

DECEMBER 20, 2015

Scripture Reflection

Long before the birth of Jesus, the prophet Micah foretold that the very tiny town of Bethlehem would witness the birth of the long awaited savior. Micah is the fourth Hebrew prophet we hear from this Advent. He announces the Word of God to the people of Bethlehem-Ephrathah, telling of a new ruler in Israel, who hails not from royalty but from this humble village. The new ruler will act as a shepherd and will rule by the "strength of the Lord."

Luke describes the encounter of Mary and Elizabeth and their greeting of joy and hospitality. The tenderness of this scene engages our own joy and desire to make ready for the coming of the Savior-Messiah into our everyday lives. This meeting of Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, and the mother of the one whom John announced represents the meeting of a peoples' hope with the fulfillment of that hope.

God came into the world as an infant; and the Incarnation was entrusted to women, who would not only bring the child to us but care for him among us. They were willing to see and embrace the smallness of us all in light of God's mighty work. They were open to the love necessary and due to any child and open to God's saving power in their midst. The Messiah was entrusted to the natural processes of human life, in the most vulnerable of hands, in the most vulnerable of ways, so that God's glory and salvation would not overwhelm us, but accompany us in solidarity with the suffering of all of us small and little people, in order to teach us the value of human life and the greatness of each of life. By each of her actions, Mary is telling us: Prepare to adore him.

• **Christmas draws very near. Mary and Elizabeth show us how to care and love the Infant. Are you ready to greet the Word Made Flesh?**

AT HOME WITH THE WORD 2015. (C) 2014 ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO, LITURGY TRAINING PUBLICATIONS, 3949 South Racine Avenue CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60609. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION. AMERICA MAGAZINE: December 7-14, 2015 Issue, John W. Martens.

Renderings of New Parish Activity Center

Drawings and floor plans of the new Parish Activity Center are on view by the Cathedral Square door of the Cathedral. If you are visiting for Christmas and have not yet seen the plans for this project, please stop by and take a look.

Calendar of Prizes 2016

Calendar of Prizes 2016 are being sold at the Cathedral Square door after all Masses. Like last year, each calendar costs \$20.00. Over half of the Calendars are sold. There are over 400 calendars still remaining. We will have 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. For this fund-raiser to be successful, all calendars must be sold. If you have a favorite three digit number, call the Parish Office (944-4603) weekdays between 9:30 AM and 5:00 PM to check on availability or stop at the Cathedral Square door after Mass. Thank you.

ALTOONA CENTRAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL
Advent of Christmas Program - Tuesday, December 22, at 10:00 AM here in the Cathedral. All are invited.

BGCHS Raffle - Our Students at Bishop Guilfoyle are selling raffle tickets. Each ticket costs \$5.00. Cash prizes are: first- \$10,00; second- \$1,500; third- \$1,000 and (5) fourth place prizes of \$100 each. Call 330-3464 or your favorite BG student.

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.

Please Remember Our Military In Prayer

Please keep all of our Cathedral men and women in the armed services in your Late Advent and Christmas prayers.

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.

ANOIDING 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

EUCCHARIST:

Sunday: 5:00 PM (Vigil)
8:00 AM
10:00 AM
12:00 Noon
5:00 PM

Holyday: 5:30 PM (Vigil)
8:00 AM
12:00 Noon
5:30 PM

Weekday: 6:45 AM
8:00 AM
12:00 Noon
Saturday: 8:00 AM
12:00 Noon

Most Reverend Mark L. Bartchak, Bishop

Reverend Monsignor Robert C. Mazur, Rector

Reverend Father Dennis M. Kurdziel, Parochial Vicar

Deacon Michael A. Anna

Deacon John J. Szwarc, Senior Deacon

CHRISTIAN INITIATION TEAM - 944-4603

CATHOLICS RETURNING HOME - 944-4603

ALTOONA CENTRAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL
Web: www.altoonacentralcatholic.com
Elementary - Pre-K thru Grade 5 - 381-7011

BISHOP GUILFOYLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
Web: www.bishopguilfoyle.org - 944-4014

DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
Chris Laraia - Pre-K thru 8 - 946-3475
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

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

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 20, 2015

Readings: Mi 5:1-4; Heb 10:5-10; Lk 1:39-45

MASS INTENTIONS

December 21, Monday: Saint Peter Canisius, Doctor

Readings: Sg 2:8-14; Lk 1:39-45

6:45 AM John Luddy (Wife, Pat)
8:00 AM BeBe Milliron (Bridget McCloskey)
12:00 PM Danyll Rougeux (Joe & Anne Jaronieski)

December 22, Tuesday: Late Advent Weekday

Readings: 1 Sm 1:24-28; Lk 1:46-56

6:45 AM Deceased of McGreal Family
8:00 AM Ben Delozier (Family)
12:00 PM Melvin L. McConnell (Family)

December 23, Wednesday: Saint John of Kanty, Priest

Readings: Mal 3:1-4,23-24; Lk1:57-66

6:45 AM Dick Huber, Birthday (Son, Tom)
8:00 AM M. Margaret Mullan (Nancy and Skip)
12:00 PM Bill Geis, Wed. Anniv. (Patty and Family)

December 24, Thursday: Late Advent Weekday

Readings: 2 Sm 7:1-5,8-12,14,16; Lk 1:67-79

6:45 AM No Mass
8:00 AM Deceased of Moloney and Vogel Families
12:00 PM No Mass

Vigil of Christmas

Readings: Is 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25

5:00 PM Francis Goss, Anniversary (Wife & Family)

December 25, Friday: **The Nativity of the Lord**

Readings: Is 9: 1-6; Ti 2: 11-14; Lk 2: 1-14

Midnight People of God

Readings: Is 52: 7-10; Heb 1: 1-6; Jn 1: 1-18

8:00 AM Ruby Doyle (Joe Wiedemer)
10:00 AM Moose Plutko (M/M Pete Rodgers)
12:00 PM Mildred Burchfield (Elaine Toomey)
No evening Mass

December 26, Saturday: Saint Stephen, First Martyr

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

8:00 AM Health of Frank Dombrowski (Family)
12:00 PM Dennis Irwin (Mother)
Vigil: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph
Readings: Sir 3:2-6,12-14; Col 3:12-21; Lk 2:41-52
5:00 PM M. Virginia Jones (Carol & Vincent Bobetich)

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

Catholic Appointment Art Calendar

A gracious thank you to the **Jones Funeral Home** for providing the 2016 civil calendar. We are most grateful to Bob and Jean for their generosity to our Cathedral parishioners. If you did not receive a calendar last week, you may receive your calendar this weekend either from the ushers or in the main sacristy.

Please Note: Christmas Vigil Mass

The Vigil Mass for Christmas is at 5:00 PM. Seating is available in the choir stalls behind the altar in the sanctuary. There is **no evening Mass** on Christmas Day.

MUSIC MINISTRY NOTES FOR CHRISTMAS

Christmas Midnight Mass Prelude - Cathedral Choir will present a half hour of prelude music on Thursday, December 24, prior to the celebration of Midnight Mass. Choir members should gather in the Music Room by 11:00 PM.

Advent and Christmas Evening Prayer with Exposition and Benediction

On the Sundays of Advent and Christmas we will gather at 6:30 PM to pray the Hours of the Church. Families are encouraged to make this a part of their Advent and 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 Sacrament in exposition on the altar. Please join us this evening for Liturgy of the Hours and Benediction.

Winter Coats

We will continue our collection of winter coats throughout the Christmas Season which goes until Sunday, January 10th. 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.

Cathedral Charismatic Prayer Group

The Charismatic Prayer Group will NOT meet this Monday, December 21st. We will meet again on January 11, 2016. Have a blessed Christmas!

Rest In Peace - Please remember in prayer our parishioners, Rita Kantoski, mother of Jim Kantoski, and Betty McCabe, mother of Terri Riley, who died this past week. Rita's Funeral Liturgy was celebrated on Friday and Betty's will be celebrated on Monday. May they rest in peace and may their families be comforted in the faith.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION

Sunday, December 13, 2015 - \$9,030.00

Christmas Flower Memorials will appear in our special Christmas Day bulletin.

Looking Ahead - Holy Day!

Mary, The Holy Mother of God - January 1

Vigil at 5:30 PM Thursday, December 31; on Friday, January 1, Masses will be celebrated at 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM and 12:00 Noon. There will be no evening Mass on the Holy Day.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Sunday: December 20th - Christmas Breakfast and Program for Grades 1 through Grade 8 in Cathedral Hall. Pre-K and Kindergarten gather in the Music Room with Miss Gabi from 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM and will have a Birthday/Epiphany Party for Baby Jesus on January 3rd!
FIRE: Class Sunday, **December 20th** 6:15 PM - 8:30 PM in Cathedral Hall.
No Classes are scheduled for **December 27th**.

Youth Choir For Christmas Eve

At 4:20 PM on December 24, all children who like to sing will be invited to join Miss Nina in the front of the Church to sing carols before the 5:00 PM Mass. Seats will be reserved for children who came to rehearsal on Saturday, December 19. For more information on Cathedral Youth Choir, call the Music Ministry Office at 944-2044 or Nina Tedeschi at 934-1684.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

The following parishioners received their First Penance this past Wednesday at the annual Advent Penance Service. Congratulations to:

Mylin Betz	Lucie Jones
Haylee Bisignano	Aidan Novack
Rachel Gormont	Phillip Sarbo
Quintin Hanley	Grace Stadtmiller
Hayden Hosgood*	*Our Lady of Fatima Parish

CHRISTIAN INITIATION

Following the Prayer of the Faithful at 10:00 AM Mass each Sunday, our Catechumens and Candidates are dismissed to reflect on the Scriptures proclaimed. There follows an hour discussion on various aspects of the Catholic faith. Please remember these individuals in your Late Advent and Christmas prayers.

Catholics Returning Home

Have you thought about coming home to the Catholic Church? Is there something from the past that has separated you from your Catholic roots? Maybe now is the time to think about returning to your Church. Call the Parish Office at 944-4603 for information on the date and time for the next *Catholics Returning Home* informal listening session.

New and Expectant Parents Please Note:

Our next Session of **Baptismal Preparation** is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 6** at **7:00 PM** in the Seton Suite. Class is offered every other month and is required before Baptism is scheduled.

Liturgical Ministry Schedules

The schedule for Christmas Eve through January 24 was mailed out on Tuesday, December 15. If you did not receive your copy or need a phone list for your ministry, please call the Parish Office. During this busy time of year we all need to come to Mass, prepared to be called on to serve. We are blessed with many wonderful ministers, but more help is always needed, especially at Noon and 5:00 PM Masses. Please consider sharing your time and talent with our Cathedral Parish Family.

Have You Been Praying For Your Prayer Partner?

Be sure to send a card or note this week, or call to make arrangements to share some time together during the Christmas Season.

Liturgical Reflection ...

JUBILEE

YEAR OF

MERCY

On this final Sunday of Advent, we are invited to joyfully celebrate with Mary and Elizabeth. By God's mercy, the Eternal Word continues to grow in the womb of the Mother of Mercy. Elizabeth proclaims the faith of endless generations, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." God's promise is fulfilled. Mercy is about to take flesh on the earth. There is joyful expectation as we come to the conclusion of Advent time.

2015, Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, Liturgy Office, 925 South Logan Boulevard, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania 16648.