



St. Cornelius Parish

SUNDAY BULLETIN

December 28, 2025

160 Ridge Rd, Chadds Ford, PA 19317

Phone: (610) 459-2502 • Fax: (610) 459-3942

Web: www.saintcornelius.org

Email: stcorn1@comcast.net

Facebook: Like us on Facebook

Msgr. David Diamond, Pastor

Deacons: Harry Morris • John Todor (Ret.)

Parish Council Members

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José Dominguez

Franca Felcher

Mary Jo Gordon

John Guest

Laurie Hays

Jon Lippard

Mary Rose Mitchell

Jerry O'Rourke

David Ripsom

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Pastoral & Administrative Assistant: Marie McGuigan

Office Manager: Douglas Kitson

Parish Religious Education Program: Abbie McCusker

Director of Music: Margie Melchiorre

Director of Parish Services: Kelly Limmina

St. Cornelius Early Learning Center

Abbie McCusker, Director

Phone: (610) 459-8663

Website: 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 8:00 am to 4 pm

LiveStream <https://vimeo.com/user123448673>

Thoughts from the Second Floor Front

The Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

December 28, 2025

On this first Sunday after Christmas the Church celebrates the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The reading from Sirach addresses the care that ought to be extended to elderly parents. That is a very good reminder for our time and society in which youth is exalted, glamorized and held up as a sort of Platonic ideal. Being older does not necessarily mean the individual has any more wisdom. That varies with individuals. One's innate intelligence as well as the learned kind can add to and extend what youth often lacks – experience.

Those among us of a certain age have memories and experiences that have formed who we are. Much of what today is hailed as new is only making another appearance, perhaps under a new nomenclature but when it is stripped down to its essentials, we can recognize it for what it is or rather what it was in its first iteration. I remember being more than a little surprised when reading the application forms that a young man must submit in applying for admittance to our Archdiocesan seminary. It is a document well over forty pages in length with detailed questions. The applicant is required to answer the question in ink. While I was occasionally surprised by the answers to some questions, I remember being regularly surprised by the manner in which the answers were given. The lengthy document was filled with answers provided in Block Printing.

I am the first to admit that my handwriting is proof of the failure of the Sister Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in attempting to teach me the Palmer Penmanship Method. But cursive writing is nothing new. The sacramental books in my previous parishes have entries made with beautiful handwriting, done in ink and in Latin. Read the excerpt from Sirach again and look at what is promised by the Sacred Author: atonement for sins, self-preservation, gladness, assurance that your prayers are heard. Care for elderly parents is a unique form of gratitude for all that they have done for you.

Here is a demonstration of the importance of the nuclear family: Mom, Dad and siblings. In the mid 1960's then President Johnson recognized that the Federal Government was spending million of dollars on public education. Once in a while our Government in Washington does show interest in the manner tax dollars are being spent. Enter Dr. James Coleman, an academic from the University of Chicago, was hired to explore the effects of increased funding for education. His findings were not consistent with the expected results. The Coleman Report was one of the largest studies in history up to that time. The result was a massive report of over 700 pages. The findings from the study done nearly six decades ago are still relevant today. Coleman found that school funding has little effect on student achievement. He identified Social Capital as more important and within Social Capital there exists Human Capital. Human Capital is the family, especially the parents, both a mom and a dad, and their interest in and support for the child's education. A stable family is more influential than things.

Coleman's findings did not sit well with the elite and intelligentsia of that day nor our own day. Throwing money at an issue rarely helps address the root of the issue. A stable family, parents in an intact marriage, an interest in reading and support for a child's education are far more important than more stuff.

The Holy Family knew challenges and difficulties as well. Today's gospel account addresses the opposition that they had to endure. They were initially threatened by Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. When Antipas died, he was succeeded by his son, Archelaus. He was worse than the father and the members of the Holy Family would one day be threatened again by the authorities. Opposition can come from people and places that we least expect. Grace can also surprisingly come from those people and places that we least expect. Praise God for the gift of our families and ask Him to protect them, keep them safe, close to Him and bless them with His Grace. May we be a channel of Grace for our own families. May God bless and protect them keeping them safe and close to Him.

Faithfully,

Msgr. Diamond

THE PARISH CHURCH AND ITS FURNISHINGS CHURCH EXTERIOR

On the outside, Catholic church buildings look different from one another, but they have many common features. Many people have a mental image of what a church should look like, and they are satisfied or disappointed when approaching one for the first time. There are no rules governing the exterior appearance of churches. Some look as plain as a storefront. Others look as breathtaking as a cathedral.



The appearance of a church exterior depends on the function of spaces inside, the demands of architecture and the search for beauty. Hundreds of years ago, architects discovered that Gothic (pointed) arches were stronger than rounded ones, which permitted the height of churches to increase. Many beautiful churches and cathedrals were built with this new technology. Although height can be attained in other ways today, many people associate Gothic arches with what a church should look like, but genuine designs are better than artificial ones.

As the art of stained glass developed, it became popular with churches. Images depicted in windows taught people about their religion. The colors made a church interior look beautiful on a sunny day. The overall effect created a sense of awe conducive to prayer.

Towers elevate the bells used to summon people to worship. A higher bell can be heard at farther distances than a lower one. Some churches are surmounted by a dome, which imitates the vault of the heavens. Others are topped with a steeple that lifts a cross on high.

No matter what the outside looks like, the most important feature is the door. Church exteriors should invite you in. When you cross the threshold, you pass into a place designated for communion with God.

Written by Paul Tumer.



In our charity, let us pray
for the repose of the soul of

Ronald J Mrjenovich, Jr
Brother of Rori McDougal

*Eternal rest grant to him, O Lord.
May he rest in peace.*

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 4.**

Nick Cappelli of Suburban Food Service is again supplying us with the caffeine, cocoa and tea. Both the women of **Walking With Purpose** and the men of **That Man Is You** will be spreading holiday cheer with their tasty Christmas treats! . Please join us after Mass with your fellow parishioners.

See you there!!



Holy Hour - Join Us!

Monday, January 5, 8:00 am

After the 7:30 Mass, the Pro-Life Group is hosting a Holy Hour. We will pray a rosary for the unborn, and an end to abortion. We will also pray the Miraculous Medal Novena for the unborn. There will be time for silent prayer. The hour will close at approximately 9:00 am.

Look for this event monthly on
the first Monday of the month.



**Feast of the Holy Family
December 28, 2026**

*The shepherds went
in haste, and found
Mary and Joseph and
the Infant lying
in a manger*

Lk 2:16

SNOW CLOSING

The safety of our children both in the Early Learning Center and PREP are of the utmost importance. Ice, sleet and snow can come at any time. We encourage you to monitor the weather from your home and use good judgement in determining your travel. While it is always good to gather for Mass each day, you should not feel obligated to risk your safety on days when weather conditions do not make it safe to travel.

It takes a big undertaking to clear the parking lot and have the pathways shoveled. Closing the Early Learning Center and canceling PREP allows our snow removal company to clean up the snow and restore our property to a safe and active place. If schools are closed ALL ACTIVITIES for the day and evening are canceled.

Remember - Safety comes First!!

Have you Registered with the Parish?



Christmas Season is a good time to reconnect with your Catholic faith and your parish. We invite you to stop in to the Parish Life Center and complete a registration form so we can meet you, your family and include you in our activities.

Perhaps you have recently moved to the area, or maybe you have been here awhile and just haven't taken the time to register.

Whatever the reason, we encourage you to stop in the Parish Life Center and join the life of the Church here at St. Cornelious.

Our office hours are Monday thru Thursday 8:00 am to 3:00 pm, and Friday 8:00 am to 12:00 pm Noon. We close for Lunch 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm

We look forward to seeing you and your family!

PARISH SERVICES



AMPS

Association of Mature Parishioners

Alzheimer's Awareness

- Danielle DiGregorio
Board Member of the
Alzheimer's Association

Parish Life Center

Thursday January 15

Lunch provided at 11:30, talk
noon-1pm

RETRouvaille

A LIFELINE FOR MARRIED COUPLES

REDISCOVER THE LOVE IN YOUR MARRIAGE

Tens of thousands of couples have healed their marriages through Retrouvaille (pronounced Retro-vy). If you know anyone who could benefit from this program, please pass this on. Couples learn to build communication skills and to increase intimacy. It provides help for marriage problems, difficulties or crises. The next program begins the weekend of **February 6-8, 2026** at the Family Life Center in Malvern, PA. For more information, or to register, call 215-766-3944 or visit www.MarriageHelpDelVal.org.

All inquiries are strictly confidential.



Giving Hope to All



IN COMMUNION WITH OUR SAINTS

**Memorial of Saints Basil the Great
and Gregory Nazianzen,
Bishops and Doctors of the Church
January 2**

After his baptism at 30, **Saint Gregory Nazianzen** gladly accepted his friend Basil's invitation to join him in a newly founded monastery. The solitude was broken when Gregory's father, a bishop, needed help in his diocese and estate. It seems that Gregory was ordained a priest practically by force, and only reluctantly accepted the responsibility. He skillfully avoided a schism that threatened when his own father made compromises with Arianism. At 41, Gregory was chosen suffragan bishop of Caesarea and at once came into conflict with Valens, the emperor, who supported the Arians.

An unfortunate by-product of the battle was the cooling of the friendship of two saints. Basil, his archbishop, sent him to a miserable and unhealthy town on the border of unjustly created divisions in his diocese. Basil reproached Saint Gregory Nazianzen for not going to his See.



When protection for Arianism ended with the death of Valens, Saint Gregory Nazianzen was called to rebuild the faith in the great see of Constantinople, which had been under Arian teachers for three decades. Retiring and sensitive, he dreaded being drawn into the whirlpool of corruption and violence. He first stayed at a friend's home, which became the only orthodox church in the city. In such surroundings, he began giving the great sermons on the Trinity for which he is famous. In time, Gregory did rebuild the faith in the city, but at the cost of great suffering, slander, insults, and even personal violence. An interloper even tried to take over his bishopric.

His last days were spent in solitude and austerity. He wrote religious poetry, some of it autobiographical, of great depth and beauty. He was acclaimed simply as "the Theologian." St. Gregory Nazianzen shares the celebration of his liturgical feast with St. Basil the Great on January 2.

Christmas Office Hours



The Parish Office will be closed from December 29 and reopening on Monday, January 5.

We wish you a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.



MARCH FOR LIFE

Friday, January 23, 2026

This year our Pro-Life committee is not offering a bus trip to the March. However, that shouldn't keep you from participating. If you wish to attend the March there is another option—Go Amtrak!

Prices are dependent on departure time, earlier is  cheaper, but you have to wait in DC for the days events to begin. The trip is about 1½ to 1¾ hours.

St. Thomas the Apostle parish will be using Amtrak, so you may want to coordinate with them as well as you plan your day.

www.amtrak.com/home.html



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Working in Witness for Christ™

In a world that can be void of meaning and leave young adults restless and dissatisfied, Young Catholic Professionals Philadelphia brings together young professionals in their 20s and 30s into a community of belonging, support, and encouragement at all stages of your faith journey. Young Catholic Professionals empowers and equips you to live your Catholic faith through everyday work and to perform all work with excellence for the glory of God.

Our patron saint is Saint Joseph the Worker. Our mission calls upon the intercession of Saint Joseph the Worker, a simple carpenter who reminds us of the importance of stillness, reflection, and prayer.

Young Catholic Professionals mission is to challenge, train, and inspire young adults working in various professional careers to work in witness for Christ. For more information go to our local Philadelphia website at

www.ycphiladelphia.org/cpages/home



St. Cornelius Early Learning Center

OPEN HOUSE

**SAINT CORNELIUS
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Building a foundation in faith
and education.

**Sunday,
January 11th
2026**

10am - 12pm

160 Ridge Road
Chadds Ford, PA 19317

- ✔ Tour the school
- ✔ Meet teachers
- ✔ Review curriculum
- ✔ Ask questions

For more info:
610-459-8663

Visit us:
scornelius.org



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 14, 2025

WeShare eGiving	\$6,828.40
Envelope Offering	<u>\$11,482.79</u>
	\$18,311.19

The offertory for December 21, 2025 was not available at the time of printing.



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

Luke 12:34



St. Cornelius Giving Tree

Thank you for your generous support of the 2025 Saint Cornelius Giving Tree!

We collected over \$16,200 in gift cards for all 7 charities: St. Cornelius Ministry of Caring, Catholic Social Services, Mothers' Home in Darby, Mary Mother of Hope Houses in Wilmington, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Peter the Apostle Parishes in Phila. Everyone was extremely grateful for the generosity of our Faith Community during these difficult economic times.

Through the new year please pray for the recipients of your generosity; they are all children of God who are working hard to overcome extraordinary challenges in their lives.

The Giving Tree Committee wishes everyone a Blessed Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year! God Bless!

Salesianum Sanders Scholarship

Golf Outing

**Save the Date
October 5th, 2026**



To benefit young men from Southeastern PA facing financial hardships, who aspire to attend Salesianum and join this community of distinguished gentlemen.

**Kennett Square Golf & Country Club
Kennett Square, PA**

Registration Opens Winter 2026

Sponsorship Opportunities are available.
For more information, please contact Mike Sanders at (610) 836-1864

Our Pre-K and kindergarten friends had a blast during after-school Science Club as they explored the exciting world of chemistry! The children enjoyed getting hands-on while making snowball slime, mixing ingredients, and watching how different materials changed when combined. This fun experiment helped our little friends learn that chemistry is all about how things react and work together. Smiles, curiosity, and lots of "wow" moments filled the room as our young scientists discovered that learning science can be both messy and magical.



CRS NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

In Haiti, Jean Clack-Andral is baking a better future! His bakery provides jobs for other young people and a community staple. Thanks to entrepreneurial training from CRS, he's creating opportunities and discouraging migration. Jean didn't have the opportunity to attend university and wasn't sure how to start. That changed when he was selected to participate in a youth entrepreneurial training through Ayiti pi Djanm.



Ayiti pi Djanm ("A Stronger Haiti") is a U.S. government-funded foreign assistance project implemented by Catholic Relief Services that builds the

resilience of vulnerable households and communities through a multi-sector approach. Working with local partners and community leaders, the project reaches more than 17,000 families in Haiti's South and Northeastern departments to improve food security, nutrition and livelihoods. Activities leverage participants' experiences and local knowledge to identify solutions adapted to their reality in agriculture, infant and young child feeding and youth entrepreneurship. As of June 2025, 1,320 youth entrepreneurs have been trained, and 409 have received financing for their business. Visit www.crs.org for more information and to see how you can help!

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
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
Spc. Andrew Koehler
Capt Daniel Kohli
Maj. Chris Love
Maj. Megan Love
Sgt Jason Lyons

2nd Lt. Kevin Malone
Sgt Alexander Marlow
PFC Zachary Marlow
CPT. Travis Mauer
Lt. Cmdr Daniel McCadden
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
Sgt. Maj. Justin Rogowski
PFC L Roland
LTJG Christian Samulewicz
1st Lt. Olivia Samulewicz
Capt. Neal F. Schubert
Ens Nicholas Spadaccini
MSG Thomas Stone
Cpl Mark Truex
Lt. Christopher Vish
Capt. Aidan Walsh
PFC Ellianna Welsh
Capt Jennifer Wynn

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

Natalie Gallen, Doris Wysocki, Kathy Coleman, Kara Ulatowski, James M. Sullivan, Jim & Kathy Buckley, Brian Buckley, Judy & Ed Field, Tom Eno, Luke Post, Nancy Cunningham, Andrea Bate-man, Bernice & Arthur Hindle, Joan Car- rington, Edna Werwinski, Hayes Gonzalez



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 17, 2026**, 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 or call (610) 717-2180.

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, Parish Life Center**

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.

If you have any questions, please contact

Valerie Childs (610) 213-0515
and Vickie Gambino (317) 440-5210



Eucharistic Adoration

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.

Join us for Adoration on Friday mornings after Mass. Please help by signing up for Adoration at least one hour each week. Your commitment will cover the same hour for each Friday.



You are welcome to visit anytime during the day until we repose the Blessed Sacrament at 4:00 PM.

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



Charitable Giving Through Appreciated Stocks and Mutual Funds

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 *Charles Schwab*.

For further information, please contact David Bauer, the business manager for the church, at 610-459-2502.

Thank you for your generous support of the parish.



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 (484) 947-7295.

Thursday Scripture Study

10:00 am - 11:00 am
Parish Life Center
with Msgr. Diamond



Join us at any time!

All women and men are invited to join us each Thursday morning from 10:00 am to 11:00 am. If you weren't able to join us last year, do not let that deter you. The goal of this Scripture study will be to broaden our knowledge of Scripture, the Church's teaching regarding the Scriptures, and it will enhance our understanding and personal faith life. Please bring a bible.

saintcornelius.org/morning-bible-study

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

It is never too late to pick up and read.



Assisted Hearing Devices

We have assisted hearing devices, which connect directly to the sound system. They are located inside the church, along side the wall to your left as you view the altar.

Easy to operate: the ear pieces are already attached. Just turn it on, a green light will blink and then remain on, adjust the volume.

Comments from satisfied users:

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



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





Parishioners who would like a statement of their 2025 contributions must call the Parish Office during business hours at (610) 459-2502, or Email the office at stcorn1@comcast.net.



December contributions made using WeShare will be posted by January 15th, 2026.



**ST BLAISE MEN'S RETREAT
Malvern Retreat House
January 30 - February 1, 2026**

Please join us for the annual St Blaise Men's Retreat at Malvern, January 30th to February 1st, 2026. This year's retreat is being directed by **Fr Jason Buck**, the Dean of Men at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, where he oversees the formation of young men discerning the priesthood. Whether leading young men through the rigors of seminary life or crafting a powerful hymn or anthem, his mission remains the same: **to call men to greatness and holiness** in a world that desperately needs both.

Please contact David Santoleri at dave@santoleri.net for more information or follow the QR code below to go directly to the retreat registration page.



Register at: <https://www.malvernretreat.com/events/st-blaise-currant-memorial>.



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WWW.HeedTheCall.org

HEED THE CALL

Sunday Mass Intentions

- 7:30 AM Tom Scullion
- 9:00 AM Jodie Arkus
- 11:00 AM Edna Vega Inserni
- 4:00 PM Hugh Thompson

Saturday Vigil / Sunday Morning

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Intention: *Missa pro populo (Mass for the people)*
Reading: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14; Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5;
Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

Weekly Mass Schedule

(Week of December 29 - January 2)

Monday 7:30 AM

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

Tuesday 7:30 AM

Intention: William McDowell
Reading: 1 Jn 2:12-17; Ps 96:7-8a; 8b-9, 10;
Lk 2:36-40

Wednesday 7:30 AM

Intention: William McDowell
Reading: 1 Jn 2:18-21; Ps 96:1-2, 11-12, 13;
Jn 1:1-18

Thursday

7:30 AM • 9:00 AM • 11:00 AM

New Year's Day

**Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
the Mother of God**

Reading: Num 6:22-27; Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Gal 4:4-7;
Lk 2:16-21

Friday 7:30 AM

**Memorial of Saints Basil the Great and Gregory
Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church**

Intention: James H. Leslie, Sr
Reading: 1 Jn 2:22-28; Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4;
Jn 1:19-28

TABERNACLE CANDLES

In loving memory of Alfred & Rosina Pietrofesse
Req. by the Schwab family

PILGRIM STATUE



- 12 - 28 - 2025 Carla Santoleri
- 01 - 04 - 2026 Open
- 01 - 11 - 2026

The January - June 2026 dates are now available for you to sign up.

Call Carla Santoleri at (610) 361-8447 for more information.

Reflecting on God's Word

Could any period in history have been more difficult than the one in which we live when it comes to raising children, keeping marriages together, or maintaining ties among adult family members? Our whole culture often seems to be working against us. The Christmas season, especially, magnifies the differences between the values that we Catholic Christians hold and the values of the ordinary world. And not all the stresses are external. Many of our troubles arise from the differences among people within our families. Christmas can also exacerbate those internal tensions. Sometimes we just want to run away and hide from the dual struggle with the bad influences of the world and the strains of family life!

The feast of the Holy Family gives us much needed encouragement. The Gospel story shows Joseph and Mary fleeing to Egypt to keep Jesus safe, and then returning to Nazareth in Galilee to raise him in their Jewish culture. Jesus was protected by his parents from danger of death. Yet they did not keep him sequestered forever. As a child growing up, he lived out his call to holiness while dwelling in the midst of the Galilean Jewish community, with all its positive and

negative influences. The readings from Sirach and Colossians illustrate how our own call to holiness can be lived out in our everyday lives. This feast reminds us that in Christ, the divine and the human, the holy and the ordinary have been forever linked. Whether it is in our nuclear family, our extended family, our parish family, the family of Christians, or the human family, today we celebrate the holiness that is to be found within our ordinary human families and communities.

—Virginia Stillwell



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St. Cornelius' Sunday Bulletin

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Gracious Lord, Child of Bethlehem

Gracious Lord, Child of Bethlehem,

As you were born into a family who fled to Egypt as refugees, help us grow in solidarity with refugees everywhere, to know we are all refugees, until our hearts find refuge in you.

As you were born under an oppressive regime, let us grow in solidarity with those whose governments deny them their rights and try to undermine their dignity. Help us work for just governance everywhere.

As it was workers, the shepherds, who first came to know you, the carpenter's son, let us remember the dignity of human labor—that you share a special love for those who work hard for their sustenance, and toil beside them. Let us honor you, in work and in prayer, that livelihoods may be secure, and that workers not be exploited.

As you were adored by the Magi who came from far-off nations to honor you, let us bring to all nations the great good news that is your love.

As your coming was joyfully sung by angels, let us with joy celebrate the gift of life every time a child of God is conceived, and honor that gift with our care.

As you were denied any birthplace but a stable, help us to open our homes, our lives, our hearts to the coming of God and his presence in your people.

Be born this time into our hearts, dear Lord.

Gracious Lord, Child of Bethlehem, through the cradle of our hearts, be born into our world.

Amen

