

**DECEMBER 23, 2018**

*Scripture Reflection*

Today's Scripture readings are filled with joyful expectation in the face of incredible odds. In the First Reading, the prophet issues an oracle of hope to a people whom he had been railing against for their failure to act justly. Though they must pay the price for their sins now, in God's time, a messiah-king will be raised up from among the least of them. This messiah-king will act in peace and *be peace!* Bethlehem was David's hometown. Hence, the messiah-king will be of the lineage of David. The woman of whom he speaks is the mother of this long-awaited messiah-king, but she remains nameless.

In the Gospel, we are privileged to imagine the tender and private encounter of two seemingly insignificant women. Both would have been the target of much gossip—one because she was pregnant before her marriage was finalized and the other because she had been denied children for all the years of her marriage. The former would become the mother of the messiah-king and the latter the mother of John the Baptist, whom God chose to announce the long-awaited reign of God.

It is one thing to find grace in dramatic events; it is quite another to catch sight of God in the everyday. In this Sunday's Gospel reading, a poor traveler arrives, and an unborn baby stirs in the womb as his mother greets the traveler with joy. This account contains little drama, but in Luke's recounting, grace saturates the scene. Luke wrote to remind his audience never to stop seeking the divine presence. Even the simplest moment has in it a world-changing significance for anyone who is ready to find the work of God.

More than any other New Testament writer, Luke draws his readers to Christ's three arrivals among humanity. The first arrival was the nativity, the second occurs daily among his disciples in the Spirit, and the final appearance will usher in the end of time. It is that second, daily, arrival that Luke highlights in this Gospel passage. We are to be attentive and alert, like Mary and Elizabeth. Christ continues to arrive each day in our lives. We must make sure not to miss these opportunities of grace.

- **How has grace come to you in everyday events?**

AT HOME with the WORD 2019, Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, pg. 25. AMERICA MAGAZINE, "How do you find joy in everyday life?" Michael R. Simone, S.J., November 30, 2018.

**Liturgy of the Hours**

The Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy (Second Vatican Council, 1963) states that Christ continues "his Priestly work through the agency of his Church... not only by celebrating the Eucharist, but also in other ways, especially by praying the Divine Office" (Number 83). This important non-sacramental liturgical prayer traces its roots to the fundamentally biblical prayer of the Jewish synagogue. Its Christian forms have evolved "by tradition going back to early Christian times... so that the whole course of the day and night is made holy by the praises of God" (Number 84). The particular contributions of the Vatican II reform of the Hours is the restoration of their celebration to the whole praying church, clerics and laity alike. All are invited to pray the Hours, especially Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer.

The Liturgy of the Hours includes the following major elements in the Roman rite: a hymn; psalms and scriptural canticles, with accompanying antiphons that emphasize the particular season of the liturgical year; Scripture proclamation and response; the Canticles of Zechariah and Mary at Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer, respectively; intercessions; the Lord's Prayer; collect; final blessing and dismissal.

The intent of the Hours is to give voice to the praise of all creation and thanks of the believing Church for creation and redemption. It is a focused time of offering praise and thanks to God. It is also a privileged but not exclusive time of God's self-disclosure to the community of the redeemed. Taking time to pray the Hours of the Church reminds believers that we are pilgrims on journey to the kingdom.

Every year at Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter Seasons, the Cathedral offers Evening Prayer, following the encouragement of the Church. Because we are under the title of the Blessed Sacrament, we place Evening Prayer within Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction. Please make time on the Sunday evenings of these special liturgical seasons to gather for Evening Prayer at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament.

**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.

Charismatic Prayer - Monday 7:00 PM.

Eucharistic Adoration - First Wednesday - 12:30 PM - 8:00 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 afternoon 2:00 PM - 4:00 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, J.C.D., 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](http://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](http://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

**DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY**

Leslie C. Thayer, MM, CAGO

Music Ministry Office - 944-2044

E-mail: [lthayer@dioceseaj.org](mailto:lthayer@dioceseaj.org)

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

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 23, 2018

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

### MASS INTENTIONS

December 24, Monday: 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 Billy & Patty Geis, Wedding Ann.(Geis Family)

12:00 PM NO MASS

December 25, Tuesday: NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Monday - 5:00 PM - Vigil

Dec'd of Conzo and Jacob Fam. (Pat and Pam)

Midnight Mass

8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, 12:00 Noon

NO 5:00 PM MASS

December 26, Wednesday: St. Stephen, First Martyr

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

6:45 AM NO MASS

8:00 AM Millie Bilski (Lois and Ed Simanski)

12:00 PM Francis Goss, Anniversary (Wife and Family)

December 27, Thursday: St. John, Apostle & Evangelist

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

6:45 AM Don & Dorothy Hanekamp(Dave & Maureen Hankamp)

8:00 AM Dave Baronner (Jim & Steph Kilcoyne)

12:00 PM Benita Jorkasky (Cathedral Christian Mothers)

December 28, Friday: The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

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

6:45 AM Msgr. George B. Flinn (Sheila Stone)

8:00 AM Derek Behe (Mom and Dad)

12:00 PM Madeline Vogel (Greg and Kathy Clemens)

December 29, Saturday: St. Thomas Becket, Bishop & Martyr

Readings: 1 Jn 2:3-11; Lk 2:22-35

8:00 AM Thomas Joseph Reighard(Tina Reighard Foltynewicz)

12:00 PM Kevin Sheets (Dick and Bernice Cellini)

Vigil:THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

Readings: 1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28; 1Jn 3:1-2, 21-24; Lk 2:41-52

5:00 PM Edgar Anna (Jim and Mary Ellen Kelly)

**NO 5:00 PM MASS ON TUESDAY,  
DECEMBER 25, CHRISTMAS DAY**

### Advent of Christmas Concert - Thank You

Thank you to all who attended the Advent of Christmas Concert last Sunday afternoon. The support of our benefactors and those who contributed to the free-will offering is deeply appreciated.

### Calendars of Prizes 2019

Calendars of Prizes 2019 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. 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. If you have a favorite three digit number, call the Parish Office (944-4603) weekdays between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM to check on availability or stop at the Cathedral Square door after Mass. These make great Christmas gifts that last all year!

### Advent Evening Prayer with Exposition and Benediction

On the Sundays of Advent and Christmas season, 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 for Evening Prayer this Second Sunday of Advent.

### Congratulations!

#### Initiation Sacraments along with Marriage

Jennifer Marie Lynn Batista-Ortiz, a catechumen in the Christian Initiation process here at Cathedral in 2018, received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist this past Saturday, December 15. It was also a time when her husband, Santos Batista-Ortiz, received the sacrament of Confirmation. In addition to these great sacraments, Santos and Jennifer celebrated their sacramental Marriage on the same day! Congratulations to this couple and their three sons, Ricky, Tommy, and Jessy. May they find support in faith among us here at the Cathedral.

#### Baptism

At the Noon Mass last Sunday, December 16, Xitlalli Montserrat Hernandez Bautista was baptized and brought into the Catholic Church. Congratulations to parents, Pablo and Rosa Hernandez Bautista, and godparents, Jose and Sherri. Xitlalli will grow in her Christian faith to the degree that her family and friends live their Catholic faith.

### OFFERTORY COLLECTION

Sunday, December 9, 2018 - \$8,729.00  
Immaculate Conception Collection- \$1,957.00

### Eucharistic Adoration

Plan ahead! Cathedral will have monthly adoration before the Blessed Sacrament here in the Cathedral on **Wednesday, January 2nd from 12:30 PM to 8:00 PM.**

### Saint Leonard's Personal Care Home

Worried about a loved one? St. Leonard's Home in Hollidaysburg provides medication management, personal hygiene assistance, socialization, meals, housekeeping and a 24-hour staff in a home-like environment. We serve men and women 62+ for whom it is no longer safe to live alone. To tour our beautiful Victorian mansion or for more information, call Sr. Cynthia Meyer at 814-695-9581 during weekday business hours.

### Advent Giving

Cathedral Parish prepares baskets of food for needy families at the conclusion of Advent for the celebration of the Christmas holidays. **Gift Cards: Martin's, Weis, or Giant Eagle** will greatly help. Please place them in an envelope and put in the collection or drop of at the Parish Office (9:00AM-5:00PM). Bins are placed at the three doors of the Cathedral to collect non-perishable food items, paper products, cleaning items, and personal care products. Please remember to bring in your donations the Sundays of Advent so we can serve the poor in our community. Paper products, laundry and cleaning products, and personal care items cannot be purchased with food stamps. Also, remember to place winter coats that are in good condition on the clothes rack located near the front doors of the Cathedral. Individuals have already contacted the Parish for heavy coats to wear throughout the upcoming winter weather.



### Liturgical Reflection ...

On this final Sunday of Advent, with only hours away from the great celebration of Christmas, Mary is placed in her rightful position in the divine plan of salvation. With Elizabeth, we say (as we do every time we pray the *Hail Mary*), "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit on your womb." The Incarnate Word is so close that Elizabeth's baby leaps for joy in her womb. We too are filled with holy joy.

2018, Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, Liturgy Office, 925 South Logan Boulevard, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania 16648.

### 2019 Religious Art Calendar

Everyone is invited to take home with you the religious art calendar for 2019. The monthly pictures contained in the annual calendar are again exquisite. Please hang your calendar in a prominent place in your home for all, family and visitors, to appreciate the monthly art and the feasts and memorials of the year. The ushers will have the 2019 calendars for you at the Cathedral doors following Mass. We are grateful to Bob and Jean Jones for their gift. Jones Funeral Home has provided this annual gift for many years. Thank you! If you did not receive your calendar last week, make sure to take one home with you.

### First Reconciliation

This past Wednesday, December 19, our children celebrated their First Confession at the Advent Penance Service. Congratulations to the following:

CATHEDRAL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Ricky Batista-Ortiz Cora Grace Jones

Abigail Grace Chverchko Ayden James Koeck

Brian Dufrene Katelyn Koller

Aleia Eckenrode Felicity Grace Rogers

Morgan Geishouser Logan Isabella Settle

Grace Elisabeth Gregg Landon C. Shellenberger

Chloe Lauren Jones Elaina Mattison Stinson

Elijah Cole Weaver

OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH

Kendall Durgin Piper Durgin Henrik Hosgood

### Gifts to the Cathedral Parish

As wills and insurance policies are established with your attorney, or financial advisor, 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 sick in your prayers.**