

DECEMBER 13, 2020

Did you ever stop and realize that there is no earthly gain that can ever really satisfy us? Think of winning the Lotto. On this side of the winning ticket, it's all about the money, the new car, house, vacations, bank accounts, and infinite pleasures. The possibility of acquiring all of these earthly securities brings us back again and again to the purchase of a ticket. Then, one day we win! Our dreams are fulfilled, and happiness is on the horizon. Then one day, we wake up and realize that nothing has really changed, and I am not as satisfied as I thought I was or would be. I find myself living in my incompleteness and with my profound sorrow and grief. I did not find joy.

Glimpses of joy are possible but not by material means. They are brought to us through incredible experiences of connection that bring us face to face with real and authentic faith, hope, and love. And, they are glimpses and do not last. The moment we find ourselves looking back at them, they are gone, and we find ourselves remembering the moment in memory. To carry joy within us is to realize that it is not something I create, manufacture or even acquire. It is not able to be purchased. It is a gift. My need for joy mirrors my need for eternity, for a Creator who has a claim on the very essence of who I am and desires a home within me. As C. S. Lewis discovered, joy is a surprise that speaks to my very soul and is given as gift by the God who loves me.

The beauty of Advent is found in discovering the beauty of the gift of joy. God has visited his people for no other reason than to show them where and how to find joy! All of our human and earthly joy experiences are always only glimpses. They never satisfy us, sustain us or fulfill us. It is only God who is the joy of my soul. Real, Divine experiences of joy catch us off guard, make us stop and become aware, bring a feeling of awe and rightness and have an eternal Otherness about them. Nothing created by humans can ever come close to this. We probably will not fully realize the truth of all of this until we actually meet God face to face in heaven one day. Then, in that sacred moment when our hearts leap for joy we will understand what we have been tirelessly searching for all along. Intense gratitude will most surely follow.

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Pray For Our Sick

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

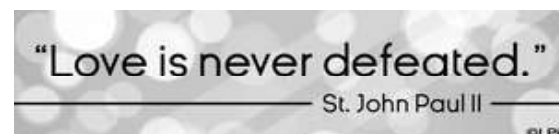
Why do Catholics genuflect?

Genuflection is an act of devotion that literally means "to bend the knee." For many Catholics, it's an almost automatic gesture that we perform before entering our pew or row of seats at Mass. But, like many of the symbols and gestures of our faith tradition, genuflecting can also be an invitation for deeper reflection.

The practice of "bending the knee" is an ancient way of recognizing the presence of someone greater than we are. It has been said that the practice dates back to the time of Alexander the Great, but it became a common part of etiquette in the royal courts of the Middle Ages. From throne rooms and palaces, it was a small step to genuflecting becoming part of the devotional lives of Christians, who used this secular gesture as a way of recognizing the presence of the One who is King of Kings, especially in the Eucharist.

Today, Catholics are asked to genuflect in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament (whether in the tabernacle or exposed on the altar during eucharistic adoration). So, while it has become second nature to genuflect before entering your seat in church, we should pay attention to where the Blessed Sacrament is kept in each church or chapel that we visit, and genuflect in the direction of the tabernacle where the Blessed Sacrament is kept. In churches or chapels in which the tabernacle is in a separate space, we are invited to simply bow toward the altar.

In addition to genuflecting before the Blessed Sacrament, we are also instructed to genuflect before the cross used for veneration on Good Friday (during the solemn celebrations of the Lord's Passion) and any time a relic of the True Cross is displayed for veneration. This long-standing tradition is a way of honoring the cross as the great sign of our salvation and of showing devotion to the passion of Jesus.



Open Positions

The following positions are available throughout the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese. To apply go to www.dioceseaj.org/employment. Administrative Assistant-Diocesan Human Resources/Children & Youth Protection Offices; Executive Director and Social Worker-Catholic Charities; Business Manager-Holy Name School; Custodian-St. Michael School; General Laborer-Church of the Transfiguration Parish; Music Director- Holy Family Parish; Pricipal-St. Patrick School; Kindergarten Teacher-St. Matthew School; Third Grade Teacher- All Saints School.

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:

Upon Request and Communal celebration

MARRIAGE:

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

DEVOTIONS:

Charismatic Prayer - Normally 3rd Monday of the Month
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: ALTCATHEDRAL@DIOCESEAJ.ORG

<https://www.facebook.com/cathedralofaltoona>

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

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

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

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

December 13, 2020

Readings: *Is 61:1-2, 10-11; 1 Thes 5:16-24; Jn 1:6-8, 19-28*

MASS INTENTIONS

December 14, Monday: Saint John of the Cross

Readings: *Nm 24:2-7, 15-17; Mt 21:23-27*

6:45 AM + Julianne Seidel (Don Sgro)

12:00PM + John Richarson (Paula Miller Family)

December 15, Tuesday: Advent Weekday

Readings: *Zep 3:1-2, 9-13; Mt 21:23-27*

6:45 AM + David Baronner (Joe Kantoski)

12:00 PM + Bernadine Garcia (Patty Yost)

December 16, Wednesday: Advent Weekday

Readings: *Is 45:6-8, 18, 21-25; Lk 7: 18-23*

6:45 AM + Deceased Family Members (McNelis All Stars)

12:00PM + Tony Alianiello Police Force Ann. (Family)

December 17, Thursday: Late Advent Weekday

Readings: *Gn 49:2, 8-10; Mt 1:1-17*

6:45 AM + Joseph Knott (Colleen Douglass)

12:00PM + Mary Kantoski, Birthday (Family)

December 18, Friday: Late Advent Weekday

Readings: *Jer 23:5-8; Mt 1:18-25*

6:45 AM + Msgr. Roy Kline (Jim & Steph Kilcoyne)

12:00PM + Bp. Joseph Adamec (Anonymous)

December 19, Saturday: Late Advent Weekday

Readings: *Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25; Lk 1: 5-25*

8:00AM + Marian & Thomas Swires (Children)

12:00PM + Richard Anthony (Mike Fleck)

Vigil: FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Readings: *2 Sm 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16; Rom 16:25-27; Lk 1:26-38*

5:00PM + Alice Winkler Birthday (Family)

December 20, Sunday:

8:00 AM + Fred Fideli (Rosemarie Fedeli)

10:00 AM + Richard Yahner (Wife)

12:00 PM + Gina Laird (Pat Rhoa)

5:00 PM Pro Popolo/ For the People

Please remember our sick in your prayers.

Radio Mass

Our parish's live radio Mass will be on Sunday, at 10:00 A.M. on WFBG 1290AM. We are pleased to be able to provide this service and we are grateful to our sponsors.

THE LITTLE BLUE BOOK

There are still a few copies of The Little Blue Book for the Advent and Christmas Season available at the entrances. The mediaton booklets contain 6 minutes worth of reflections and prayers based upon Scripture and the feasts, customs, and symbols of Advent and Christmas. The handy pocket-sized booklet can be conveniently used in church, at home, or while waiting in an office.

Facebook

Our parish has created an official Facebook page and the address is <https://www.facebook.com/cathedralofaltoona> The link is found at the top of our parish's webpage. Our official page will gradually become a convenient way to keep people informed and post notices. (Please do not use the link at the bottom on the page.)

A Constant Companion

As Christians, we are called to a life of prayer. This is not just during seasons like Advent, but all year long. When we talk about being prayerful everyday stewards, we are speaking about cultivating an awareness of God being with us at all times. Each day we begin by offering God the entirety of our day. Each night we rest in Him and hope that the hours that passed gave Him glory.

During this busy time of Advent, it is hard to cultivate this life of prayer, but without it we can too easily lose sight of the reason for the season. It is during this time of year we need to heed the words of St. Paul more than ever when he wrote to the Thessalonians, "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing." This is how we will be able to avoid the pitfalls of consumerism and secularism and keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

Bring Jesus with you into the office Christmas party. Take him with you shopping for gifts in the department store. Be aware of him when you sit down to watch television specials you have seen every year of your life. Give him all your time and let his presence fill your every moment. By striving to be connecting with Jesus at all times, you will bear greater fruit and the joy you experience will be much greater than you could imagine. You might even spend a few less dollars and spend more time with those you love, particularly the one who loves you the most, the Incarnation himself.

— Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

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Workbooks for Readers and Lectors

The new 2021 workbooks are now available after all the masses and also at the Parish Office during regular hours. Monday-Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION Sunday, December 6, 2020 \$10,336.00



Calendar of Prizes 2021 Are Here!

Calendar of prizes 2021 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 \$1,500.00 in special monthly prizes awarded throughout the year; and a grand prize of \$1,000.00. 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.

Religious Ed PK-8

We will be collecting new hats, scarves, mittens, toys, and personal care items during Advent to be distributed to the Blair County Family Services Abuse Shelter. Collection will end on January 1st. Items may be taken to the Parish Main Office Mon-Fri 9-4:30 or to the former church baptistry before and after all Masses. Contact Chris Laraia at 814-312-7317 or claraia@dioceseaj.org if you have any questions. Thank you for your help with our program's Advent project.

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

This year, we will have Masses on Christmas Eve at 3:00 PM and 5:00 PM. Our Masses on Christmas Day will be at Midnight, 8:00 AM and Noon.

Parish Council

The Parish Council Communication Committee would like to improve communications with parishioners and establish a better avenue to keep you informed of parish events. We would like to gather email addresses at this time. Please complete the form online at <https://forms.gle/hTCZaboAG4ZJb7nE6> or their are forms available in the church office during office hours. Completed forms can be returned through the Sunday offering or sent to the Parish Office.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

During Advent this year, since we are not able to have a Communal Celebration of the Sacrament, the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available on Sundays at 4:00 P.M., Wednesdays at 7:00 PM and on Saturdays at 12:30 PM. The Sacrament will also be celebrated following our daily Masses this week.



VOTIVE CANDLES

The light signifies our prayer offered in faith coming into the light of God. With the light of faith, we petition our Lord in prayer, or petition a saint to pray with us and for us to the Lord. The light also shows a special reverence and our desire to remain present to the Lord in prayer even though we may depart and go about our daily business. The donation is \$4.00 per candle and the envelope can be placed in the weekend collection basket or put in the rectory door slot.

Stewardship Reflections

How do we respond to St. Paul's challenge to give thanks to God in all circumstances? We respond with an "attitude of gratitude!" Good stewards know they didn't earn their time, talents or treasures.

Good stewards have good memories, recalling where they came from, the struggles of their parents, the struggles of their own lives, those peaks and those valleys that shaped them and brought them to their very moment. And they find themselves very grateful. These are truly gifts from a generous God; miraculously and randomly scattered over the human race, who asks that we be generous in response. (*Seven Secrets of Successful Stewards*, Paul Wilke, 2005 Catholic Update, St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati, Ohio)

Like the rose candle of an Advent Wreath may we "shine on" as we share our blessings in cheerfulness and joy.