will be **NO** walking in the gym December 24th through January 3rd.



Book Club

Tuesday, January 25
at 10:00 a.m.

Discussing "Busy Lives and Restless Souls"

Support Our Featured Advertiser!



Culligan Water Conditioning
752-6527



AGAPE Center

The Agape Center is your North Macomb resource center for those living within our boundaries who seek emergency food and financial assistance. We are located at 347 S. Main Street in Romeo. Our mission is to help the Church share our love and resources with our most vulnerable neighbors.

Helping us to achieve this mission are our many dedicated volunteers and partner churches: St. Clement of Rome (Romeo), St. Isidore (Macomb), SS. John and Paul (Washington), St. John Vianney (Shelby Twp.), St. Kieran (Shelby Twp.), St. Lawrence (Utica), St. Francis/St. Maximilian (Ray) and St. Therese of Lisieux (Shelby Twp.). We are also partnered with several St. Vincent de Paul conferences, private donors, Romeo Goodfellows, Romeo Lions Club, the Macomb Food Program, Forgotten Harvest, United States Postal Service – Romeo and other community groups.

Our eligible food pantry clients receive Easter and Thanksgiving assistance. In addition, our annual Sharing Tree program assists those who need help with providing gifts for their families at Christmas. Gift tags are distributed throughout the community and gifts are returned to the Agape Center for clients to pick up in time for Christmas.

Basic services offered at Agape Center are:

- **Food Pantry** – Open Monday and Wednesday 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. and Thursday 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
- **Forgotten Harvest** – Rescues surplus food from stores and donates it to emergency food pantries. Each Tuesday afternoon eligible individuals/families are provided with food from the items delivered. Hours are 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- **Financial assistance** - Given to persons/families referred to the center by a supporting parish or St. Vincent DePaul conference.
- **Community First Health Center WIC** (Women, Infants and Children) Services – Medical professionals give tips on shopping, cooking and eating well and connects moms with children 5 and under with other health and wellness services. The WIC clinic will be open Mondays from 9:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. in the pantry area. Please note: Due to COVID, the WIC Clinic is temporarily on hold. If you need their services, please call 586-749-5173, ext. 232.
- **Community First Homeless Healthcare** - A representative will provide access to primary health care services, preventive and emergency dental care and health education and behavioral health services. The representative will be in the pantry area once a month on Mondays from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Please note: Due to COVID, the Homeless Healthcare representative is temporarily unable to come. If you need their services, please call 586-552-8333.

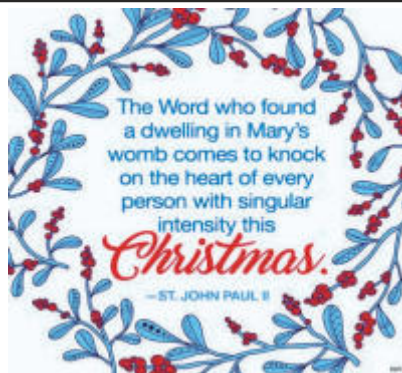
The Agape Center depends upon the generosity of volunteers and donors to fulfill our mission of sharing our love and resources with those in need. We are a 501 (c) (3) organization, and all donations are tax deductible. Your donation can be made in memory of or in honor of a family member, friend or special person or group. For your convenience, donations can be made online. Please visit www.agapenorthmacomb.org and click on the “give” page. The Agape Center gladly accepts non-perishable food, personal hygiene items, cleaning supplies, paper products, etc. The Agape Center does not accept furniture, clothing or household items. All donations can be made anytime during pantry hours.

The Agape Center is an agency of the United Way 211 emergency system for client referral and is an equal opportunity provider. Any questions regarding Agape Center can be directed to Kathy Mollon, Coordinator of Programs and Volunteers, at 586-336-6842 or visit our website at www.agapenorthmacomb.org.



Merry Christmas from the Ministry to the Sick

The St. Clement Ministry to the Sick members wish a Merry Christmas filled with the Joy to all in our parish.



Merry Christmas from the Comfort Makers

CHRISTMAS BALLS

Balls are round, a shape that reminds us that God's love has no end. The balls also represent the world into which Jesus came as Emmanuel - "God with us."

Liturgical Appointments for January 1/2

	Saturday 5:00 p.m.	Sunday 7:00 a.m.	Sunday 10:30 a.m.
Presider	Fr. Jim	Fr. Steve	Fr. Art
Lector			



A Family Perspective

Christmas: *Today's gospel reminds us God chose to enter human history in a family. By Divine design the salvation of the world began in a family. Family was the best God the Creator could do for his Beloved Son. Jesus was our first Christmas gift.*

Holy Family: *Today's gospel contains this truth about parenting: "but his parents did not know." One of the reasons parenting is so difficult is because our children don't tell us everything. If the Holy Family had trouble with their teenager, why do we think it will be easier for us? ~ Bud Ozar*



The Nativity of the Lord

"He so loved us that for our sake He was made man in time, through Whom all times were made; was in the world less in years than His servants, though older than the world itself in His eternity; was made man, Who made man; was created of a mother, whom He created; was carried by hands which He formed; nursed at the breasts which He had filled; cried in the manger in wordless infancy, He the Word without Whom all human eloquence is mute (St. Augustine, Sermon 188)." The miracle of what happens at Christmas is truly an awesome mystery. Revealed in the silent ordinariness of life is God's intimate love for humanity and all that he made. The Word, existing for all time, comes and dwells among us. God kisses us. We can seek and soar with playful delight as a joy never known before fills our heart.

Joy is best expressed through dance. There is just something truly wonderful about the self-abandon a beautiful melodic dance reveals. If we are able to let go and really be free, it celebrates life in a way few other experiences really can. With the birth of Jesus Christ, God takes the Divine Dance to a deeper and more tangible level. We can now not only see what we believe but believe what we see! This most perfect dance is a call to beauty, innocence, truth, purpose, hope, faith, and love. Today we know, beyond doubt, that we are a necessary part of God's beautifully choreographed masterpiece of life and not just a random happening without real intent or purpose. We are loved, treasured, and blessed.

Accepting the truth of God's birth in time we also accept an invitation to dance with God. We can let go of what tethers us to anxious concerns and superficial securities. Throw caution to the wind and go with God. We have been blessed with talents, gifts, and life eternal. Follow the rhythm of the dance with joy and listen to what the Word who became flesh tells us about what the next steps can be. Today, heaven remains the same, but earth has been profoundly changed.

Readings for the week of December 27



Monday: 1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 [12]/Jn 20:1a, 2-8

Tuesday: 1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7b-8 [7]/Mt 2:13-18

Wednesday: 1 Jn 2:3-11/Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6 [11a]/Lk 2:22-35

Thursday: 1 Jn 2:12-17/Ps 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10 [11a]/Lk 2:36-40

Friday: 1 Jn 2:18-21/Ps 96:1-2, 11-12, 13 [11a]/Jn 1:1-18

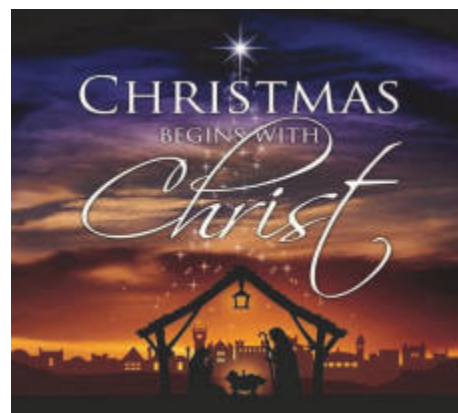
Saturday: Nm 6:22-27/Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8 [2a]/Gal 4:4-7/Lk 2:16-21

Sunday, January 2: Is 60:1-6/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13 [cf. 11]/Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6/Mt 2:1-12



A few years ago, a list was compiled from Pope Francis' most popular teachings and quotations to form his most popular New Years' resolutions. Here they are:

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.

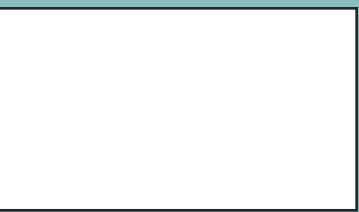


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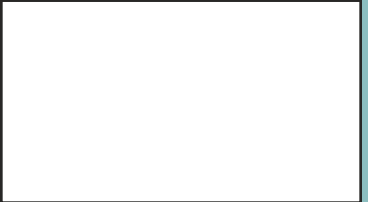
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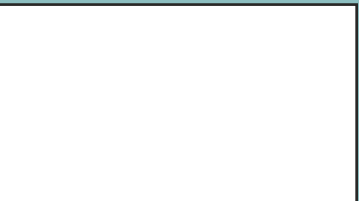
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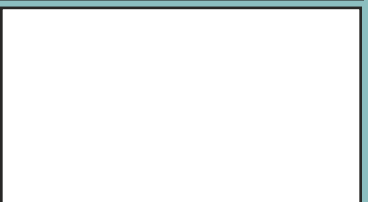
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