

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Parishioners,

Today we celebrate the second of the five feasts of the Christmas season, the feast of the Holy Family.

We honor Jesus, Mary and Joseph as our models in learning to love our family members. Some degree of love comes to us naturally. But to have genuinely Christian love for our family members and others- a "love that bears all things, hopes all things and doesn't fail," we must pray for it.

With my prayers,
Fr. Conley

Christian Prayer and the Incarnation

by Anthony Lilles, edited & adapted.

With the coming of the Word of the Father, Jesus Christ, the words of Christian prayer are born from the Virgin's Womb. Such was the mystery of prayer learned first by the One who believed as she felt Him ready to enter the world. It is not seized by force or mastered by practice. The result always exceeds expectation but can never be calculated. This prayer can only be welcomed as a gift and requires that humble reverence without which no love is ever possible. There is no other prayer that the human heart can offer that is given to us as this prayer has been given.

Just as Mary carried the Lord in her womb before His birth, every prayer offered in Christian faith also carries Him. Since her "let it be done", the Word of the Father has never stopped coming and with each advent, Christ prepares a new coming of His presence whenever a heart says "yes" to Him. Each new word of prayer offered by faith in Him makes space for Jesus to be born again in us and opens unseen human poverties and miseries to divine peace and glory.

As Mary waited for that first Christmas, filled with wonder, the humble Handmaid of the Lord knew the mystery first conceived in her heart by the Holy Spirit would soon be heard and seen in the shadow of the Almighty. Mary must have been amazed by the very vulnerability of His prayer, even when the cry of the infant Jesus would pierce the heart of the Father and unveil the deep things of God. Her mind must have bathed in astonishment over how His prayer would echo at the center of human history and in every human heart. Did Mary guess by the way it drew her, that the prayer of Jesus Christ had the power to draw all men back to what is noble and true about humanity, and to all that is good and tender about God?

Mary must have wondered over that mysterious silent love by which Jesus raised His heart to the Father. If she felt this in her womb, could she see with her heart that His song of love would not be dimmed even when He suffered death? Mary nonetheless believed that the

humble glory of His unvanquished petition would make powerful knees bend and haughty heads bow down. By the invincible hope of His cry, she still rejoices that the prayers of those who believe stand in the midst of hardship and shine bright against the darkness.

It is possible to learn such prayer in these Christmas days. These are words that are learned by an obedience that suffers, progresses and dies in love just as Jesus did.

The Man of Sorrows is the Way that prayer must walk if Christian faith is to attain what it seeks. The Just One is the Truth who makes true the desires of the Christian heart. The One Crucified by Love is the life for all those who, by prayer, die to themselves and live no more this earthly life. A wondrous gift is offered in the simple surrender that would turn again from sin, persevere in love and invoke His Name; and that prayer that amazed the Mother of God becomes also the prayer coming to birth in the heart.

MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO HELPED TO MAKE OUR CHRISTMAS MASSES SO BEAUTIFUL! YOUR SERVICE TO OUR PARISH IS APPRECIATED.

Tuesday, January 1st, is the Feast of Mary, the Mother of God and a holy day of obligation. Our Masses for the feast will be at 4pm on Monday and at 8 & 10am on Tuesday. Come and honor the mother of our Lord and ask her prayers for the New Year.

This Thursday PRAISE & Worship. We will have a praise and worship gathering this Thursday from 6:30 to 8:30 and dinner will be served. Everyone is invited to come and join us for Spirit-filled praise of our Lord. For more information contact Fr. Conley.

This Friday is the first Friday of the month. We will have adoration of the Blessed Sacrament following the 9:30 AM Mass and concluding with Benediction at 6 PM. (Note change in time!) Volunteers are needed to sign up for adoration between the hours of three and 6PM. The sign-up sheet is in the foyer.

COMING NEXT WEEK- THE JOY OF HOPE: HOW TO LIVE JOYFULLY IN THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE This four-part will be the topic of our next **Following Jesus series** which meets on the **second** and **fourth** Thursday evenings of the month, from 6:30 PM until 8:30 PM. The Joy of Hope will meet on January 10 and 24th and February 14 and 28th. The cost of the series is \$10 and includes dinner. Everyone is encouraged to come. You can sign up in the foyer or by contacting Fr. Conley at frconley@comcast.net or 301-870-2220 ext. 13.

WE WANT YOUR BLOOD On Saturday, January 12, 2019 from 10 AM to 2 PM, Catholic Daughters will sponsor a Red Cross Blood Drive in the school hall. You can email Carol at caherskovitz@comcast.net.

ST. MARY'S HEALING PRAYER MINISTRY

The mission of our healing prayer ministry is to help people to have a personal encounter with the Lord and experience his healing love. We do this by praying with people who are seeking physical, emotional and spiritual healing. Our healing prayer ministry is founded on our confidence in God the Father, who has given us every spiritual blessing in the heavens; Jesus Christ the Son who has redeemed us by his blood; and the Holy Spirit who fills us with the fire of his love. Persons seeking prayer from the healing prayer ministry will be given the opportunity to make an appointment with a prayer team for one or two confidential prayer sessions. To make an appointment to meet with one of our healing prayer teams, please contact Kaye Oliver at 240-682-0646 or Sam Oliver at 301-848-3206. Email can be sent to Samuel_Oliver @comcast.net.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ANNUAL CELEBRATION

All are invited to the annual archdiocesan Celebration of the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Saturday, January 19, at 4:30pm at St. Luke Catholic Church in Washington, DC (4925 East Capitol St.). This celebration of Dr. King's life provides a special occasion of renewed inspiration for courageous conversations that help us build respect and solidarity within our communities, bearing witness to God's boundless love for all the human family. For more information, contact the Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach at 301-853-5335 or culturaldiversity@adw.org.

COLLECTION FOR CHURCH MISSIONS WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

On the weekend of January 12-13, the Archdiocese of Washington will take up a second collection for Church Missions within the United States. This collection supports mission dioceses in this country that are unable to offer their people the basic pastoral ministries of word, worship, and service without outside help. It may also give grants to other dioceses in the U.S. for particular projects, and to organizations and religious communities engaged in missionary work. Second, it provides vulnerable Black and Native American communities with funds for supporting and strengthening evangelization programs that would otherwise be in danger of disappearing among these communities. Thank you for your generosity.

MASS FOR HEALING

The Archdiocesan Association of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities (AEMNC) invites you to pray with and for the Church at a special Mass for Healing. It will be held on Saturday, January 5 at 5:30pm (the Vigil of the Epiphany) at Annunciation Church in Washington, DC (3810 Massachusetts Ave., NW). A reception afterward will provide the opportunity to meet and get to know the several movements that operate in the archdiocese. For more information, please email Ray Glennon at ray.glennon@1972.usna.com.

HELP FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

Do you feel alone? Are you frustrated or angry with each other? Do you argue ... or have you just stopped talking to each other? Does talking about it only make it worse? Retrouvaille (pronounced "retro-vi" with a long "i") helps couples through difficult times in their marriages. This program has helped tens of thousands of couples experiencing difficulties in their marriage. For confidential information or to register for the upcoming program beginning with a weekend on February 1-3, please visit www.HelpOurMarriage.com, call 443-400-7017, or email 3015@retrovaille.org.

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK:

SUN: 8am *Mittie Forbes Simmons & Parishioners*, 10am *Msgr. Tom Duffy*, 12N: *F. Brooke Matthews*, **MON:** 8am *Patricia Jean Padgett*, 4pm *Rev. Joseph Kleinstuber*, **TUES:** 8am *Cristina Arguelles*, 10am *Maurice Long, Sr.*, 12N: **NO MASS**, **WED:** 8am *Leila Mohler*, **THURS:** 8am *Mary Crawford*, **FRI:** 9:30am *Shameka Gross*, **SAT:** 9am *Yvonne Coates*, 4pm *Ernest J. Keller, Jr.*, & *Jessie Chlysta*.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY

PRAYERS: Stephen Balenger, Mary Bowes, Deacon Gene Burroughs, Quint Burroughs, Brenda Callahan, Joe Cross, Agnes Curtis, Chuck Davis, Kendall Farrell, George Fassel, Arlene Gandolfi, Kevin Gardiner, Martha Gehring, James Gibson, Zynae Green, Irma Johnson, Angie Kalnasy, Regina Kijesky, Lillian Komar, Susie Logan, Larry Miller, Joseph Mona, Wayne Mullings, Mary Reeves, Sylvene Savoy, William Leon Savoy, Edna Sweeney, Jean Turner, Eva Washington, Beth Weise, Pat Werner, Brice Zimmer.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION LAST WEEKEND:

\$11,987.50. The unidentified donations totaled \$703.00. We received \$21.00 for our School Support.