

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
December 24, 2023
Mass Intentions

December 24, Sunday, Fourth Sunday of Advent
 8:00AM+Michael Ratzesberger (Family)
 10:00AM+Skip, Richard Cowan, and Karen Cowan Dougherty (Family)
 Mass at Our Lady of Fatima Church is at 11:30 A.M.

Vigil: Christmas Eve
 5:00PM Pro Popolo/For the People

December 25, Monday, The Nativity of the Lord
 Midnight-12 AM For Peace in the World
 8:00 AM Parishioners and Benefactors
 10:00 AM Parishioners and Benefactors
5:00 PM No Mass on Christmas Day

There is Mass at 11:30 AM at Our Lady of Fatima Church on Christmas Day.

December 26, Tuesday, Saint Stephen The First Martyr
 12:00PM+Judy Ianuzzi Goldblum (Tom & Becky DeHaven)

December 27, Wednesday, Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist
 12:00PM+Barry Bidelspach (Family)

December 28, Thursday, The Holy Innocents, Martyrs
 12:00PM+Paul Caracciolo #1, Birthday (Wife)

December 29, Friday, Fifth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord
 12:00PM+Raymond & Olive Miller (M.L. Ball)

December 30, Saturday, Sixth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord
 12:00PM+Elizabeth Smith, Birthday (Mary Lysinger)
Vigil: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
 5:00PM+Charles Moore, Ann. (Donna & Bill Ellerman)

December 31, Sunday, The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
 8:00AM+Geraldine Petrunak, Birthday (Family)
 10:00AM+Ann Rhodes, Birthday (Family)
 5:00PM Pro Popolo/For the People

WEEKLY READINGS AND OBSERVANCES - ENGAGE PARISHIONERS IN DAILY MASS AND PRAYER

Readings for the week of December 24, 2023
Sunday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38
Monday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29/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/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/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14
Tuesday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17/Mt 10:17-22
Wednesday: 1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12/Jn 20:1a, 2-8
Thursday: 1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7cd-8/Mt 2:13-18
Friday: 1 Jn 2:3-11/Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6/Lk 2:22
Saturday: 1 Jn 2:12-17/Ps 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10/Lk 2:36-40
Next Sunday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3/Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 or Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9/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



We sometimes give and receive many gifts at Christmas. This is the time, however, to think above all of the gracious gift God gives to us of God's own self in Jesus. It is important for us to worship God at Christmas.

There will be a Christmas Eve Mass on Sunday, December 24, at 5:00 P.M. There will also be Masses at the Cathedral at Midnight (preceded by a Prelude beginning at 11:30), 8:00 A.M. and 10:00 A.M. on Christmas Day. (There is no 5:00 P.M. Mass on Christmas Day.)

Mass at Our Lady of Fatima Church will be on Monday, December 25, at 11:30 A.M.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION
Sunday, December 17, 2023, \$ 9,769.68
 Thank you for your financial and spiritual support.

Inquiry Sessions of Christian Initiation of Adults

Are you interested in the Catholic Church? Do you know someone who might be interested in seeking information about our Catholic faith? The Cathedral Christian Initiation Team will begin weekly meetings in the Church from 11:00 AM until 12:00 Noon (after the 10:00 Mass) for all those seeking information on the Catholic Church. No commitments are made at this time. These are informal Inquiry Sessions to discuss aspects of our faith with anyone who might be thinking of joining the Catholic Church. All are welcome; bring a friend. If you are interested in joining or would like more information, please contact Carol Galio at (814)327-4841.



Pilgrimage to Fatima & Lourdes & Discovery of Barcelona

Msgr. Carson will be leading a pilgrimage from September 15-24, 2024.

Pilgrimage information is available in the brochures at our entrances, at our Facebook page, and at

<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1213040>



OUR 2024 CALENDAR OF CASH LOTTERY TICKETS ARE NOW AVAILABLE IN THE OFFICE DURING THE WEEK AND FOLLOWING MASSES ON WEEKENDS. THE COST IS \$20.00. BUY ONE FOR YOURSELF AND GIVE A FEW AS GIFTS! SO FAR WE HAVE SOLD 636 CALENDARS.



The Cathedral's *Give Catholic* campaign target was \$10,000. Our goal was to raise money to replace our office computers and upgrade our parish software. \$10,765 has been received. Thank you!



Christmas Blessings!

On behalf of Bishop Mark, myself, and the staff of the Cathedral Parish, I want to extend to you our hope and prayer that the Christmas season is filled with peace and comfort for you and your family. The preparations and celebrations can be rather exhausting for some, and so, it is important to take some time to rest and relax.

Gratitude is extended to the volunteers, benefactors, and liturgical ministers who help make our Cathedral liturgies such a beautiful and prayerful experience.

The nativity of Jesus is such a powerful and humble expression of God's love for us. What a gift!

Msgr. Stan Carson

GOSPEL MEDITATION - ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

December 24, 2023
4th Sunday of Advent

Life is troubling. Who among us has not struggled with anxiety and difficulties, sometimes massive ones? I certainly have, as have many of my loved ones. If we do, does this mean that we don't trust the Lord or just need to toughen up?

I don't think so. How encouraging for us anxious and troubled souls to hear Luke describe the Blessed Mother Mary in these words, "But she was greatly troubled at what was said." An archangel has visited her. An inconceivable promise has been made to her. Her life has become wildly unpredictable, perhaps more so than any person before or since. The first point for us: the Lord is with her precisely when she is troubled. Her anxiousness and God's presence are not mutually exclusive. Christianity is not about a trance-like robotic indifference. It's about the presence of divine love. Even in — especially in — troubled circumstances.

Our troubled soul can become our greatest treasure. What seems so troubling at first to Mary becomes the best possible thing, Jesus, the Savior and Lord, is now her son. All the difficulties and troubles remain, and yet her movement into the fullness of God is accelerated. What is troubling you right now? This scripture invites us now, this week, to hear the Lord's messenger say to us what he said to Mary, "Do not be afraid! You have found favor with God." Father John Muir ©LPi

Stewardship Reflections

Our God is mighty, all-powerful and Love itself. The only proper response is to worship Him and live our lives as a grateful gift for all His goodness to us. But how can we possibly live up to this task? Only by relying on God, as St. Paul tells us in the Second Reading, from his letter to the Romans. Paul instructs us to go to "him who can strengthen you Jesus Christ." The truth is, once we recognize that all we have is a gift from God, the next step is to acknowledge that we need God's strength and wisdom to guide us in the best use of those gifts for the building of His Kingdom. Hopefully we are all making time during Advent to go to God in prayer and through the sacraments to obtain the strength we need to live as His disciples and the guidance to know we are indeed following His will with the gifts He has entrusted to us.

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In fact, our aim should be to make the words of our Blessed Mother our own. We read today's Gospel passage from Luke the wonderful words of her 'fiat', her 'yes' to God's plan. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." These are among the most beloved in the Gospel. But the next sentence is also important for the Christian steward. After Mary's fiat, we read "Then the angel departed from her." Our Blessed Mother was left with a lot of unexplained details about God's plan for her. Yet, she followed God's will perfectly! She gave herself and her life fully to God as a gift. She trusted in her Heavenly Father to guide her at each step, and He did. She was the first disciple. We are called to follow her as disciples today.

The Christmas, let us resolve to make our whole life a gift to the One Who has given us everything. It is the work of a lifetime. But He will give us all the help and strength we need to do it.



This year, since the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God falls on a Monday, January 1, it is not a holy day of obligation. Mass on that day will be only at 9:00 A.M.

**THE CHURCH OF ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN
THE CATHEDRAL
OF THE
BLESSED SACRAMENT
ONE CATHEDRAL SQUARE, ALTOONA, PENNSYLVANIA 16601-3315
CHURCH OFFICE: 814-944-4603**

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, DECEMBER 24, 2023

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:

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.

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

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

Weekday: 12:00 Noon
Saturday: 12:00 Noon

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

Reverend Monsignor Stanley Carson, Administrator

Paula Clemens, Parish Secretary

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Chris Laraia - Pre-K thru 12 - 814-312-7317

Religious Education Office: Sundays - 814-943-7424

E-mail: claraia@dioceseaj.org

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY

Leslie C. Thayer, MM, CAGO

Music Ministry Office - 814-944-2044

E-mail: lthayer@dioceseaj.org

CHRISTIAN INITIATION TEAM - 814-944-4603

CATHOLICS RETURNING HOME - 814-944-4603

MAIL MINISTRY TO ELDERLY, HOMEBOUND, SERIOUSLY SICK, AND GRIEVING - 814-944-4603

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Web: www.holytrinitycatholic.school

Eldorado Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 5) - (814)942-7835

Fairview Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 5) - (814)381-7011

BISHOP GUILFOYLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Web: www.bishopguilfoyle.org - 814-944-4014

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