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Associates: Deacon Martin J. Olivieri, Deacon Nicholas Ramoni

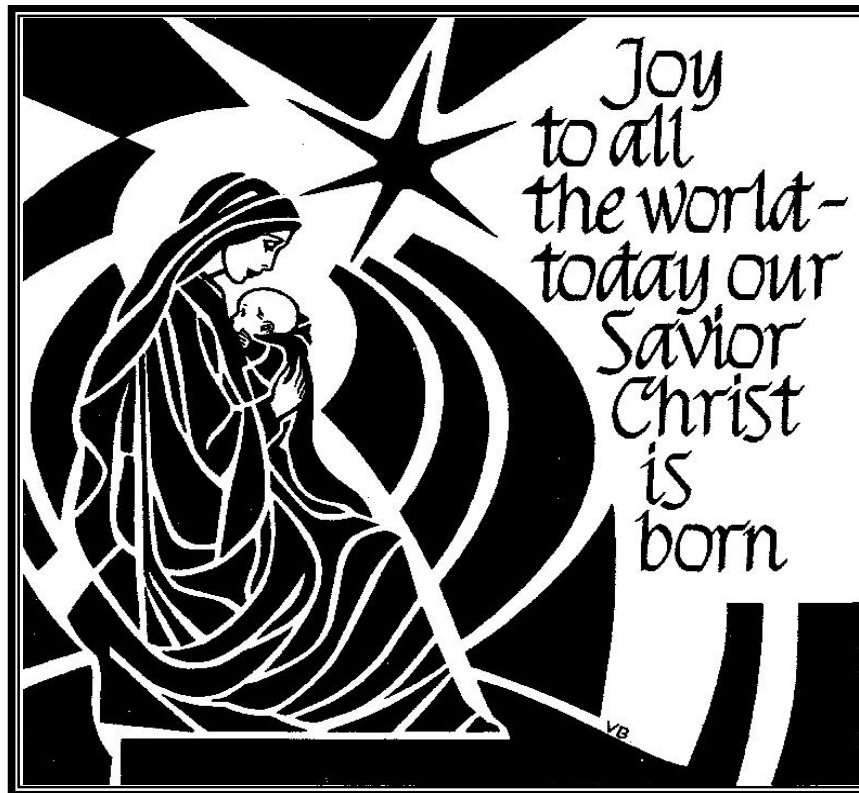
Retired Priest: Rev. Kenneth Ross; Msgr. Walter A. Birkle

Pastoral Associate: Sr. Mary Beth Read, O.S.U.

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The Nativity of the Lord
December 25, 2016

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Masses
Saturday Vigil:
5:00 p.m.

Sunday:
8:00, 9:30,
11:00 a.m., 12:30 p.m.

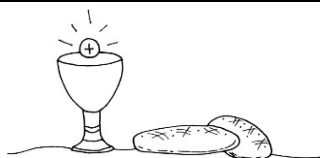
Monday thru Friday:
8:00 a.m. & 12:00 noon

Saturday:
8:00 a.m.

Sacrament of Penance
Saturday:
4:00 - 4:45 p.m.

Sacrament of Marriage
Make arrangements six months
prior to wedding

Sacrament of Baptism
Every Sunday
after the 12:30 Mass



MASS INTENTIONS OF THE WEEK

Saturday, December 24, 2016

Vigil: The Nativity of the Lord

5:00 p.m. For the Deceased Members of the
Reamer, Lennon and Razza Families
12:00 Mid. James Hayes, Jr.

Sunday, December 25, 2016

The Nativity of the Lord

9:00 a.m. George and Rose Milder and
John DiNome
11:00 a.m. For the deceased member of the
Vanadia and Ludlow Families
12:30 p.m. Anna and Mario Procaccino

Monday, December 26, 2016

Feast of St. Stephen, The First Martyr

8:00 a.m. Benito and Maria Odoardi

Tuesday, December 27, 2016

Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

8:00 a.m. Joseph Ferrari
12:00 noon Sophia Naryniecki

Wednesday, December 28, 2016

Feast of The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

8:00 a.m. Pastricia Sullivan
12:00 noon Michael Coughlan

Thursday, December 29, 2016

Feast of St. Thomas Becket, Bishop and Martyr

8:00 a.m. Franco Zito
12:00 noon Josephone and Salvatore Miceli

Friday, December 30, 2016

Feast of The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

8:00 a.m. Rina Gonzini
12:00 noon Antoinette Gizzo

Saturday, December 31, 2016

Feast of St. Sylvester I, Pope

8:00 a.m. Rev. Peter J. McKeown

Saturday, December 31, 2016

Vigil: Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

5:00 p.m. Mass for the Parishioners of
St. John the Baptist

Sunday, January 1, 2017

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

9:00 a.m. Rosaria Santorelli
11:00 a.m. Fiorino, Maria and
Antoinio Guglielmi
12:30 p.m. Salvatore Spataro

WEEKLY PARISH CALENDAR

Monday, December 26th

Rectory Office Closed

Wednesday, December 28th

No Senior Club

No R.E.

ALTAR SERVERS

Saturday, December 24th

5:00 p.m. – A. Burke, K. Burke, N. DeMatteo
and S. Joyce

Midnight – D. Browne, T. Browne, C. Castaldi
and E. McLaughlin

Sunday, December 25th

9:00 a.m. – M. Bello

11:00 a.m. – N. Camacho and R. Murphy
12:30 p.m. --

Saturday, December 31st

5:00 p.m. – E. Barrett, M. Barrett and P. Tozzi

Sunday, January 1st

9:00 a.m. – D. Odume and R. Tuffy

11:00 a.m. – A. Burke and K. Burke

12:30 p.m. – R. Peter and R. Peter



New Year's Day: Following the ancient tradition of celebrating the octave (eighth day) of an event, we celebrate again the mystery of

Jesus' birth, but this time with our eyes on Mary. This is actually the oldest feast of Mary in our Calendar. When we celebrate her as the Mother of God we are, at the same time, celebrating the divinity of Jesus, who was truly Man and truly God. In recent times January 1st has been designated as a day of prayer for peace. This recommendation calls us as the New Year begins, to pray and work for peace in our homes, in our nation and in our world. We will have one Vigil Mass on New Year's Eve, Saturday, December 31st at 5:00 p.m.; we will have three Masses on Sunday, January 1st at 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. There will be no evening Mass at St. John's on New Year's Day.

S.J.B. ANNOUNCEMENTS

December 25, 2016



THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD: What is God like? Philosophers, poets, thinkers and writers have speculated endlessly on that question – but at Christmas God gives us His answers to that perennial question. This day God, the Creator of all things, gives us the incredible gift of His Son made flesh to teach us by word and example who God is and how we might find our way to Him. Imagine that! The God of majesty and power has become one of us! Through this great mystery of the Incarnation, the God of mercy and love invites each one of us into His life of Grace. This is an incredible gift – a gift no one, no matter how wise or good or talented, could ever deserve. Today we stand in awe of the mystery of God; today we celebrate His life and grace given to us so that we might become His sons and daughters. God has become one with us; let us rejoice and be glad!

THE SPECIAL FEASTS OF CHRISTMAS WEEK

Monday, December 26th – St. Stephen

The Christmas celebration continues with eight days following, known as the *octave*. Prayers are assigned to each of these days, the first of which honors Stephen, the first martyr. In the shadow of the *first-born* Son of God, we celebrate the victory of eternal life for the *first-born* martyr of the Christian faith. Looking at it from a human perspective, the celebration of martyrdom might seem out of place on the day after Christmas. But as the prayers and readings make clear, the Church understands Stephen's death as a celebration of birth. Stephen is radiant with the message of the Risen Lord and will not cease preaching it. The Incarnation is fulfilled in the Resurrection. We celebrate Stephen's martyrdom to remind us that with the birth of Jesus we enter into His life, death and resurrection.

Tuesday, December 27th – The Feast of St. John

St. John is the second of the “companions of Christ” whose feast follows close upon Christmas. John is known as the Beloved Disciple because of the special friendship he shared with Jesus. His feast day is a good occasion to recall the importance of Christian love and fellowship. As we celebrate his day in the Church, we are reminded of the legacy he left in his writings. The First Reading echoes the Gospel of Christmas Day and reminds us that Jesus is the word of life. And in today's Gospel we are brought again to the Easter mystery as we hear the story of the discovery of the empty tomb.

Wednesday, December 28th – Holy Innocents

Matthew's Gospel reports how King Herod, out of fear and jealousy of this newborn king, ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under – (Mt. 2:16). Having been warned in a dream, Joseph took Mary and the Infant Jesus and fled to Egypt. Jesus escaped, but these innocent little ones became the victims of Herod's insane fear.

Thursday, December 29th – St. Thomas Becket, Martyr

Born in London in 1118, Thomas became Lord Chancellor of England under King Henry II; Henry then persuaded the Pope to appoint Thomas Archbishop of Canterbury. The king hoped his friend would help him exercise control over the church, but Thomas defended the church and was murdered by agents of the king in Canterbury Cathedral in 1170.

Friday, December 30th -- Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Today's feast echoes the reality of the Incarnation: by becoming flesh, Jesus became part of a particular family in Nazareth as well as the universal family of humanity. The “holy family” is not insulated from suffering and sorrow. They are a real family who knows what it means to be persecuted and driven from their homeland but who trust in God nonetheless. Today's first and second readings (from the Old Testament's Book of Sirach and from St. Paul's letter to the Colossians) stress the qualities which should mark all human relationships: respect, patience, forgiveness. We are all equal in God's eyes and should treat each other as if we really believed that.

Saturday, December 31st – St. Sylvester I, Pope

Sylvester was Pope in the early part of the 4th century – at a time when Constantine became the first Roman emperor to end the persecution of Christians. There was still a great deal of hostility and many heretical sects to be defended against. Sylvester was one of the first non-martyrs to be venerated as a saint.



A Christmas Prayer



A marvelous change was wrought in our nature at its restoration. This truth flashed on the world when from the old stock the new humanity was born, from mortality came immortality, from human nature the remedy was drawn for human nature's healing, from a race of sinners sprang a child who was innocent of sin. When your Word took to Himself this frail nature of ours, it was honored with the gift and we ourselves, sharing its wonderful destiny, were made eternal also.

*-- Sixth Century
Author Unknown*



Sunday Report: Last weekend 1,350 parishioners attended Mass; our collection totaled \$8175.00; average contribution: \$6.06. Thank you for your continued financial support of St. John's and its many needs. Your generosity is essential and greatly appreciated.

Monthly Maintenance: Since next Sunday is the first Sunday of the month of January, we will take up our regular "First Sunday of the Month" second collection after Communion next week. This collection helps with the upkeep, maintenance, and cleaning of our beautiful church. Please be generous.



Christmas Traditions: *The Crèche* - The most meaningful of all Christmas traditions is the nativity scene, for it brings to our mind Jesus – the center of Christmas and of our lives. Although there were representations of the Christmas crib in both the Holy Land and in Rome beginning in the fourth century, St. Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth century is usually credited with erecting the first complete manger scene. Francis saw in the Child Jesus a perfect model for us to imitate – and he wanted to make Jesus the center of Christmas celebration. So, near a church near Assisi, Francis set up the first manger with live animals and real people playing the roles of Mary, Joseph and the shepherds. The popularity of nativity scenes in churches and homes quickly spread – and reached artistic heights in the figures made by 18th century artisans in Naples, Italy.

The Christmas Octave: The English word *octave* is derived from the Latin word *Octave* (dies), meaning the eighth day of a festival. In music, an Octave is an interval of eight degrees between two tones, one of which has twice as many vibrations per second as the other. In poetry in verse, an octava is a stanza of eight lines. In fencing, an octave is a rotating parry. And in liturgy, which gave English the word to begin with, an octave is the eight day period beginning with a feast and ending eight days later.

In the liturgical calendar, there are only two feasts important enough that the Church sets aside eight days to celebrate them fully. Those two feasts are Easter and Christmas. The octave of Christmas is therefore a time heightened festivity. It starts with Jesus (Christmas), ends with Mary (Mary, the Mother of God), and is packed with feasts of saints – some of whom are mentioned in the New Testament. Eight is not an arbitrary number. It suggests the mystery of redemption and the fullness of time. At Christmas, one day is not enough. Take time off to celebrate!

Rest in Peace: Let us pray for Liboria Pancaldo, Carmine Rubano and Christopher Palandra who were buried from our church this past week. Our prayers go out to their family and friends.



The Meaning of Christmas: For faithful Christians Christmas is and always has been a celebration of the birth of the Savior. It is a time we hold sacred because it is about the Lord whom we love. It is the feast of His Incarnation. It is a celebration of the mystery of God becoming man, so that human beings could share in the life of God.

The season of Christmas embraces both the Nativity and the Epiphany. The Nativity centers on Jesus' birth and the events immediately surrounding it. The Epiphany in turn celebrates three episodes of His early public manifestation: the visit of the magi, the baptism of the Lord, and the first miracle of Jesus – at the wedding at Cana, when he changed water into wine.

The Christmas season is the time when we retell some of our most cherished stories as a faith community. Not only do Christians meditate upon the marvelous infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke, they also discern in these stories rich symbols of Christ's identity. He is the suffering Messiah, the light to the nations, the glory of Israel, the one promised to the humble faithful, to name just a few themes that are highlighted at Christmas.

The Christmas mystery serves as a touchstone for deeply held values of the Catholic community. Angels sing to shepherds, and we hear a message of peace delivered to the poor of every time and place. Herod slaughters the innocents, and believers grieve over the senseless death of children. The Magi follow a star to seek a king, and the Church rejoices in the journey of faith and the progress of all human knowledge and science in the service of truth.



Christmas Envelopes: For anyone who did not receive a Christmas envelope in the mail, they are available at the exits of the Church and in the sacristy. Christmas is traditionally a time for giving – because we are especially aware at this holy season of everything that God has given us through His Son. Your special sacrifice at this time of year does so much to insure that St. John's will be able to meet the many needs of our people and continue to be such a special church in which to pray, to hear God's word, and to receive the sacraments. God bless you for your goodness.

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THE CHAPLET OF THE DIVINE MERCY

(For private recitation on ordinary rosary beads)

*Our Father ..., Hail Mary ..., The
Apostles' Creed.*

*Then, on the OUR FATHER BEADS you
will say the following words:*

*Eternal Father, I offer You the Body
and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your
dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus
Christ, in atonement for our sins and
those of the whole world.*

*On the HAIL MARY BEADS you will say
the following words:*

*For the sake of His sorrowful Passion
have mercy on us and on the whole world.*

*In conclusion THREE TIMES you will
recite these words:*

*Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy
Immortal One, have mercy on us and
on the whole world.*

*From the Diary of the Servant of God Sr. Faustina -
Note Book I, p 197*

IMPRIMATUR: + Joseph F. Maguire
November 17, 1979 Bishop of Springfield, Mass.

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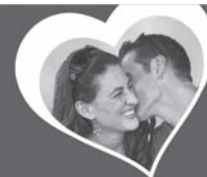
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