

DECEMBER 25, 2016

Scripture Reflection

Luke's account of the birth of Jesus is one of the most familiar texts of the New Testament. The details are so familiar. This humble scene has inspired centuries of art, from great masterpieces to the school pageant. Luke situates the birth of Jesus in the course of history and in the midst of the everyday public life of secular rulers and humble shepherds. But this is no ordinary birth event. The child is "of the house and family of David." He is the fulfillment of God's promise that has stirred the hearts of God's people for generations. The humble surroundings point to the nature of Jesus' mission, and the future of humankind is forever changed in this night.

In the Gospels of John, Matthew, and Luke, Christmas celebrates the light of God's Word-made-flesh. Light comes in many forms. Some light is direct. Others are a mere reflection of another source. The glow of a candle, lights on a highway, motion detectors, and lamps in our homes lessen darkness, offer comfort, provide guidance, calm fears, and help us see. Lights in church tell us God is here.

Celebrate Christmas as people of hope who give praise and thanks for Jesus Christ. Restore peace by offering comfort and hope in actions that make God's glory known. Let the light of our lives match the lights that decorate our trees and homes to lessen darkness, offer comfort, give guidance, calm fears, and help all see that God is here. That's how all the ends of the earth can see the saving power of God.

The theologian and novelist Frederick Buechner writes: "Once we have seen God in a stable, we never know where we might see him again. If God is present in this least auspicious place, there is no place or time so lowly or earthbound but that holiness can be present, too. For just when God seems the most helpless, God is the most strong; and just where we least expect him that he comes most fully." On this Christmas Day, may you see God in your stable in the midst of those you love; may you know in every season of the New Year the joy of "preparing him room" in your hearts and homes.

• **What is one way that you can testify to the power of the Christ-light this Christmas?**

AT HOME WITH THE WORD 2016. (C) 2015 ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO, LITURGY TRAINING PUBLICATIONS, 3949 South Racine Avenue CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60609. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION.

Living the Word, Laurie Brink and Paul Colloton, World Library Publications, 2016, pages 26-27.

CONNECTIONS, Media Works, December 2016.

Renovation Work in Progress

Work continues to proceed on the building immediately next to the Cathedral Rectory located at Thirteenth Avenue and Fourteenth Street. This renovated building will house parish offices, religious education facilities, and an activity center.

The new roof has been completed and is water-tight. At a later date, the bell tower will be installed with a roof access hatch.

Exterior demolition on the stairwell on the Fourteenth Street side is complete, along with the removal of the exterior elevator and loading dock at the alley side. The interior stairwell at the alley side between the three floors has been removed. Some interior demolition at this location is being carried out before there is progress with construction on a new stairwell.

The window rough-in for the new windows is in progress on the upper and middle floors. This work is proceeding well considering the harsh weather and temperatures. Both stained glass windows from the convent and new clear glass windows possessing etchings of symbols of the Blessed Sacrament will be placed in these openings. The floor cutting and removal on the middle level floor is underway. This is necessary for the new staircase. All of this interior work is aided by temporary heating units supplied by the Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning Contractor.

Plumbing, floor cutting, and excavation are now complete at the lower level. Plumbing with underground piping at this location will soon be installed.

Materials for the Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning Contractor and materials for the Electrical Contractor are being received and stored at the lower level.

The new, lower parking lot, containing 34 parking spaces, will begin in the spring of the coming year.

Thank you to all who have pledged and committed to this capital project here at the Cathedral Parish. This is an historic time in our 165 years of life in center city Altoona. Thank you for your regular payments toward your pledges. We are seeing this project unfold and move towards completion. God bless you for your generous and prayerful response.

THE CHURCH OF ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN
THE CATHEDRAL
OF THE
BLESSED SACRAMENT

ONE CATHEDRAL SQUARE, Altoona, Pennsylvania 16601-3315
Church Office: 814-944-4603

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS:

The process of formation for those seeking God through membership in the Catholic Christian community.

INFANT BAPTISM:

Arrange in advance for pre-baptismal instructions.

CONFIRMATION:

Ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students are invited to participate in the Confirmation Preparation Process.

RECONCILIATION:

Wednesday: 7:00 PM, Saturday: 12:30 PM.
Communal Penance Services: Advent and Lent.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK:

Communal celebration Easter Season.

MARRIAGE:

Arrange nine months in advance. Couples expected to participate in pre-marriage preparation program.

DEVOTIONS:

Novena of the Miraculous Medal - Monday 7:45 AM.
Rosary - Wednesday 6:00 PM.
Charismatic Prayer - Monday 7:00 PM.
Evening Prayer within Eucharistic Exposition - Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter Seasons - Sunday 6:30 PM.
Eucharistic Day - Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM:

September through April: Pre-Kindergarten thru 12.
Sunday morning 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM
Pre-Kindergarten thru 8.
Sunday evening 6:15 PM - 8:30 PM
Grades 9 thru 12.

WEB: WWW.ALTOONACATHEDRAL.ORG

FAX: 814-942-4337

E-MAIL: ALTCATHEDRAL@DIOCESEAJ.ORG

EUCHARIST:

Sunday:	5:00 PM (Vigil)	Holyday:	5:30 PM (Vigil)	Weekday:	6:45 AM
	8:00 AM		8:00 AM		8:00 AM
	10:00 AM		12:00 Noon		12:00 Noon
	12:00 Noon		5:30 PM	Saturday:	8:00 AM
	5:00 PM				12:00 Noon

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE CITY OF ALTOONA SINCE 1851

Most Reverend Mark L. Bartchak, Bishop

Reverend Monsignor Robert C. Mazur, Rector

Reverend Father Dennis M. Kurdziel, Parochial Vicar

CHRISTIAN INITIATION TEAM - 944-4603

CATHOLICS RETURNING HOME - 944-4603

MAIL MINISTRY TO ELDERLY, HOMEBOUND, SERIOUSLY SICK, AND GRIEVING - 944-4603

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Web: www.holytrinitycatholic.school

Altoona Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 4) - 381-7011
Hollidaysburg Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 4) - 695-6112
Middle School Campus (Grades 5 thru 8) - 942-7835

BISHOP GUILFOYLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Web: www.bishopguilfoyle.org - 944-4014

DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Chris Laraia - Pre-K thru 8 - 312-7317
Jean Koury - 9 thru 12 - 949-2777
Religious Education Office: Sundays - 943-7424

MUSIC MINISTRY

Nina M. Tedeschi
Choir Director and Head Organist - 944-2044
Kevin J. Luke - E-mail: kluke@dioceseaj.org
Administrative Duties and Organist - 944-2044

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

DECEMBER 25, 2016

Readings: Is 9:1-6; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20

MASS INTENTIONS

December 26, Monday: Saint Stephen, First Martyr

Readings: Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59; Mt 10:17-22

6:45 AM No Mass

8:00 AM Ruby Doyle (Family)

12:00 PM Julia Febbo (Mike and Sheila Frederick)

December 27, Tuesday: Saint John, Apostle, Evangelist

Readings: 1 Jn 1:1-4; Jn 20:1, 2-8

6:45 AM Carrie Moffa (Estate)

8:00 AM Lori Crilley (Sister, Pam Leasure)

12:00 PM Poor Souls

December 28, Wednesday: Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Readings: 1 Jn 1:5-2:2; Mt 2:13-18

6:45 AM Don and Dorothy Hanekamp (D. & M.)

8:00 AM Jerry Smith (Paul and Debbie Ciampoli)

12:00 PM Moose Plutko (Kertes Family)

December 29, Thursday: Fifth Day/Octave of Nativity

Readings: 1 Jn 2:3-11; Lk 2:13-15, 19-23

6:45 AM Beverly Fabian (Anna Tiesman)

8:00 AM Pat Rabine (Ed and Hun Strassburger)

12:00 PM Herb Kutruff (Russ and Mary Ann Pleva)

December 30, Friday: Holy Family, Jesus, Mary, Joseph

Readings: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

6:45 AM Nozzie, Jennie, Sandy Calabrese (Family)

8:00 AM Catherine Mincin (Neville Family)

12:00 PM Jim Davidson (Livoti Family)

December 31, Saturday: Seventh Day/Octave of Nativity

Readings: 1 Jn 2:18-21; Jn 1:1-18

8:00 AM Bessie Smith, Birth (Mary Lysinger Family)

12:00 PM Joe Tomlinson (Linda DeAngelis)

Vigil: Mary, The Holy Mother of God

Readings: Nm 6:22-27; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21

5:00 PM Geraldine Petrunak, Birth. Int. (Family)

Pray For Our Sick - Remember our sisters and brothers who are weakened by illness. Prayers are sometimes the best prescribed medicine.

Liturgical Ministers, Parish Council, Finance Council and Catechists

You are invited to come to the Main Sacristy after Mass to receive a Christmas gift in the name of the Parish. Thank you for all you do in service to the Cathedral Parish. Your time and talent are acknowledged and appreciated.

MIDNIGHT MASS ON RADIO

Thank you to the Jones Funeral Home who sponsored the Midnight Mass on Radio station WFBG - AM 1290. It has been several years since Midnight Mass has been broadcast on the radio. Bishop Bartchak presides at this Mass. We know those unable to attend appreciate the opportunity to join us in this traditional Christmas Mass.

NOTE OF APPRECIATION

Our Bishop, priests and staff are most appreciative of your cards, gifts, baked goods, fruits and assortments. Your taking the time to be especially kind is affirmative to our ministry here at Cathedral Parish. Your generosity to us has added to the delight of the holy season. Thank you for taking the time to remember.

Christmas Evening Prayer with Exposition and Benediction

On the Sundays of Christmas, January 1 and 8, we will gather at 6:30 PM to pray the Hours of the Church. Families are encouraged to make this a part of their Christmas prayer. We are the Parish Family of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, and all those with a deep love of the Eucharist are invited to be present before the Blessed Sacrament in exposition on the altar. Evening Prayer and Benediction go about forty minutes.

Gifting the Cathedral Parish

As wills and insurance policies are established with your attorney, remember the Cathedral Parish as a beneficiary of your estate. Perhaps you would like to direct your gift to a particular ministry or project at the Parish. Please realize that Mass Stipends go directly to fulfilling that canonical wish and do not aid the financial life of the Parish.

Gluten Sensitivity

There may be parishioners who have found that they have physical disorders related to gluten intolerance. The spectrum of illnesses includes celiac disorder, wheat allergy, bloating, abdominal discomfort, diarrhea, muscular disturbances, and bone or joint pain. The ordinary hosts distributed at Communion contain gluten. If you have found that you are gluten sensitive, special bread is available that possess a very low gluten content. Please tell the priest before Mass, and he will consecrate the low-gluten host for you to receive at that Mass.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION

Sunday, December 18, 2016 - \$8,192.00

Christmas For Families

Thank you to all parishioners who participated in the Cathedral *Christmas for Families Program*. Your donations of gift cards and requested clothing were deeply appreciated by many people. A special thank you to Jean Koury who coordinated this project, and to all those who did the shopping!

Christmas Creche

Take time and kneel before the nativity scene in the Cathedral. Reflect on the miracle of the new born infant who is the Eternal Word of God. See Mary's loving watch over her baby. Notice Joseph's protective presence. See how the shepherds focus on the Christ Child. And observe the precious gifts the Three Wise Men present to the Child. Reflect and pray on the wonder of Christmas.

Liturgical Ministry Schedules

Eucharistic Ministers, Readers, and Altar Servers are asked to call or text Gabrielle Cronin at 932-6340 with contact changes or Mass preferences. Please provide e-mail addresses if you would like to receive reminders of weekly assignments. Thank you to those who are regularly e-mailing requests for days off. Please look ahead to Winter Ordinary Time (January 14-15 through February 25-26) as that schedule will be out January 4.

Winter Coats

We will continue our collection of winter coats throughout the Christmas Season which goes until Monday, January 9th. Place items on the clothes rack to the far left as you enter the Cathedral through the front doors. Thank you for your participation in this service project.

Charismatic Prayer Group

The Charismatic Prayer Group will NOT meet again until Monday, January 9 at 7:00 PM when Mary Jo McConnell will be giving a witness talk. All are welcome.

January 1, 2017 - Mass Schedule

Next Sunday, January 1, is the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. We return to our normal weekend schedule: Vigil at 5:00 PM on Saturday, and Sunday Masses at 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, Noon and **5:00 PM, Sunday** evening.

Baptism Congratulations!

Tanner Michael Irwin was baptized and welcomed into our Cathedral Parish Family on Sunday, December 18, at the 8:00 AM Mass. Congratulations to parents, Eric and Meghan (Farrell) Irwin along with sisters, Courtney, Skylar, Erika and Whitney. Tanner will grow in his Christian identity as family and friends model the faith. May the graces of the Sacrament of Baptism strengthen both our children and the adults who care for them.

Next Session of Baptismal Preparation

Tuesday, January 10 at 7:00 PM in the Seton Suite. Attendance at Baptismal Prep is required before a baptism is scheduled at Cathedral Parish. Call the Parish Office at 944-4603 to register.

Calendars of Prizes 2017

Calendars of Prizes 2017 are being sold at the Cathedral Square door after all Masses. Each calendar costs \$20.00. There is a \$10.00 daily prize; an additional \$1,000.00 in special monthly prizes awarded throughout the year; and a grand prize of \$5,000.00 Family Trip or Cash Option. Due to the state regulations for small games of chance, it is necessary that all one thousand tickets be sold. Otherwise, the parish will lose money on unsold tickets. **We are almost there!!** Calendar sales are going nicely but we still have **150** calendars to sell. This makes a **great gift that lasts all year!** If you have a favorite three digit number, call the Parish Office (944-4603) weekdays between 9:30 AM and 5:30 PM to check on availability or stop at the Cathedral Square door after Mass.



Liturgical Reflection ...

Today the Church celebrates the arrival of the Word Made Flesh on this earth. Darkness is shattered; peace is proclaimed; divinity has made a home with his people. The God who has no beginning or no end, has arrived as an infant in a manger. We join the angels and shepherds in giving praise to God. All the earth is filled with wonder. May we be filled with that awe and wonder this Christmas Day. Salvation has arrived; we remember the beginnings of our redemption!

2016, Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, Liturgy Office, 925 South Logan Boulevard, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania 16648.