

## DECEMBER 20, 2020

In Blaise Pascal's work, *Pensees*, he says: "What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself."

We have a difficult time accepting that fulfillment and happiness are not achieved by our own merits but through a relationship with God. We are hardwired for this relationship and it is in our DNA. The simple fact is that we come from God and are designed to return to God. If our beginning and our end define who we are, why would we not want to seek the One who can truly satisfy? The world does not realize that it is waiting. It is waiting for the birth of God in time, within one's soul and in eternity. We get so confused by seeking other momentary satisfactions that we misinterpret the hunger within. We crave God.

The union of God and humanity, revealed in Jesus Christ, is precisely what sets us on a straight path, orders our relationships, establishes proper focus and goals and tells us whose kingdom we really are meant to serve. We are so lost. God is with us. The prophet Nathan told this to King David, the angel said this to Mary and the birth of Christ brings this Good News to us. We do not need to be busily looking for more things but must learn to find contentment and blessing in the One Presence. This is the beautiful simple message of Advent!

If you are feeling unsettled, anxious, angry, disgruntled, disconnected, unhappy, worried, fearful, off center, becoming overly self-indulgent, unable to spend time alone and without distraction, then there's a good chance you are lost. Now is the time to allow God to find you! Ponder the holy simplicity of Mary's call to be the Mother of God. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." When we are helpless and at home with our emptiness, God will fill us. Our Savior has come.

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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.

### The Journey

Advent comes along every year and will continue to do so until Jesus returns. As this season draws to a close, we can each ask ourselves, "Am I now any better a disciple of Jesus Christ and more of a steward of all my gifts than before the Advent season started?" I have been on this earth for 40+ years. I have had 40+ Advents to draw closer to God and to work on taking more seriously my baptismal call. Some have gone better than others, but I would like to think my spiritual life progressed at least a small amount during each of them.

Conversion is a process. Stewardship is about a way of living and it is about more than simply being generous when a situation calls for it. Stewardship and conversion go hand-in-hand and we are always moving closer to holiness in Jesus Christ. Living in this way takes practice and commitment. If this Advent didn't go as you had hoped, remember is not really an end. It is just another step along your journey.

This Christmas, while you are giving and receiving gifts and hopefully spending time with those you love, may you take the time to cherish the true gift that came to us over 2000 years ago and continues to call us to this day: Jesus. Let us be grateful beyond measure for this gift above all gifts, let us continue on our journey, and let our lives give testimony to the one who leads us.

— Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

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### Office Closed

The Parish Office will be closed, Wednesday December 23rd through Friday December 25th. We will be back in the office Monday, December 28th. We hope that everyone has a Blessed and Holy Christmas and a Happy New Year!

### 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.

# 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](http://WWW.ALTOONACATHEDRAL.ORG)

FAX: 814-942-4337

E-MAIL: [ALTCATHEDRAL@DIOCESEAJ.ORG](mailto: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
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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](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 IN ADVENT

December 20, 2020

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

## MASS INTENTIONS

December 21, Monday: St. Peter Canisius Pr./Dr.  
6:45 AM + Jeannie Farabaugh (Geishausen Family)  
12:00 PM + Barbara Beech (Debbie Ball)

December 22, Tuesday: Late Advent Weekday  
6:45 AM + Danyll Rougeux (Mom & Dad)  
12:00 PM + Mildred Brady, Ann. (M/M Joe Shellenberger)

December 23, Wednesday: St. John of Kanty, Priest  
6:45 AM + Danyll Rougeux (Mom & Dad)  
12:00 PM + Frank Goss, Ann. (Wife & Family)

December 24, Thursday: Late Advent Weekday  
8:00 AM + Barry Bidelspacht Birthday (Family)  
12:00 PM NO MASS  
Vigil-THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD  
3:00 PM Health Care Professionals/First Responders  
5:00 PM Our Children & Teenagers

December 25, Friday: THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD  
12:00 AM/MIDNIGHT People of the Parish  
8:00 AM Parishoners & Benefactors  
10:00 AM NO MASS  
12:00 PM People of the Parish  
5:00 PM NO MASS

December 26, Saturday: St Stephen, The First Martyr  
8:00 AM + Carrie Detwiler (Mom & Dad)  
12:00 PM + M/M Don Hanekamp (M/M Dave Hanekamp)  
Vigil: THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH  
5:00 PM + Orlando DeCriscio Birthday (Family)

December 27, Sunday:  
8:00 AM + Jean Bradley (Patricia Rhoa)  
10:00 AM + Fran Moses (M/M Tony Eckenrode)  
12:00 PM + Martha Maurer (Larry & Lori Wills)  
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. **Our Christmas Midnight Mass is also broadcast** thanks to the generosity of Jones Funeral Home. Tune in!

## Readings for the week of December 20, 2020

**Sunday:** 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29 [2a]/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38

**Monday:** Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21 [1a; 3a]/Lk 1:39-45

**Tuesday:** 1 Sm 1:24-28/1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd/Lk 1:46-56

**Wednesday:** Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and 14 [cf. Lk 21:28]/Lk 1:57-66

**Thursday:** Morning: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29 [2]/Lk 1:67-79

**Friday:** Vigil: Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29 [2a]/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25. Night: Is 9:1-6/Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13 [Lk 2:11]/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14. Dawn: Is 62:11-12/Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20. Day: Is 52:7-10/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6 [3c]/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or Jn 1:1-5, 9-14

**Saturday:** Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17 [6]/Mt 10:17-22

**Next Sunday:** Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3/Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 [cf. 1] or Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9 [7a, 8a]/Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19/Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-4

## The Nativity of the Lord

Our hearts are aglow with the joy of Christmas! Our senses are alive with the season, from the rich smells of evergreen and gingerbread to the feel of crisp air on our skin and the warmth of a loved one's embrace. At some point in the holiday hustle and bustle, take a few moments of quiet. In the silence, reflect on the other senses of the season. Imagine the cool damp of an animal stable, the earthy smell of hay and feed, and the crisp night air blowing in softly. Imagine kneeling beside an exhausted, joyful mother and a relieved, protective father. Imagine an infant wrapped in cloth scraps held out to your open arms. Imagine holding the infant Jesus. As his eyes meet yours, welcome into your heart the greatest gift of Christmas.



## OFFERTORY COLLECTION

Sunday, December 13, 2020 \$4,450.00

## Christmas Masses

You are invited to join us for the Eucharist as we celebrate The Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord. We have Masses on Christmas Eve at 3:00 P.M. and 5:00 PM and on Christmas Day at Midnight, 8:00 AM and Noon. Facial masks or shields must be worn and we must be socially distanced from non-family members.

## 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.

## 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 meditation 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.)

## 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.



## Christmas in the Diocese of Altoona -Johnstown

Experience the Christmas Joy and Hope that is present throughout the Diocese! Music, Inspirational Stories, Sharing of Christmas Traditions.

Plan to join us:

Sunday, December 20, 2020 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM on WATM-ABC23. And also: Christmas Day- December 25, from 7:00AM to 9:00 AM on WWCP FOX 8.

## Cathedral Decorating Volunteers Needed

Parishioners and friends of the Cathedral are invited to help decorate for Christmas on Tuesday afternoon at 1:00 PM. Trees will be done, decorations hung, and the nativity scene will be set up. On Wednesday, after 1:00 PM the flowers are expected to be delivered and we will need help arranging them. Thank you for your time, talent, and treasure.

## Congratulations

We would like to congratulate the following children that made their First Reconciliation here at the Cathedral on Saturday, December 5th. They are Alaina Ake, Khloe Barr, Mikayla Geishausen, McKayla Gority, Giavanna Gormish, Hannah Gregg, Jordyn Hallinan, Sophie Heverly, Chase Keagy OLOF Church, Jessy Batista Ortiz, Dontavia Summerville, and Lucas Weaver.

O Come All Ye Faithful