

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church Christmas & Holy Family Newsletter

My Dear Parishioners,

This is a weekend of memories. I pray that as we reminisce about Christmas past, that we may do so while remembering that God really and truly loves us and our families. For 2000 some years, we have been celebrating this collective memory: that God was born of the Virgin Mary in the person of Jesus Christ, and that He chose to be born this way because of His love for us. His love is further symbolized in the wooden manger that held Him some 2000 years ago, for that wooden manger actually foreshadows the wood of His Holy Cross, and we know, that, in love, He accepted the Cross for our salvation and the salvation of the whole world. This Christmas, and every Christmas, we celebrate this beautiful memory of God's Love, a memory which we now pass on to our children and our grandchildren.

On behalf of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, the Pauline Fathers, our Deacons, and our staff, I do wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a very happy celebration of this weekend's Feast of the Holy Family.

Fr. Michael J. Pawelko





Catechesis on Christmas

by

Pope Francis

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

In this catechesis, as we approach Christmas, I would like to offer some food for thought in preparation for the celebration of Christmas. In the Midnight Mass liturgy the Angel's proclamation to the Shepherds: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:10-12).

In imitation of the shepherds, we too move spiritually towards Bethlehem, where Mary gave birth to the Child in a stable, "because there was no place for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). Christmas has become a universal feast, and even those who do not believe perceive the appeal of this occasion. The Christian, however, knows that Christmas is a decisive event, an eternal fire that God has kindled in the world, and must not be confused with ephemeral things. It is important that it should not be reduced to a merely sentimental or consumerist festival. Last Sunday I drew attention to this problem, underscoring that consumerism has hijacked Christmas. No: Christmas must not be reduced to a merely sentimental or consumerist feast, full of gifts and good wishes but poor in Christian faith, and also poor in humanity. Therefore, it is necessary to curb a certain worldly mentality, incapable of grasping the incandescent core of our faith, which is this: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father" (Jn 1:14). And this is the kernel of Christmas; rather, it is the truth of Christmas, there is no other.

Christmas invites us to reflect, on the one hand, on the drama of history, in which men and women, wounded by sin, ceaselessly search for truth, the search for mercy, and the search for redemption; and, on the other hand, on the goodness of God, who has come towards us to communicate to us the Truth that saves and to make us sharers in His friendship and His life. And this gift of life: this is pure grace, not by any merit of our own. There is a Holy Father who says: "But look there, over there, there: seek your merit and you will find nothing other than grace". Everything is grace, a gift of grace. And this gift of grace, we receive it through the simplicity and humanity of Christmas, and it can remove from our hearts and minds the pessimism that has spread even more nowadays as a result of the pandemic. We can overcome that sense of disquieting bewilderment, not letting ourselves be overwhelmed by defeats and failures, in the rediscovered awareness that that humble and poor Child, hidden away and helpless, is God Himself, made man for us. The Second Vatican Council, in a famous passage from the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, tells us that this event concerns every one of us: "For by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man. He worked with human hands, He thought with a human heart, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, He has truly been made one of us, like us in all things except sin."

But Jesus was born two thousand years ago, what does this have to do with me? It affects you, and me, each one of us. Jesus is one of us: God, in Jesus, is one of us. This reality gives us much joy and courage. God did not look down on us, from afar, He did not pass us by, He was not repulsed by our misery, He did not clothe Himself only superficially in a body, but rather He fully assumed our nature and our human condition. He left nothing out except sin: the only thing He does not have. All humanity is in Him. He took all that we are, just as we are. This is essential for understanding the Christian faith....Christmas is the feast of Love incarnate, of love born for us in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the light of mankind shining in the darkness, giving meaning to human existence and to the whole of history.



Sunday Mass Readings

Readings for Christmas Eve

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) - Mass During the Night

Reading 1: [Isaiah 9:1-6](#)

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing, as they rejoice before you as at the harvest, as people make merry when dividing spoils. For the yoke that burdened them, the pole on their shoulder, and the rod of their taskmaster you have smashed, as on the day of Midian. For every boot that tramped in battle, every cloak rolled in blood, will be burned as fuel for flames. For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, from David's throne, and over his kingdom, which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13](#)

R. (Lk 2:11) Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.

► Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all you lands. Sing to the LORD; bless his name. **R.**

► Announce his salvation, day after day. Tell his glory among the nations; among all peoples, his wondrous deeds. **R.**

► Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice; let the sea and what fills it resound; let the plains be joyful and all that is in them! Then shall all the trees of the forest exult. **R.**

► They shall exult before the LORD, for he comes; for he comes to rule the earth. He shall rule the world with justice and the peoples with his constancy. **R.**



Reading 2: [Timothy 2:11-14](#)

Beloved: The grace of God has appeared, saving all and training us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age, as we await the blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of our great God and savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to deliver us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people as his own, eager to do what is good.

Alleluia

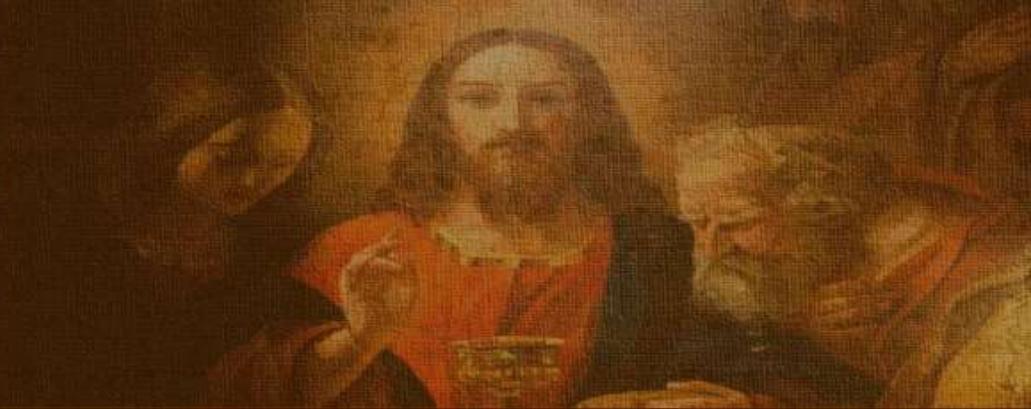
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

► I proclaim to you good news of great joy: today a Savior is born for us, Christ the Lord.

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

Gospel: [Luke 2:1-14](#)

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. 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." And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."



Sunday Mass Readings

Readings for Christmas Day

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) - Dawn

Reading 1: [Isaiah 62:11-12](#)

See, the LORD proclaims to the ends of the earth: say to daughter Zion, your savior comes! Here is his reward with him, his recompense before him. They shall be called the holy people, the redeemed of the LORD, and you shall be called “Frequented,” a city that is not forsaken.

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 97:1, 6, 11-12](#)

R. A light will shine on us this day: the Lord is born for us.

► The LORD is king; let the earth rejoice; let the many isles be glad. The heavens proclaim his justice, and all peoples see his glory. R.

► Light dawns for the just; and gladness, for the upright of heart. Be glad in the LORD, you just, and give thanks to his holy name. R.

Reading 2: [Timothy 3:4-7](#)

Beloved: When the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, He saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

Alleluia

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

Gospel: [Luke 2:15-20](#)

When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.





Sunday Mass Readings

Readings for the Feast of Holy Family

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

Reading 1: [Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14](#)

God sets a father in honor over his children; a mother's authority he confirms over her sons. Whoever honors his father atones for sins, and preserves himself from them. When he prays, he is heard; he stores up riches who reveres his mother. Whoever honors his father is gladdened by children, and, when he prays, is heard. Whoever reveres his father will live a long life; he who obeys his father brings comfort to his mother. My son, take care of your father when he is old; grieve him not as long as he lives. Even if his mind fail, be considerate of him; revile him not all the days of his life; kindness to a father will not be forgotten, firmly planted against the debt of your sins — a house raised in justice to you.

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5](#)

R. (cf. 1) Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

► Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways! For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork; blessed shall you be, and favored. **R.**

► Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the recesses of your home; your children like olive plants around your table. **R.**

► Behold, thus is the man blessed who fears the LORD. The LORD bless you from Zion: may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life. **R.**



Reading 2: [Colossians 3:12-21](#)

Brothers and sisters: Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Wives, be subordinate to your husbands, as is proper in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and avoid any bitterness toward them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, so they may not become discouraged.

Alleluia

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

► Let the peace of Christ control your hearts; let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel: [Luke 2:39-40 \(Short Version\)](#)

When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.



Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Mass Schedule

Thursday, December 31st

4:00 PM - Church

Friday, January 1st

9:30 AM - Church