Celebrating the Christmas Season at Home

DECEMBER 25, 2017 – JANUARY 7, 2018

BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS FOR THE Christmas SEASON

CHRISTMAS DAILY PRAYER

Jesus Christ, Word of God,
always be on my lips.
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Jesus Christ, Prince of peace,
always guide my actions,
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Jesus Christ, Light from light,
always illuminate my way,

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

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TABLE PRAYER FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

O come, let us adore him!
O come, let us adore him!

May the meal shared at this table
provide the strength to follow your way
as we celebrate your glorious birth,
O Christ.

O come, let us adore him!

May the blessing of food
be nourishment to proclaim glad tidings
as we hear the voice of the herald angels.

O come, let us adore him!

May these Christmas days of grace
let your love shine forth in the world
as we behold your humble birth.

O come, let us adore him!

Let us adore him, Christ the Lord!
May every meal and every life be blessed
during this joyful Christmas season. Amen.

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EPIPHANY HOUSE BLESSING

Items needed: chalk and a small bottle of holy water. Gather with family members, friends, and perhaps some neighbors at the front door.

Leader: In the (+) name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray: *Christus mansionem benedicat.* May Christ bless this house, Amen.

With chalk we sign this doorway, along with four crosses of the seasons and the numerals of the new year.

[20 + C + M + B + 18]

Leader (or other Reader):
A reading from the Letter to the Galatians.
So then, while there is time, let us do good for all people, especially those who are of the household of faith.
The Word of the Lord

Each room is sprinkled with holy water.

Living room:
Bring us to live with you one day in heaven.
Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

Kitchen:
You prepare for us a heavenly banquet.
Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

Dining room:
Feed us at your celestial feast.
Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

Bedrooms:
In you alone we rest peacefully.
Bles

Bathroom:
Cleanse us from all uncleanliness.
Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

All return to the front door to pray together.

Our Father . . .

All are sprinkled with holy water.

Bless this household through all days to come, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

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Christmas Season 2017

Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Joseph Parish:

The halls are decked and the Christmas lights will soon be lit. This is the evidence of a very enthusiastic, generous and hard working faith community. The Living Nativity and PSR children's pageant serve to celebrate the season beautifully and teach our children in a very creative and tangible way the Christmas Story, the very beginnings of our Christian Faith. In a few weeks decorations will be down but the peace and joy of Christmas is needed to continue in our lives and through our lives into the world.

One of the things that I observe that troubles me is the lack of calm and silence to allow more quality time to invite the presence of Christ more intimately into our lives. I purchased a small wall plaque at Station Drug in Mantua. It offers a wise message: "Let us be Silent that We may Hear the Whisper of God."

This may be a good time to ask God for the graces to be attentive and focused listeners, not only with God but also with others. We can gain wonderful insights and deeper relationships by receiving and offering the precious gift of ourselves in this way.

God bless you all with the gifts of peace, joy and some restful solitude during this Holy Christmas Season and throughout the New Year.

Sincerely,

Fr. Ed Stafford

CELEBRATING SAINT STEPHEN

Tradition tells us that Saint Stephen's task in the early Church was organizing aid for the poor. Beginning sometime in the nineteenth century, British-influenced countries have observed Boxing Day on December 26th, Saint Stephen's feast. Families that were better off would offer Christmas boxes full of money, clothing, or food to servants, errand boys, and the poor.

This tradition offers us a chance to shift the focus of the day after Christmas. Instead of braving the malls, why not make this a day to take stock of possessions—to examine what things could be used to bless those who are less fortunate?

Here are some ideas:

Closets: Do you or your children have so many clothes that you have to box up out-of-season items? Did you receive new clothing or accessories for Christmas? Can they replace older items that are still in good enough shape to pass on to family members, friends, homeless or children's shelters, or even donation boxes like USAgain? If not, find a PlanetAid box, which recycles fabric and uses the proceeds to help the developing world.

Storage: Some people rent units to keep things they don't have room for in their homes. Is it time to give some of that away? Do you still have boxes of outgrown baby or kids' clothes that can bless a children's shelter or even the school nurse's office at a school in a low-income neighborhood?

Kitchen:

Do you have any non-perishables that could go to a food bank? Do you have a "junk drawer" fullof kitchen gadgets you haven't used? Coffee mugs? Seasonal towels that are always forgotten? Pass them on.

Toys:

Do you have broken toys or partial sets that can be recycled? Are there simply too many toys in your home? Use this as an opportunity to teach your kids about sacrifice and charity. Have them choose a given number to donate.

Mental clutter:

Examine your ongoing commitments. Have you taken on so much that your mind is constantly buzzing? Is it time to leave some tasks to others?

The feast of Saint Stephen, the first martyr, is a chance to re-orient ourselves after the busyness of the commercial Christmas season. By clearing out the clutter in our own lives, we can make more room for Christ.

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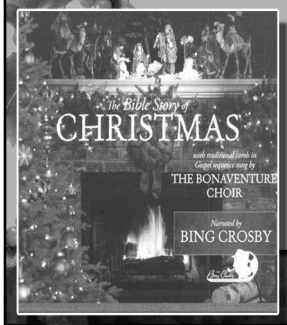

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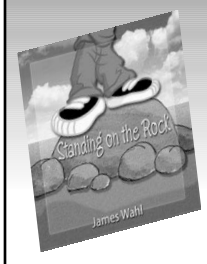

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