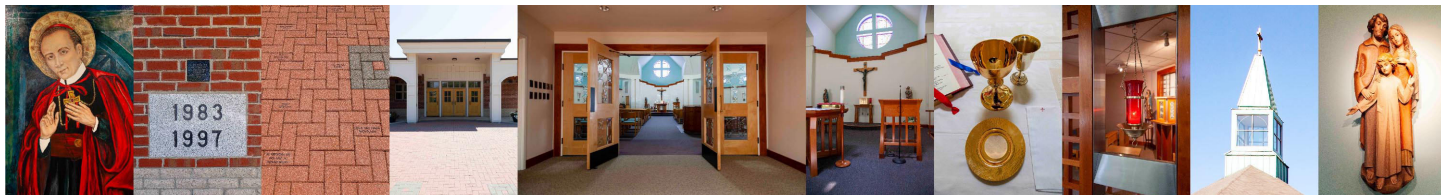


**SAINT JOHN NEUMANN PARISH**  
708 Milford Rd (Rte 101A), Merrimack, NH 03054—SJNNH.ORG



**NATIVITY OF THE LORD**  
December 25, 2022

**Rev. Robert Glasgow**  
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**MASS SCHEDULE**

Saturday (Anticipatory) ..... 5:30 PM  
Sunday ..... 8:00 AM  
Sunday ..... 10:00 AM  
Sunday (Labor Day thru Memorial Day) .... 6:00 PM  
Daily (Mon, Wed-Fri) ..... 12:15 PM

**CONFESSION**

Saturday ..... 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM  
And before/after daily Mass, or by appointment.

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**BAPTISM**

Parents must attend a Parent Baptism Class before the baptism of their child. The class is offered the first Sunday of each month following the 10:00 AM Mass.

**MARRIAGE**

Please contact the office at least six months prior to the wedding date. The diocese requires Marriage Prep.

**VISITS TO THE HOMEBOUND AND SICK,  
ANOINTING OF THE SICK**

Please call the office to request home or hospital visitation.

**RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION**

RCIA is the process of formation offered to those who seek to become Catholic. For information, please call the office.

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**TO BE A CHRISTIAN**

It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians. —Acts 11:26

The excerpts below are from the Letter to Diognetus (ca. 2nd-3rd c.). The author is unknown. He refers to himself as "Mathetes" [Lt., *disciple*]. It's believed he was the tutor of Marcus Aurelius [Roman Emperor, 161-177 AD], and possibly a catechumen of St Paul, Apostle. This letter is regarded as one of the most perfect literary and apologetic compositions handed down from ancient Christian times.

TODAY, the twenty-fifth day of December, unknown ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth and then formed man and woman in his own image.

Several thousand years after the flood, when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant.

Twenty-one centuries from the time of Abraham and Sarah; thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt.

Eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the Judges; one thousand years from the anointing of David as king; in the sixty-fifth week according to the prophecy of Daniel.

In the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad; the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome.

The forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus; the whole world being at peace, JESUS CHRIST, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father, desiring to sanctify the world by his most merciful coming, being conceived by the Holy Spirit, and nine months having passed since his conception, was born in Bethlehem of Judea of the Virgin Mary.

Today is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.

Formal announcement of the Nativity of the Lord from the Roman Martyrology

**CHRISTIANS are indistinguishable from other**

men either by nationality, language or customs. They do not inhabit separate cities of their own, or speak a strange dialect, or follow some outlandish way of life. Their teaching is not based upon reveries inspired by the curiosity of men. Unlike some other people, they champion no purely human doctrine. With regard to dress, food and manner of life in general, they follow the customs of whatever city they happen to be living in, whether it is Greek or foreign.

And yet there is something extraordinary about their lives. They live in their own countries as though they were only passing through. They play their full role as citizens, but labor under all the disabilities of aliens. Any country can be their homeland, but for them their homeland, wherever it may be, is a foreign country. Like others, they marry and have children, but they do not expose them. They share their meals, but not their wives. They live in the flesh, but they are not governed by the desires of the flesh. They pass their days upon earth, but they are citizens of heaven. Obedient to the laws, they yet live on a level that transcends the law.

Christians love all men, but all men persecute them. Condemned because they are not understood, they are put to death, but raised to life again. They live in poverty, but enrich many; they are totally destitute, but possess an abundance of everything. They suffer dishonor, but that is their glory. They are defamed, but vindicated. A blessing is their answer to abuse, deference their response to insult. For the good they do they receive the punishment of malefactors, but even then they rejoice, as though receiving the gift of life. They are attacked by the Jews as aliens, they are persecuted by the Greeks, yet no one can explain the reason for this hatred.

To speak in general terms, we may say that the Christian is to the world what the soul is to the body. As the soul is present in every part of the body, while remaining distinct from it, so Christians are found in all the cities of the world, but cannot be identified with the world. As the visible body contains the invisible soul, so Christians are seen living in the world, but their religious life remains unseen. The body hates the soul and wars against it, not because of any injury the soul has done it, but because of the restriction the soul places on its pleasures. Similarly, the world hates the Christians, not because they have done it any wrong, but because they are opposed to its enjoyments.

Christians love those who hate them just as the soul loves the body and all its members despite the body's hatred. It is by the soul, enclosed within the body, that the body is held together, and similarly, it is by the Christians, detained in the world as in a

prison, that the world is held together. The soul, though immortal, has a mortal dwelling place; and Christians also live for a time amidst perishable things, while awaiting the freedom from change and decay that will be theirs in heaven. As the soul benefits from the deprivation of food and drink, so Christians flourish under persecution. Such is the Christian's lofty and divinely appointed function, from which he is not permitted to excuse himself.



NO man has ever seen God or known him, but God has revealed himself to us through faith, by which alone it is possible to see him. God, the Lord and maker of all things, who created the world and set it in order, not only loved man but was also patient with him. So he has always been, and is, and will be: kind, good, free from anger, truthful; indeed, he and he alone is good.

He devised a plan, a great and wonderful plan, and shared it only with his Son. As long as he preserved this secrecy and kept his own wise counsel he seemed to be neglecting us, to have no concern for us. But when through his beloved Son he revealed and made public what he had prepared from the very beginning, he gave us all at once gifts such as we could never have dreamt of, even sight and knowledge of himself.

When God had made all his plans in consultation with his Son, he waited until a later time, allowing us to follow our own whim, to be swept along by unruly passions, to be led astray by pleasure and desire. Not that he was pleased by our sins: he only tolerated them. Not that he approved of that time of sin: he was planning this era of holiness. When we had been shown to be undeserving of life, his goodness was to make us worthy of it. When we had made it clear that we could not enter God's kingdom by our own power, we were to be enabled to do so by the power of God.

When our wickedness had reached its culmination, it became clear that retribution was at hand in the shape of suffering and death. The time came then for God to make known his kindness and power (how immeasurable is God's generosity and love!). He did not show hatred for us or reject us or take vengeance; instead, he was patient with us, bore with us, and in compassion took our sins upon himself; he gave his own Son as the price of our redemption, the holy one to redeem the wicked, the sinless one to redeem sinners, the just one to redeem the unjust, the incorruptible one to redeem the corruptible, the immortal one to redeem mortals. For what else could have covered our sins but his sinlessness? Where else could we, wicked and sinful as we were, have found the

means of holiness except in the Son of God alone?

How wonderful a transformation, how mysterious a design, how inconceivable a blessing! The wickedness of the many is covered up in the holy One, and the holiness of One sanctifies many sinners.

### WEEKLY CALENDAR

#### Dec 25, SUNDAY — Octave of Christmas

8:00 AM | Christmas Day Mass  
10:00 AM | Christmas Day Mass  
~~6:00 PM~~ | \*No 6:00 PM Mass  
6:00 PM | Adoration

#### Dec 26, MONDAY — St Stephen, Martyr

12:15 PM | Daily Mass

#### Dec 27, TUESDAY — St John, Apostle and Evangelist

7:00 PM | Scouts Meeting

#### Dec 28, WEDNESDAY — Holy Innocents

9:30 AM | Knitting Group (meets every other Wednesday)  
10:00 AM | Faith Sharing  
10:30 AM | "Mary: A Biblical Walk with the Blessed Mother"  
12:15 PM | Daily Mass  
7:00 PM | "Mary: A Biblical Walk with the Blessed Mother"

#### Dec 29, THURSDAY

12:15 PM | Daily Mass

#### Dec 30, FIRST FRIDAY — Holy Family

10:00 AM | Food Pantry  
12:15 PM | Daily Mass w/ Adoration

#### Dec 31, SATURDAY

8:00 AM | Red Cross Blood Drive  
8:30 AM | Men's Group  
9:00 AM | Divine Mercy Cenacle (1st/3rd Sat)  
9:30 AM | Widow's Group (2nd Sat of month)  
4:00 PM | Confession (until 5:00 PM)  
5:30 PM | Holy Day Mass (Vigil)

#### Jan 1, SUNDAY — MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

8:00 AM | Holy Day Mass  
10:00 AM | Holy Day Mass  
6:00 PM | Holy Day Mass

### MASS INTENTIONS

Dec 24 (Sat), 4:00 PM | Lorraine Berube (req. by Mark & Joanne Kenna)  
Dec 24, 7:00 PM | Parishioners of St John Neumann  
Dec 24, 10:00 PM | Mary Krasucki (req. by Brian & Andrea Lester)  
Dec 25 (Sun), 8:00 AM | Deceased diocesan clergy  
Dec 25, 10:00 AM | Julia Bilow (req. by family)  
Dec 26 (Mon), 4:00 PM | Jose Louise Gonzalez (req. by Veronica Burhcard)

Dec 30 (Fri), 12:15 PM | Paul Krasucki (req. by Brian & Andrea Lester)  
Dec 31 (Sat), 5:30 PM | Edward Towne & Earl Stimson (req. by Ellie Boucher & Sandy Towne)  
Jan 1 (Sun), 8:00 AM | Pat Davis (req. by Tom Davis)  
Jan 1, 10:00 AM | Donald Vanecek & Mark Clark (req. by Maryann Vanecek)

The Code of Canon Law confirms the practice of offering Mass(es) for particular intentions is ancient: "The Christian faithful who give an offering to apply the Mass for their intention contribute to the good of the Church and by that offering share its concern to support its ministers and works" (945 §2).

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### PARISH online

Sunday Mass is live streamed at 10:00 AM on YOUTUBE.COM > Search for: "SJN Merrimack NH Mass"

For monthly parish updates, subscribe via FLOCKNOTES by going to:

<https://SJNMERRIMACK.flocknote.com>

— or texting —

"SJNMERRIMACK" to 84576  
(message/data rates may apply)

INSTAGRAM: [instagram.com/sjnmerrimack](https://www.instagram.com/sjnmerrimack)

FACEBOOK (for daily Mass):

[facebook.com/St John Neumann-Merrimack](https://www.facebook.com/StJohnNeumann-Merrimack)

### ON LEARNING THE FAITH

In his 1905 encyclical Acerbo Nimis [ON THE TEACHING OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE], Pope St Pius XI stressed the necessity of religious instruction:

"But We do maintain that the will cannot be upright nor the conduct good when the mind is shrouded in the darkness of crass ignorance. A man who walks with open eyes may, indeed, turn aside from the right path, but a blind man is in much more imminent danger of wandering away. Furthermore, there is always some hope for a reform of perverse conduct so long as the light of faith is not entirely extinguished; but if lack of faith is added to depraved morality because of ignorance, the evil hardly admits of remedy, and the road to ruin lies open. How many and how grave are the consequences of ignorance in matters of religion! And on the other hand, how necessary and how beneficial is religious instruction! It is indeed vain to expect a fulfillment of the duties of a Christian by one who does not even know them."

## FOR THE ASKING

The purpose of CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION is to nourish and develop the life of grace received in Baptism. Without it, there can be little fear of the malice/baseness of sin, let alone any resolve to avoid or renounce it. As St Paul writes: "Do not continue in ignorance, but try to understand what is the will of the Lord" (Eph 5:17). The book of Proverbs (4:7, 13) says: "The beginning of wisdom is to seek it ... Whatever else you do, get understanding. Hold fast to instruction, never let it go; keep it, for it is your life." "The greatest kindness one can render to a man," says St Thomas Aquinas, "consists in leading him from error to truth."

- As a companion to the PARISH HANDBOOK, the parish offers a 4-part SUMMARY OF THE CATECHISM (Creed, Sacraments, Life of Faith, Christian Prayer), a concise yet thorough explanation of the tenets of the faith.

<div><p>CREED</p><p>By 17 years-of-age students should learn:</p><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That 'CATECHESIS' is education in the Faith, the Church's efforts to "make disciples of all nations," instructing them in the life of Christ.</li></ol><div><p>"The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, 'All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.'" —Mt 28:16-20</p></div><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. That the four-fold structure [alt., pillars] of the Catechism follows ancient precedent:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Creed,</li><li>ii. Sacraments,</li><li>iii. Commandments,</li><li>iv. Christian Prayer.</li></ol></li><li>3. That the first part of the Catechism—CREED—gives (1) an explanation of revelation and Faith, and (2) an explanation of the Creed.</li></ol></div>	<div><p>SACRAMENTS</p><p>By 17 years-of-age students should learn:</p><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That the second part of the Catechism—THE SACRAMENTS OF FAITH—explains how God's salvation, accomplished once for all through Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit, is made present in the Church's liturgy and worship, especially the seven Sacraments.</li><li>2. That by his passion and death Jesus Christ merited the REMISSION OF OUR SINS and the GRACE [supernatural help] that we might gain eternal life. Without God's grace/help, and by our own powers alone, we can do nothing helpful to life everlasting.<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ "Indeed, if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, once reconciled, will we be saved by his life" (Rom 5:10).</li><li>+ "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 6:23).</li><li>+ "And of his fullness we have all received, grace for grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:16-17).</li></ul></div></li><li>3. That grace is given by God chiefly through the SACRAMENTS which confer grace provided they are received with the necessary dispositions.</li></ol></div>
<div><p>LIFE IN CHRIST</p><p>By 17 years-of-age students should learn:</p><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That the third part of the Catechism—LIFE IN CHRIST—is an exposition of Christian moral teaching for the purpose of helping the faithful live "in a manner worthy of the Lord" (Col 1:10); cf. Phil 1:27).<div><p>"I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:20).</p></div></li><li>2. That the basis of HUMAN DIGNITY is our creation in the image and likeness of God, endowed with a spiritual and immortal soul, intelligence and free will.<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ "Then God said: Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth. God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." —Gen 1:26-27</li><li>+ "Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay and you our potter; we are all the work of your hand." —Isa 64:7</li></ul></div></li></ol></div>	<div><p>CHRISTIAN PRAYER</p><p>By 17 years-of-age students should learn:</p><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The fourth part of the Catechism—CHRISTIAN PRAYER—explains (1) the meaning and necessity of prayer in the life of the believer, and (2) the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer as containing all we might legitimately pray for.<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ "We set forth our petitions before God, not in order to make known to Him our needs and desires, but rather so that we ourselves may realize that in these things it is necessary to turn to God for help" (St Thomas Aquinas, d. 1274).</li><li>+ "Prayer is the only channel through which God's great graces and favors may flow into the soul; and if this be once closed, I know no other way He can communicate them" (St Teresa of Avila, d. 1582).</li><li>+ "Without prayer we have neither light nor strength to advance in the way which leads to God" (St Alphonsus Liguori, 1787).</li></ul></div></li></ol></div>

- In addition, the parish offers a seven-part LIFE OF CHRIST series of handbooks, a story by story walk through all four Gospels.

### JESUS TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

Behold, your king comes to you, meek and riding on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass.  
—Zach 9:9

on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass" (9:9). The prophecy, significant salvation will be won by humility/gentleness, not by force.

- Jesus is greeted by enthusiastic crowds shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest."
- The Hebrew word "Hosanna"—literally, "I beg you to save"—is an acclamation of praise.
- The acclamation, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord"—from Ps 118:26—is, likewise, a joyful greeting of someone sent by God.
- Jesus enters the temple area and, moved with zeal for his Father's house (cf. Jn 2:17), drives out the money-changers and those selling doves. "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you make it a den of robbers."
- Jewish law required payment of "half a shekel" (Ex 30:11-16)—a Jewish, not Roman coin—on the service of the sanctuary. Likewise, the law required two doves/pigeons be offered in sacrifice (Lev 14:22). The merchants' services are not condemned, just their encroachment upon the respect-reverence due to the temple as a holy place, "a house of prayer."
- Despite "the wonderful things [Jesus] was doing," the chief priests and scribes are indignant: children are crying out, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Jesus responds: "Hosanna you never read the text, 'Out of the mouths of infants and nursing ones you have brought forth praise'"—quoting Psalm 8:2. It means, what God reveals to the temple, he hides from the learned (cf. Mt 13:35).

**SUMMARY**

- Jesus, with foreknowledge of events, sends two disciples to borrow a colt.
- Moved on the colt, Jesus enters Jerusalem fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy: "Behold your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden."

Matthew 21:1-17

1. **1** WHEN they drew near Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an



## CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

### "God with Us"

by St Peter Chrysologus

IN choosing to be born with us, God chose to be known by us. He therefore reveals himself in this way, in order that this great sacrament of his love may not be an occasion for us of great misunderstanding.

Today the magi find, crying in a manger, the one they have followed as he shone in the sky. Today the magi see clearly, swaddling clothes, the one they have long awaited as he lay hidden among the stars.

Today the magi graze in deep wonder at what they see: heaven on earth, earth in heaven, humanity in God, God in humanity, one whom the whole universe cannot contain how enclosed in a tiny body. As they look, they believe and do not question, as their symbolic gifts bear witness: incense for God, gold for a king, myrrh for one who is to die. So the Gentiles, who were the last, become the first: the faith of the Magi is the first fruits of the belief of the Gentiles.

Today Christ enters the Jordan to wash away the sin of the world. John himself testifies that this is why he has come: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Today a servant lays his hand on the Lord, a man lays his hand on God, John lays his hand on Christ, not to forgive but to receive forgiveness.

Today, as the psalmist prophesied: The voice of the Lord is heard above the waters. What does the voice say? This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.