

DECEMBER 22, 2019

Scripture Reflection

On this final Sunday before Christmas, the readings highlight the foundation of our faith in Jesus' identity and, by extension, our identity as his followers. Matthew opened his Gospel, in imitation of the Old Testament, with a genealogy of Jesus Christ that identifies him as a descendent of Abraham through the lineage of David. Today's reading gives Matthew's account of Jesus' birth presented from Joseph's perspective.

Joseph's dilemma regarding Mary's pregnancy is resolved when in a dream an angel reveals that the child is conceived "through the Holy Spirit." The child to be born is the Son of God and the son of Mary. This is Jesus' identity: fully divine and fully human. Matthew supports this by quoting from Isaiah's prophecy: "Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call him Emmanuel."

This is the same Gospel message that St. Paul hands on so clearly in the beginning of his Letter to the Romans (today's Second Reading). The message of the Good News of our salvation centers on the person of Jesus: fully human, as a descendent of David and foretold by the prophets, and fully divine, as the Son of God and demonstrated by the Resurrection.

Jesus' identity has significant implications for us. We are called to "belong to Jesus Christ" by being transformed in holiness through the grace and peace that comes through Jesus' Resurrection. This is our faith. This is our inheritance: "We belong to Jesus Christ" as God's beloved children called to be saints. As such, like St. Paul, we are called to witness to this message by our lives.

- **What is the significance of the name "Emmanuel"?**

AT HOME with the WORD 2020, Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, pg. 23

First Reconciliation

The following children made their First Reconciliation on Wednesday December 18th:

CATHEDRAL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
Nicolas Acuna Jayson Jiminez
Tommy Bautista-Ortiz Mason Klock
Alayna Bott Charlotte Lantzy
Hailey Camberg Emma Metzgar
Kelan Chirdon Lucas Muccitelli
Tyler Davis Emily Nachtman
Hailie Dufrene Tyson Pattillo
Lauren Elvey Dominic Pyo
Garrett Garlick Liam Roland
James Hoyne Sean Roland
Erika Irwin Olivia Sapp
Antonio Jiminez William Stadtmiller

OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH
Killian Keagy Josh Starr



Eucharistic Adoration

There will be adoration before the Blessed Sacrament in exposition on **Wednesday, January 8th** from 12:30PM until 8:00PM. The Monstrance is located in front of the tabernacle in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. All are invited to make time in our schedules to spend quality prayer time before the Blessed Sacrament. Eucharistic Adoration has seemed to enhance vocations to the priesthood and religious life. As you pray before the Sacrament, remember to ask God to bless our Diocese with vocations.

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

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 -

Charismatic Prayer - Monday 7:00 PM.

Eucharistic Adoration - First Wednesday - 12:30 PM - 8:00 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 - 8:15 PM

Grades 9 thru 12.

WEB: WWW.ALTOONACATHEDRAL.ORG

FAX: 814-942-4337

E-MAIL: ALTACATHEDRAL@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
12:00 Noon
Saturday: 8:00 AM
12:00 Noon

Most Reverend Mark L. Bartchak, J.C.D., Bishop

Reverend Monsignor Stanley Carson, Administrator

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

Holidaysburg 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

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY

Leslie C. Thayer, MM, CAGO

Music Ministry Office - 944-2044

E-mail: lthayer@dioceseaj.org

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

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 22, 2019

Readings: *Is 7:10-14; Rom 1:1-7; Mt 1:18-24*

MASS INTENTIONS

December 23, Monday: Saint John of Kanty, Priest

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

6:45 AM + Agnes Shaffer (Family)

12:00 PM + Billy & Patty Geis, Ann. (Geis Family)

December 24, Tuesday: 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 + Barry Bidelspach Birthday (Family)

12:00 PM NO MASS

December 25, Wednesday: NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Tuesday - 5:00 PM - Vigil

Our Children and Teenagers

Midnight Mass, People of the Parish

8:00 AM, Parishioners & Benefactors

10:00 AM, People of the Parish

12:00 PM, People of the Parish

December 26, Thursday: Saint Stephen, First Martyr

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

6:45 AM + Don & Dorothy Hanekamp (M/M Dave Hankamp)

12:00 PM + Deacon John Szwarc (Family)

December 27, Friday: St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

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

6:45 AM + Monica Gimo (Gerri Rose)

12:00 PM + Alice Winkler Birthday (Geis Family)

December 28, Saturday: The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Readings: *1 Jn 1:3-5-2:2; Mt 2:13-18*

8:00 AM + Rita Luciano (Pat & Kerry Byrne)

12:00 PM Karen Hazlett (Joan Smithmyer)

Vigil: THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

Readings: *Sir 3:2-6, 12-14; Col 3:12-21; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23*

5:00 PM + Michael Peckowych (Doug & Jan Stoehr)

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

Did You Remember?

Did you remember to bring non-perishable food items and paper products for the needy of our community? Bins are located at the three doors of the Cathedral.

Cathedral Decorating Volunteers Needed

Parishioners and friends of the Cathedral are invited to help decorate for Christmas on Monday afternoon at 1:00 PM. Flowers are expected to be delivered at around that time. Flowers will be arranged, decorations hung, and the nativity scene will be set up.

Gratitude is extended to the small group of hard-working volunteers who placed lights on our trees: Mary Ann Bell, Melissa Gormont, Tony Eckenrode, John Murphy, and Jim Dixon.

A Note of Thanks

Gratitude is extended to Tim Bettwy and the staff of Bettwy Electric for enhancing the lighting of the exterior of our Cathedral.

Music is such a significant part of Catholic worship and especially during the season of Christmas. Gratitude is expressed to Leslie Thayer, our choir, and our leaders of song.

Our parish's Wednesday morning cleaning crew has been dedicated and rightfully proud of their concern for the interior condition of our worship space. Thank you.

Christmas Message

Despite the prophetic messages found in Sacred Scripture, the birth of Jesus came very much as an unexpected event. It is probably fair to say that this has been a year of the unexpected for so many people, including our own faith communities of Cathedral and Our Lady of Fatima parishes. When the unexpected happens, the period of transition can be very unsettling; and, so there is a need for patience, grace, and a profound trust in God's providence. We do believe that "God is with us" during all of our life experiences, the expected and the unexpected.

Just as Mary and Joseph accepted the disappointment of a crowded inn, the joy of a child's birth, and the visits of rugged shepherds and mysterious magi, our own lives are filled with events that cause us to ponder and pray.

On behalf of myself and our staff, I want to assure you of a remembrance in my prayer. May you and your families experience more deeply the grace-filled love and the tender-mercy Jesus came to bring. Jesus will always be our reason for hope. Thank you for your kindness to me.

(Rev. Msgr.) Stanley B. Carson, Administrator

OFFERTORY COLLECTION

Sunday, December 15, 2019 - \$6,892.00

Confirmation Prep

Sunday January 5th, 6:15-7:30 PM. 11th Grade Confirmation Prep Session II Candidate/Parent/Sponsor, must be present.

Religious Education

Thank you to those parishioners who shopped and donated gift cards to those families in need.

Thanks also to our H.S. FIRE students who shopped, wrapped and sorted food.

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.

Office Closed

The Parish Office will be closed Tuesday, December 24th through Thursday, December 26th. We will be back in on Friday December 27th. We hope that everyone has a Merry Christmas and a Blessed and Happy New Year!

Ministry to the Elderly, Seriously Ill and Grieving

Thank you for to every one who has donated stamps for this ministry.

Please continue to call the office with the names and addresses of a family member or friend who you know would appreciate a kind word and a prayer through the mail. We would like to be able to reach out to as many people as we can. If you would like to join this ministry call the office 814-944-4603 or Jeanne Thompson at 814-317-2672.



Calendar of Prizes 2020 Are Here!

Calendar of prizes 2020 are being sold at the Cathedral Square Door after all masses starting this weekend. Each calendar costs \$20.00. There is a \$20.00 daily prize; an additional \$1,000.00 in special monthly prizes awarded throughout the year; and a grand prize of \$1,500.00. Due to the states regulations for small games of chance, it is necessary that we sell all one thousand tickets, otherwise the parish will lose money on unsold tickets. If you have a favorite three digit number, call the Parish Office at 814-944-4603 weekdays between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM to check for availability or stop by the Cathedral door after Mass on the weekends. These make great Christmas gifts and stocking stuffers.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

RCIA is a process (a journey) through which people enter the Catholic Church. This includes people who have not been baptized (called catechumens) and people who have been baptized in another Christian Church now seeking full Communion with the Catholic Church (referred to as candidates). If you are interested in learning more about RCIA, join us Sunday from 11:00am - Noon in the Seton Suite. Please reach out to Tammy Datri, Director of RCIA at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament. We look forward to you joining us!

Friar's Nook Gift Shop

Finish up (or start) your Christmas shopping at the Friar's Nook Gift Shop Christmas Sale! Save 20% off the ENTIRE shop December 14th-23rd (closed 22nd) including nativities, gifts, flags, mats, decor, cards, and much more! The shop is located at 793- Monastery Road, Hollidaysburg. The Shop hours are Monday-Saturday: 10:00 AM-4:00 PM. Please call 814-695-3802 with any questions. Please note: Unfortunately, there will be **not** be a Christmas Cookie Sale this year. Many thanks to you all and enjoy the Advent and Christmas seasons!

Stewardship Reflections

Stewardship has the power to shape and mold our understanding of our lives and the way in which we live. Saint Joseph carried out God's will and embraced his fatherhood as a model stewardship.

Christian stewards respond in a particular way to the call to be a disciple. May you allow God to change your plans in order to fulfill the plan of your life in Him.