

# St. Cornelius Parish

SUNDAY BULLETIN

December 24, 2023

## 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

160 Ridge Rd  
Chadds Ford, PA 19317  
Phone: (610) 459-2502  
Fax: (610) 459-3942

Web: [www.saintcornelius.org](http://www.saintcornelius.org)

Email: [stcorn1@comcast.net](mailto:stcorn1@comcast.net) • Facebook: Like us on Facebook

**Msgr. David Diamond, Pastor**

Deacons: Harry Morris • John Todor (Ret.)

### Parish Council Members

Agnes Arkus  
Michael Brisgone

Anslem Cooray  
Chris Fahey

Michael Gidlewski  
John Guest

Jon Lippard  
Joanne Morris

Michelle Nardozzi  
David Ripsom

Jennifer Swetland

**Business Manager:** David Bauer

**Pastoral & Administrative Assistant:** Marie McGuigan

**Office Manager:** Douglas Kitson

**Parish Religious Education Program:** Julie Sullivan

**Director of Music:** Margie Melchiorre

### St. Cornelius Early Learning Center

*Abbie McCusker, Director*

Phone: (610) 459-8663

Website: [www.scornelius.org](http://www.scornelius.org)

### St. Cornelius Parish Office Hours

Monday thru Thursday 8:00 am to 3:00 pm

Friday 8:00 am to 12:00 pm Noon

**Saturday:** Confessions 2:30 - 3:30 Vigil Mass 4:00 pm

**Sunday:** 7:30 am, 9:00 am, 11:00 am, 4:00 pm

**Weekday Mass: 7:30 am**

**Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:** Friday's after morning Mass to 4 pm

**LiveStream** [www.livestream.com/saintcornelius](http://www.livestream.com/saintcornelius)

## Thoughts from the Second Floor Front

### IV Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023

On this fourth Sunday of Advent we stand at the close of that season and at the threshold of the celebration of Christmas. The fourth week of Advent begins today and ends today. It all goes by too quickly. The Church gives us the Annunciation scene from Luke's account as our gospel passage. That is followed by our Lady's great prayer. The Magnificat.

If Advent is about preparation and transformation that prayer is about the reversals that God can accomplish in our lives and has accomplished in our world. Mary announces that in His goodness God has looked upon his lowly servant and has raised up the lowly. This is not simply an articulation of her humility. St. Luke uses words that carry with them the connotation of having little if any social status and implies being pressed down by forces beyond the control of the individual. Her condition is not humble; her condition is of no social value. Yet God has raised her up for all generations to call Blessed.

God continues this reversal throughout all of society. This is good news for the poor, who have nothing on which they can depend for their security; God will raise them up. It is bad news for the rich, the power brokers and those on thrones; they are about to be cast down. But the prayer is not about the vengeance of the disenfranchised; the 'have-nots' finally get a hand up not a hand out and the "haves" finally get what's coming to them. It is not about revenge. Anyone who uses Sacred Scripture as a club against someone misuses the gifts of God's word and is guilty of assaulting the Kingdom itself.

Mary's prayer is a call to every believer to pay attention to the work of God in the world and in your life. In the upcoming days of the Christmas celebration engage in a little reflection. Reflect on the enormous joy children can have at this time of year. Consider the good people in your life. Ponder what it would mean to you if you did indeed let the Lord have His way rather than yours. We know that Christmas is more than the gifts, the decorations, the carols or the lights. Mary's prayer is a profound recognition that, against all odds, God has worked a wonderful thing in her life. The same can be said by every disciple.

The season of Advent moves too quickly and in our culture, Christmas seems to last just the one day. When I was living in a parish in Bethesda while I was a student at Catholic University, I became friends with a couple from Ireland. We explored aspects of our own homeland, the similarities and differences between the Irish and American cultures. They reported two characteristics about the States that were both a source of surprise and puzzlement. The first was our fascination with the weather. That we have a television station which reports on the weather all day, every day simply astounded them. In Ireland, if you don't like the weather, just wait fifteen minutes and it'll change.

The other matter that confounded them was the way we celebrate Christmas. We do it all in one day. By the time dessert is served at the Christmas dinner we are talking of disassembling the decorations and packing the tree up for another year. We all go back to work the next day like nothing has happened. What is the rush? Take time after Christmas Day to be still and quiet and pause.

Seize the opportunity that Grace has given you in this season of goodness and good wishes. If you do not find the peace and goodness of the season readily at hand, ask yourself what you are doing to bring it about. Turn to the first chapter in St. Luke's gospel and pray on that.

Give it 15 minutes; you won't regret it.

Faithfully,

Msgr. Diamond

*Emmanuel,*

*God is  
with us*



**Christmas Eve Mass Schedule**

4:00 pm

Celebrant: Fr. Joseph Serano, O. Praem.

Music Provided by:

*11 am Contemporary Ensemble*

6:00 pm

Celebrant: Msgr. Diamond

Music Provided by:

*Strings and Young Voices*

8:00 pm

Celebrant: Msgr. Diamond

Music Provided by:

*Trumpet, Flute and Adult Choir*

10:00 pm

Celebrant: Msgr. Diamond

Music Provided by:

*Young Adult Quartet & Walnut Street  
Trio*

**Christmas Day Mass Schedule**

8:30 am

Celebrant: Msgr. Diamond

Music Provided by:

*Cantor and Organ*

11:00 am

Celebrant: Msgr. Diamond

Music Provided by:

*Cantor and Walnut Street Trio*



**New Year's Eve**

4:00 pm

Celebrant: Msgr. Diamond

**New Year's Day**

7:30 am

Celebrant: Msgr. Diamond

9:00 am

Celebrant: Msgr. Diamond

11:00 am

Celebrant: Msgr. Diamond





## Parish Office Christmas Hours

*The Parish office will be closed  
during the Christmas and  
New Year's break.*

*We will reopen on Wednesday,  
January 3, 2024.*

*We wish you all a very blessed Christmas  
and a Happy New Year.*



## WeShare Online Giving

Online Giving is an easy and convenient way to save time and support St. Cornelius Parish. Donating is **simple, safe,** and completely **secure.**

With **WeShare**, you can set up a recurring weekly or monthly transaction using your checking, savings, or credit card account. You can decide how much to give to the offertory and make changes any time, day or night. Plus, you can leave your checkbook at home on Sundays.

If you would like to enroll in Online Giving, please visit

<https://saintcornelius.weshareonline.org>



If you have any questions or concerns about the program or would like help setting up your account, please call our parish office at (610) 459-2502.

WeShare accepts the following means of contributing  
debit card • credit card • checking & savings account

We are happy to announce there is a new, easy way to help support St. Cornelius Early Learning Center! The new and improved app uses technology to scan your store receipt, find participating products and instantly add Box Tops to your school's earnings online. 1.To participate in the new digital program simply, download and use the Box Tops App! 2.Find St. Cornelius and connect your box tops app to our school. 3.Start scanning your paper or digital receipts and earn money for our school



## Baptisms

Baptized in Christ

**Marlowe Ferong**

Son of Jacob and Sarah Ferong

**Maeve Mulvihill**

Daughter of Joseph and kayla Mulvihill

Let us pray for our newly baptized Christians.



Parishioners who would like a statement of their 2023 contributions must call the Parish Office during business hours at (610) 459-2502, or Email the office at [stcorn1@comcast.net](mailto:stcorn1@comcast.net).



*December contributions made using WeShare  
will be posted by January 15th, 2024.*

## LIGHT THE ADVENT WREATH

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ...  
Come Lord Jesus, be our light!  
Help us to trust in you, as Joseph trusted in God.



## PRAY

Father God, we ask that, like Joseph, we will trust in you and do your will, even when it isn't what we would have planned for ourselves. Amen

## REFLECT

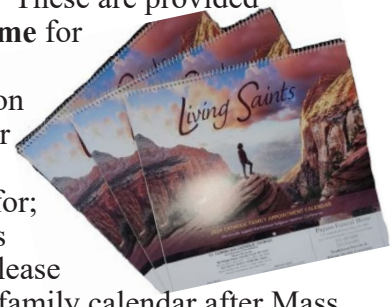
How is God calling you to trust in Him?

## ACT

This week, practice this simple prayer each night before bed: "Jesus I trust in you."

## CHURCH CALENDARS

Our parish calendars have arrived and are available for your home or office. These are provided by **Pagano Funeral Home** for free. While they do not have your family vacation indicated on the calendar they do have other important dates to plan for; Lent, Holy Week, Feasts Days and Holy Days. Please Be sure to pick up your family calendar after Mass.



## First Sunday Coffee

The St. Cornelius Council of the Knights of Columbus will be hosting a coffee reception in the Holy Family Portico after the 11:00 Mass on **Sunday, January 7** Nick Cappelli of Pronto Catering is again supplying us with the caffeine, cocoa and tea. This month we ask parishioners with last names beginning with A-M to help out by bringing a dozen or so baked goods to share with all our parishioners.

Please join us after Mass with your fellow parishioners.  
See you there!!



## The Faith Community Nurse Holistic Health Ministry

On request, Faith Community Nurses are making home visits to families who may be experiencing medical or social difficulties. The nurses confidentially address the needs holistically through bringing with them prayers from the parish, a knowledge of the medical field and process for providing support. If you know of anyone in the parish or beyond who would benefit from these services, please email: [stfcfn@gmail.com](mailto:stfcfn@gmail.com). Contact person is Joan Holliday, RN/FCN at (610) 717-2180.



"Help provide home cooked meals to neighbors in need! Caring for Friends (formerly Aid for Friends) is collecting frozen meals and soups for homebound seniors and food insecure individuals. Meal trays and soup containers can be found in the utility closet on the right of the side door of the narthex. Consider putting aside an extra dinner or soup portion, freeze it and then bring it to the freezer also located in the utility closet. PLEASE sign the meals and soup in on the list attached to the shelves next to the freezer. The food is distributed all over the Greater Philadelphia Area. This effort is on-going at our parish. We invite you to contribute what you can." If you have questions, please contact Nancy Todor 609-234-1193

*Let us pray for our Men and Women  
serving in the Armed Forces. Especially for:*

SSG Ana Brunal  
SPC Mike Canfield  
Cpl Michael Castle  
Lt. Connor Cleary  
Fr. Joseph Coffey (Chaplain)  
Maj Robert B. Cusick, Jr.  
Capt Joshua deFreitas  
SSGT Michael DiVernieri  
Cadet Emily Fanning  
Lt. Ryan Gallagher  
2nd Lt. Nicholas Gallagher  
SSG. Eric Gardner  
Capt Matthew Gibbons  
Ens Patrick Gibbons  
Ens John Paul Gibbons  
Maj Rachel Gonzalez  
SPC Logan Hannum  
Sgt Andrew Hart  
Devin J. Hunt  
PO1 Nathan R. Keller  
1st Lt Lauren Kinnee  
Capt Daniel Kohli  
Maj. Chris Love  
Maj. Megan Love

Sgt Jason Lyons  
2nd Lt. Kevin Malone  
Sgt Alexander Marlow  
Pfc Zachary Marlow  
Lt. Cmdr Daniel McCadden  
CSM Sean McGlensey  
Capt Jonathan McGrath  
LT Molly K. McGuckin  
LCDR Ryan A. McGuckin  
Maj. Sean P. Noll  
Lt. Col Brian J. O'Shea  
Lt. Cmdr Inga O'Shea  
Maj James O'Shea  
PFC L Roland  
LTJG Christian Samulewicz  
2nd Lt. Olivia Samulewicz  
Capt. Neal F. Schubert  
HM3 Charles Schwartz  
Ens Nicholas Spadaccini  
MSG Thomas Stone  
Cpl Mark Truex  
Lt. Christopher Vish  
Capt. Aidan Walsh  
Capt Jennifer Wynn



## St. Cornelius Giving Tree

Thank you for your generous support of the 2023 Saint Cornelius "Giving Tree"! Your generous outpouring this year will support a variety of ministries and agencies in our area and within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. People will receive gifts for their children, food for their family, gift cards to assist in covering expenses and household needs, and child care items for mothers in need to name just a few.

Your gifts to the giving tree not only helps those in need, it also honors God the Father's gift of His son to the world.

*Thank You*

The season of **Advent**... restores this  
horizon of **hope**, a  
hope which does not  
disappoint for it is  
founded on  
**God's Word.**



Pope Francis,  
December 1, 2013





## St. Cornelius Early Learning Center

Last week in our awesome little school we had a Polar Express Day. The Polar Express has a wonderful message about the importance of believing, the value of friendship, respect for leadership and courage, and the beauty of being kind to others.



The children wore their pajamas to school, we had our tickets punched to board the train, drank hot



chocolate, ate cookies and popcorn, and we all received that very special bell. It was so much fun sharing this special day with all our friends! The magic of Christmas is all over our school!



The Sunday collection is very important for us to maintain our fiscal responsibilities. So, if you are away on a Sunday, *ENJOY*; but remember *YOUR* church.

**December 17, 2023**

WeShare eGiving	\$8,504.50
Envelope Offering	<u>\$23,735.50</u>
	\$32,240.00



*"For where your treasure is,  
there also will your heart be."*

Luke 12:34

## Joyous Mysteries of the Rosary Saturday Mornings

Joyous Mysteries of the Rosary aims to facilitate an experience where participants can encounter, contemplate and discuss the key mysteries in the life of Jesus Christ as contained within the Rosary. The Rosary is simultaneously a contemplative prayer, a spiritual weapon and a catechetical tool. The goal is for each participant to encounter the person of Jesus Christ in the episodes, discussions and in their personal prayer. In doing so, Our Lord will teach them the art of Christian living as well as the art of Christian prayer.



MYSTERIES  
of the ROSARY

**Dates:** Saturdays, December 2, 2023 - January 27, 2024

Dec 2 - Series Introduction and Preview

Dec 9 - The Annunciation

Dec 16 - The Visitation

Dec 23 and 30 - Christmas Break (NO MEETING)

Jan 6 - The Birth of Jesus

Jan 13 - The Presentation

Jan 20 - The Finding in the Temple

Jan 27 - Series Conclusion and Review

**Time:** 9:00 am - 10:30 am

**Location:** Parish Life Center (PLC)

**Weekly Agenda:**

9:00 am Gathering, Food and Fellowship

9:30 am Video

10:00 am Discussion and Prayer

10:30 am Closing



Session sign up



## Helping Hands and Hearts

This ministry offers temporary help (meals, errands, etc.) to individuals and families in need! If you are aware of someone in need or would like to be a volunteer helper, please contact Marilyn Gustin at [mgustin05@gmail.com](mailto:mgustin05@gmail.com) (484) 732-8842.

## CRS NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

Climate change adaptation programming is cost-effective. In 5 Central American countries, more than 40,000 farmers have learned to protect their soil, to plant cover crops to build soil fertility, to apply the right fertilizer, and to capture rainwater to boost crop yields. Visit [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org) for more information and to see how you can help!

*"The destruction of the environment is an offence against God, a sin that is not only personal but also structural, one that greatly endangers all human beings, especially the most vulnerable in our midst and threatens to unleash a conflict between generations... Climate change is a global social issue and one intimately related to the dignity of human life... Are we*



*working for a culture of life or a culture of death? To all of you I make this heartfelt appeal: Let us choose life! Let us choose the future! May we be attentive to the cry of the earth, may we hear the plea of the poor, may we be sensitive to the hopes of the young and the dreams of children! We have a grave responsibility: to ensure that they not be denied their future."*

~ Pope Francis

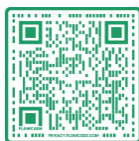


### St Blaise Men's Weekend Retreat at Malvern Retreat House Feb 2 - 4, 2024.

Please join us for the annual St Blaise Men's Retreat at the Malvern Retreat House.

This is a great opportunity to deepen your relationship with the Lord, escape the busyness of everyday life and reflect on your journey to heaven. Fr Doug McKay, Rector of Malvern Retreat House, will lead us with 4 conferences throughout the weekend. Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, adoration and the rosary will be offered.

Please contact David Santoleri at [dave@santoleri.net](mailto:dave@santoleri.net) for more information.



## PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE ILL AND THOSE WHO CARE FOR THEM

Lillian Corbett, Eileen Kane, C. McCollum, Joshua Gidlewski, Denise Banta, Patty Burke, Tom Eno, Raul Gesmundo, Diana Duffy, Isaac Burks, Suzanne Agren, Gabe Grant, Nancy Cunningham, Jay Holland, Thomas Drane, Kara Ulatowski, Harold Von Brockdorff, Jeff Behm, Mary Harmes, Mary Helen Arthur, Anne Spetzer, Carolyn Duffy, Carleen Peters, Marian Short, Matthew Hess, Bryan Thompson, Cindy Ficca, Paul Lucas, Carla Santoleri, Richard Meccarrielli, Edward Field, Judy Field, Joyce Monaco, Matthew Hurst, Leonard Smith, Jr., Jim Waters, Kathie Buckley, Bernice & Arthur Hindle, Sean Mulvey, George Butler, Margaret Butler, Patricia Wells, Kathy Williams, Michael Gibbons, Shirley Masse, Ellen Brisgone, Laura O'Brien-Black, Elizabeth Kephart, Tina Landis, Bill & Theresa Sherwin, Michelle Dillione, Chris Roe, Frank Kuders, Kylee Dougherty, Dave and Ronnie Pryce, Rosemary Brennan, Ellie May McGrath, Vicki Wojdak, Andrea Bateman, Brandon Heacock, Brittany Lott, Nancy Young, Peyton Lott, Billy Lott, Nanci Ehmer, Ken Rudert, Ed Shell, Ellie McCreight, Ellie Griem, Gregory Varacchi, Michael McKinnen, Connie Carney, Luke Post, Jim Buckley, Jerome Lienhard



## The Ministry of Consolation

A St. Cornelius community response to the needs of people grieving the death of a significant person/persons in their lives, the ministry honors the words and example of the Lord Jesus:

*"Blessed are they who mourn; they shall be consoled"*

(Matthew 5:4).

A team of four St. Cornelius church members have been trained to set up and facilitate a Support Group for the Consolation Ministry.

On **January 20, 2024**, the Consolation Group will meet at the **Parish Life Center, Fr. Simon Room** from **2:30pm to 3:30pm**.

Contact Joan Holliday for any questions  
[dochollisv@aol.com](mailto:dochollisv@aol.com) or call (610) 717-2180.



## Assisted Hearing Devices

We have 4 assisted hearing devices, which connect directly to the sound system that are available for use at each Mass. They are located on the table by the Sacristy entrance.

Easy to operate: put 2 batteries in and you are good to HEAR!

Comments from satisfied users:

*Wow - That is the first time in a long Time that I have heard everything at Mass.*





*Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament flows from the sacrifice of the Mass and serves to deepen our hunger for Communion with Christ and the rest of the Church.*

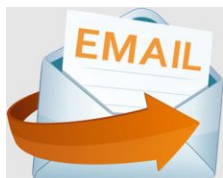
***If a funeral is scheduled for a Friday,  
there will be NO exposition.***



If your investment portfolio has appreciated assets, a great way to reduce your taxes and donate to the church is to gift St. Cornelius appreciated investments. If you do have appreciated investments, Saint Cornelius is able to accept stocks and mutual funds as a charitable contribution through [TD Ameritrade](#).

Bauer, the business manager for the church, at 610-459-2502.

*Thank you for your generous support of the parish.*



Msgr. Diamond's weekly Thursday Email is a popular weekly news letter for our parishioners. Currently there are **over 1055** people who receive his email each Thursday afternoon. If you would like to be on our distribution list, please call the office at (610) 459-2502 or send your request to be added to our distribution at

Stcorn1@comcast.net.



**catholiccharitiesappeal.org**



## Saint Cornelius Parish

# PREP

## YOUTH GROUP



**St Cornelius**  
**YOUTH GROUP**

## Children's Liturgy of the Word

We would like to wish all of our young families a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We will not be having our Children's liturgy this week or next. We look forward to welcoming you all back on January 7, 2024 at the 9 am Mass.

# Lending Library



You may not be aware of the Lending Library that exists in our ambulatory, near the large stain glass windows overlooking the family portico. The cart pictured to the left contains a variety of reading material that you are welcome to take with you. You may also find a variety of holy cards, prayer pamphlets and novenas. Please feel free to take what you like.



## Prayer Shawl Ministry... Come, Join US!



Did you know that each baby baptized at St. Cornelius receives a hand-made blanket made by our Prayer Shawl Ministry? You are welcome to join us in this rewarding ministry. We also make shawls, blankets, scarves, hats, mittens etc. for elderly homes, the Giving Tree and anyone looking for a comforting gift.

**Every 4th Monday of each month  
1:30pm to 3:00pm**

We find ourselves in need of white acrylic yarn or funding to help continue this wonderful ministry. Please prayerfully consider donating to our ministry or purchasing a "Pound of Love" or "Caron Pound" of white acrylic yarn. We have a basket set up in the narthex, below the large TV monitor, to offer our works and for your donations. Also, you are welcome to drop off any yarn donations to the Parish Life Center. Donations are greatly appreciated.

Shawls and blankets are available in the Bethany Room. If you have any questions, please contact

Mary Jo Shell, (610) 361-8198  
or Joanne Fonash, (610) 299-9694

## —BIBLE STUDY—

We are continuing our Bible Study with Monsignor Diamond. All women and men are invited to join us each Thursday morning from 10:00 to 11:00 am., in the PLC. The goal of this Scripture study will be to broaden our knowledge of Scripture, our church's teaching regarding the Scriptures, and how it can enhance our understanding and personal faith life.



If you have questions, please call  
Nancy Todor - cell 609-234-1193.

## Updating Our Prayer List

We are attempting to update our prayer list as it has grown over the years. If you know of a loved one listed whom you feel has been helped by our prayers and are now recovered, please email the office at [stcorn1@comcast.net](mailto:stcorn1@comcast.net) so we can remove their name.

## Weekly Mass Schedule (Week of December 25 - December 29)

### Saturday Vigil / Sunday Morning

Intention: *Missa pro populo (Mass for the people)*

Reading: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29;  
Rom 16:25-27; Lk 1:26-38



### Christmas Eve

**4:00 PM • 6:00 PM • 8:00 PM • 10:00 PM**

Reading: Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27-29;  
Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25]

During the Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13;  
Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14

### Monday 8:30 AM & 11:00 AM

### The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

Reading: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3:4-7;  
Lk 2:15-20



### Tuesday 7:30 AM St. Stephen

Intention: John Rodia

Reading: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59;  
Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22

### Wednesday 7:30 AM St. John

Intention: Marie Diamond

Reading: 1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1a, 2-8

### Thursday 7:30 AM The Holy Innocents

Intention: Santoleri Family

Reading: 1 Jn 1:5 - 2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7cd-8; Mt 2:13-18

### Friday 7:30 AM St. Thomas Becket

Intention: Rose Marciano

Reading: 1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-3, 5b-6; Lk 2:22-35

## PILGRIM STATUE

12 - 24 - 2023 Carla Santoleri  
12 - 31 - 2023 Carla Santoleri  
01 - 07 - 2024 Cathy Eno



The new sign up sheet for 2024 is now available. Feel free to pick your dates.  
Call Carla Santoleri at (610) 361-8447 for more information.

**Fourth Sunday of Advent****December 24, 2023****GOD'S PROMISE**

The lengthy passage from Samuel is a wonderful exposition of God's promise to the house of David: that his throne would forever be gloriously occupied by his descendants. Hidden in the mystery of the prophecy is the promise of the Savior, the Messiah, Son of God and Son of David. The prophet Nathan, speaking in God's name, poetically turns around David's plan to build a house for God, and announces God's plan to build a "house," that is, a dynasty for David. From this house of David will come the Messiah, the Christ, not in kingly splendor as David ruled, but as a humble man, destined to rule forever and over all. When God gives a gift, it's amazing what we are given—so different from what we ever could have imagined.

**TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION**

Children of the parish are somewhat focused on Santa Claus these days, who is keeping an eye on who's naughty and who's nice. Santa Claus, with his heavenly patron Saint Nicholas, has been more or less in charge of gift-giving to American children for a hundred years or so. In other places, perhaps more attentive to our Christian tradition, there are different gift-bearers. In Greece, Saint Basil delivers the presents on his feast day, December 31, and makes sure everyone is sprinkled with holy water. The Baby Jesus is in charge elsewhere, called the *Christkind* in Austria and Belgium, *El Niño Jesús* in Columbia, and *Le Petit Jesus* in France, where he

shares his duties with *Père Noël*. In the Czech Republic almost everyone is atheist, but *Ježíšek*, the infant Jesus, brings gifts to one and all. In Poland the "Star Man" is said to bring the gifts, although often he turns out to be the village priest in disguise. Saint Nicholas, not his Americanized cousin, is the giver in Holland, where he wears a bishop's miter, and in Russia, where he wears a bishop's crown. Soviet Russia tried to dethrone Saint Nicholas and promote Grandfather Frost, but no one was much fooled by this attempt to squeeze religion out of Christ's birth. One country has a saintly woman in charge of the gifts, Saint Lucy, honored in Sweden on December 13, when children serve their parents breakfast in bed, and others awake to news that they have been nominated for a Nobel Prize. Some children have a second round of gifts on Epiphany, when the magi assume the gift-giving duties. In general, the gifts of Christmas are simple pleasures, not great heaps of treasures. Once upon a time, a new pair of socks or an orange was enough for us. No matter what gifts we receive, all of them are to point us to the true gift, and the true giver.

—Rev. James Field



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# THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

# DECEMBER 24, 2023

## BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS TREE

Christmas is almost here! Have you blessed your Christmas tree yet?

According to custom, the Christmas tree is set up just before Christmas and may remain in place until the Solemnity of Epiphany. The lights of the tree are illuminated after the prayer of blessing.

In the home the Christmas tree may be blessed by a parent or another family member, in connection with the evening meal on the Vigil of Christmas or at another suitable time on Christmas Day.



*When all have gathered, a suitable song may be sung.*

[The leader makes the sign of the cross, and all reply "Amen."]

[The leader may greet those present in the following words]

*Let us glorify Christ our light, who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and forever.*

**R/. Amen.**

*My brothers and sisters, amidst signs and wonders Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea: his birth brings joy to our hearts and enlightenment to our minds. With this tree, decorated and adorned, may we welcome Christ among us; may its lights guide us to the perfect light.*

[One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example, **Titus 3:4 (lines 4-7)** or **Ezekiel 17:22 (lines 22-24 4; I will plant a tender shoot on the mountain heights of Israel.)**]

**Reader:** *The Word of the Lord.*

**R/. Thanks be to God.**

[The intercessions are then said. The leader says]

Let us ask God to send his blessing upon us and upon this sign of our faith in the Lord.

**R/. Lord,** give light to our hearts. That this tree of lights may remind us of the tree of glory on which Christ accomplished our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

**R/. Thanks be to God.**

That the joy of Christmas may always be in our homes, let us pray to the Lord.

**R/. Thanks be to God.**

That the peace of Christ may dwell in our hearts and in the world, let us pray to the Lord.

**R/. Thanks be to God.**

[After the intercessions the leader invites all present to say the Lord's Prayer. *Our Father who aren't in heaven...*]

[The leader says the prayer with hands joined]

*Lord our God,  
we praise you for the light of creation:*

*the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night. We praise you for the light of Israel: the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures.*

*We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son: he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace, who fills us with the wonder of your love. Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we illumine this tree. May the light and cheer it gives be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts. May all who delight in this tree come to the knowledge and joy of salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

**R/. Amen.**

The lights of the tree are then illuminated. The leader concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying:

*May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy, now and forever.*

**R/. Amen.**

[The blessing concludes with a verse from "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"]

O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here; disperse the gloomy clouds of night and death's dark shadow put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

—From Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers



"Mary said,  
"Behold, I am  
the handmaid of  
the Lord. May  
it be done to  
me according to  
your word."

—LK 1-38