

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Parishioners,

In this Sunday's gospel, John the Baptist invites people to make a peaceful world of harmony and sharing. He told them to be honest and fair and also satisfied with what they have. Because this was John's message, they began to regard him as the Christ, which he denied, announcing the one to come and the one whose sandal straps he was unworthy to loosen.

In a world of nuclear war heads, we need peace and harmony. In a world where politics, power and position seem to rule, we need to be honest and fair and willing to share and, instead of being driven by greed and an unending quest for "more," we need to be happy with what we have.

Yours in Christ,

Father Dave

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday – December 17 – 9:00 a.m.

JOSEPH JONES SR. (Ron & Pat Lombel)

Tuesday, December 18 – 9:00 a.m.

NANCY ARNOLD (John & Bernice Petock)

Wednesday – December 19 – 9:00 a.m.

GEORGE HAHNER SR. (Ed Hahner)

Thursday – December 20 – 9:00 a.m.

CATHERINE & JOHN MARKOVICH

(Pat & Phil Markovich)

Friday, December 21 – 9:00 a.m.

ROBERT LOTZ (Rita Lotz)

Saturday, December 22 – 5:00 p.m.

MARY LOU MCGINLEY

(Denise McGinley Gerchak)

Sunday, December 23 – 8:15 a.m.

FRANCIS J. TRABOSH (Pat Trabosh)

Sunday, December 23 – 10:30 a.m.

ANNETTE LIEBERMAN (Spece Family)

WEEKLY COLLECTION

December 8/9: \$ 4,620.00;

Retired Religious: \$1,361.00

Immaculate Conception: \$ 1,117.00

We thank our parishioners for their sacrificial giving.

CANDLE DONATIONS

BVM - IMO Catherine & James Smith

& Rev. Martin Smith by Martin & Linda Smith

St. Joseph – IMO Catherine & James Smith

& Rev. Martin Smith by Martin & Linda Smith

Tabernacle - IMO George Holley by Mary Ann Holley

Sanctuary All Sanctuary Candles ...

IMO George Holley by Mary Ann Holley

Guardian Angels

1&2. IMO George Holley by Mary Ann Holley

SCHEDULE

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

5 p.m. – Saturday – December 22nd

Reader: Heidi Gorski

Euch.Min.: Robert Wollyung, (Larry Lonergan)

Servers: Alyssa Sheriff, Noah & Helena Fredericks

Cantor: Lucilla Kochol

8:15 a.m. – Sunday – December 23rd

Reader: Michelle Ambrose

Euch.Min.: Mike Ambrose, Dave Smith

Servers: Christopher & Caroline Hobbs, Jillian Guzick

Cantor: Debbie Purcell

10:30 a.m. – Sunday – December 23rd

Reader: Susan Hahner

Euch.Min.: Frank Murphy, Joyce Gerace, (Dr. Visot)

Servers: Bethany, Trinity, Izabella Reedy

Cantor: Dave Derbes

PRAY FOR OUR SICK / DECEASED

We remember in prayer those who are ill. We commend to our Divine Lord all of our aged people and those residing in nursing homes.

Sick: *Angela Pfeil Hamm, Theresa Tuite,*

Joe Brahler, Bill Webber, Karen Modesto,

Tom Jefferson, Jean Hill, Esther Smith, Paul Connors,

Fred Maskerines, Dorothy Parsick, Frederick Hossler.

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

When you ask "What should we do?"

How does Jesus respond?

Next Week's Readings

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (December 22/23)

Reading I: Micah 5:1-4a

Reading II: Hebrews 10:5-10

Gospel: Luke 1:30-45

MEN'S GOSPEL REFLECTION GROUP

Men's Gospel Reflection Group meeting will take place on **Tuesdays from 7 to 8 p.m. in the Rectory Fellowship Room.** This group is open to any men interested in reflecting on how the Gospel impacts their lives. All are welcome! Please call Michael Scheidel 739-1808 or Bill Gianfagna 573-0105 with any questions.

PRAYER FOR OUR TROOPS AROUND THE WORLD

"Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for the selfless acts they perform for us in our time of need. I ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior."

GOING TO CONFESSION

The Church designates this Advent Season of preparation as an important time to receive the sacrament of Penance also known as the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In this sacrament, we examine our life and we seek forgiveness for those things, those actions that keep us from letting the Lord more deeply in our heart.

RETIRED FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

Religious give thanks. "This money is pure gift," writes a religious sister of the support made possible by the Retirement Fund for Religious. "It enables us to continue providing care for our elderly sisters." Your gift to last week's collection helps hundreds of religious communities meet pressing retirement needs while continuing to serve the People of God. Thank you for your generosity.

CHRISTMAS WAFERS "OPLATKI"

What are Oplatki? For centuries on Christmas Eve, families in Poland, Lithuania, the Czech and Slav Republics have practiced a beautiful tradition. It is the breaking and sharing of the Oplatek – Christmas Wafer. Oplatek taken from the Latin word oblatum, meaning Sacred Bread, has been the symbol of Christianity and Jesus Christ our bread of life since the Last Supper.

The host or hostess leads in a special prayer and distributes an oplatek to the participants. Each person breaks off a piece of the other's oplatek and continues until they have exchanged good wishes and blessings with everyone. **Oplatki are available at the Rectory Monday thru Thursday.**

CHILDREN'S BOX ENVELOPES



If your child(ren) would like to receive a box of weekly contribution envelopes for 2019, please contact the rectory during the week at ... 622-5470 ext.3.

2019 CALENDARS: Church calendars for the New Year are available at the church exits. Please feel free to take one, but please make sure they are not wasted. We wish to thank the **James E. Humphrey Funeral Home** for taking care of this expense.



CHURCH DECORATING: Your help is needed. !!! All are welcome to help decorate our church for Christmas. Please call the Rectory if you can help

Sunday, December 16th after 10:30 a.m. Mass

CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES

Monday, December 24
4 p.m. + (6 p.m. Children's Mass) + 10 p.m.
(Preludes & Carols at 9:30 p.m.)

CHRISTMAS DAY MASS

Tuesday, December 25 -- 10:00 a.m. only

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY MASSES

Saturday, December 29 – 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, December 30 – 8:15 & 10:30 a.m.

SOLEMNITY OF MARY MASSES

Monday, December 31 – 5:15 p.m.
Tuesday, January 1 – 10:00 a.m. only

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Wednesday	December 19	7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Thursday	December 20	5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Saturday	December 22	4:15 to 4:45 p.m.
Sunday	December 23	7:45 to 8:00 a.m.
Sunday	December 23	10:00 to 10:15 a.m.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Any child 5 years of age or older who would like to take part in our Christmas Eve Pageant may sign up by contacting

Emily Scheidel at 739-1808.

Our next rehearsal date is:

Wednesday, **December 19th** from 6 to 7 p.m. in Church

-- ST. JOHN'S REMEMBERS --

So many have been part of the lives of those who have served our Parish Family as Pastor or Pastoral Assistant. During this Holiday Season, please remember the following:

Sister Judith Baldino, 2405 Gulf Gate Drive, Sarasota, Fl. 34231

Rev. Donald Henry, 4339 Kingston Loop, Sarasota, Fl. 34238

Rev. Frederick Sattler, Holy Family Villa, 1325 Prospect Ave., Bethlehem, Pa. 18018

Sister Barbara Jean Wojnicki, 6727 Deluth Ave., Baltimore, MD 21222

Sister Maryanne Zakreski, St. Joseph Convent, 120 Hilldale Road, Cheltenham, Pa. 19012

Robert (Bobby) Rienzo, St. Charles Seminary, 100 E. Wynnewood Road, Wynnewood, Pa. 19096



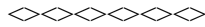
CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS

“The Word became Flesh and made His dwelling among us, and we have seen His glory: The glory of an only Son coming from the Father, filled with enduring love.” (John 1:14)

The word **Christmas** was derived from the Old English Cristes Maesse or “**Mass of Christmas.**” Over the centuries it has become a comprehensive word including both the religious traditions and the secular traditions.

In North America, the early immigrants brought their different **Christmas** traditions. The Germans brought the **Christmas tree**, the Irish contributed the lights in windows of homes, Catholic immigrants brought Midnight Mass and everyone had their own **Christmas carols**.



Christmas is a time of visiting, giving, helping and sharing. Christmas is a special feast for those who provide these and other services in their community. Parishioners are asked to reflect on the people and the circumstances of the first Christmas.

Whenever we recall the Nativity story, we are inspired by the birth of Jesus in such poor and difficult surroundings. We see the young couple, far from home, expecting a baby. We see crowds coming into town to register for the census. We see innkeepers and merchants busy with the influx of people. Amidst all the hubbub and the excitement, a child is born.

FINDING CHRIST

Poor shepherds were the first to hear about the birth of Jesus. An angel told them that a child was born and was to be found in a lowly manger wrapped in swaddling clothes. The shepherds hurried over to Bethlehem to see the Baby. Perhaps they brought some of the simple food they had to share. Later, Magi from the East travelled a great distance in search of the Child. They too, brought gifts to the “newborn king” – the one born in such a humble setting.

Finding Christ was not a difficult thing to do. Those sincerely searching for Him were guided along the way. Jesus made it very clear where He could be found. Among the poor, the needy, and the outcasts is where he lived His life. He fed the people who came to listen to Him teach. He healed those who suffered. While Jesus lived on earth, anyone looking for Jesus knew where He could be found.

This Christmas, if you are looking for Jesus, you know where He can be found. He is no longer a Baby in a manger. That Child is the Jesus who grew up and lived among the lowly and the humble. He worked and prayed with sinners and with those who needed healing and instruction. He told people, “Whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me.” If you are looking for Christ this Christmas, you know where to go.

BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS MEAL

Abba, Father, we gather at this table to celebrate the joy of Jesus' birth. We rejoice at being together and remember those who are distant; we recall with love those who have died. We thank you for the gift each of us is to the other (family members name some special trait of other members, or something special one member has done for another since last Christmas). Hold us close to you and to each other, and help us to share your love with all we meet. We pray this in the name of Jesus, born this day. Amen.

ORIGIN OF “THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS”

The songs gifts are hidden meanings to the teachings of the faith. The “true love” mentioned in the song doesn't refer to an earthly suitor, it refers to God Himself. The “me” who receives the presents refers to every baptized person.

The **Partridge in a pear tree** is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The other symbols mean for following:

2 Turtle Doves = The Old and New Testaments.

3 French Hens = Faith, Hope and Charity, the Theological Virtues.

4 Calling Birds = the Four Gospels and/or the Four Evangelists.

5 Golden Rings = the first five books of the Old Testament, the “Pentateuch”, which gives the history of man's fall from grace.

6 Geese A-laying = the six days of creation.

7 Swans A-swimming = the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven Sacraments.

8 Maids a-milking – the eight beatitudes

9 Ladies Dancing = the nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit

10 Lords A-leaping = the Ten Commandments

11 Pipers Piping = the eleven faithful apostles

12 Drummers Drumming = the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle's Creed.

THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS BEGINS

Sharing the Gifts of the Season

When the song of the angels is stilled,

When the star in the sky is gone,

When the kings and the princes are home,

When the shepherds are back with their flocks,

Then the work of Christmas begins

... To find the lost ...

... To heal the broken ...

... To feed the hungry ...

... To rebuild the nations ...

... To release the prisoner ...

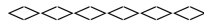
... To bring peace among people ...

... To make music in the heart.

ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC WOMEN'S UNION

*Women of all ages are invited to join
the Catholic Women's Union.*

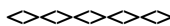
Learn how you can become involved with the Catholic Women's Union by joining us. Meet the members and learn how you can be part of this unique organization. We work to raise money for our parish and have fun doing it. We also share in fellowship by sharing in a Spring and Fall Auction, Christmas Party, and the Spring Covered Dish Party. Your ideas, friendship and membership are welcomed.



Installation of officers took place at the November meeting. Pictured below:



Barbara Munster – Recording Secretary
Millie Fredericks – Vice President
Donna Moyer – Treasurer
Sharon Miller – President
Fr. Dave – Pastor



Thank You to St. John's CATHOLIC WOMEN'S UNION

A special thank you to our Catholic Women's Union here at St. John's for their generous gift this year of **\$4,000**. This donation is the result of all their hard work and efforts over this past year.

For more information call: Sharon Miller at 622-0516 or St. John's Rectory: 622-5470.

RECTORY CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

All are welcome to stop by the Rectory during office hours on weekdays to see the beautiful Christmas tree and decorations.



*“And we know that all things work together
for good to them that love God,
to them who are the called according to His purpose.”
... Rom. 8:28*

ST. JOHN'S FAMILY GUILD

The **Family Guild** is a small organization which sponsors activities for the elementary school students of the parish.



Through our fundraising efforts we sponsor two spiritual based programs throughout the year. The programs are the Lent Event and the Advent-ure.

The **Family Guild** also strives to make the Sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation a little more special for our children by purchasing gifts and providing flowers for these joyous occasions.

If you would like to become more involved within the parish and be a positive influence in the spiritual lives of our parish youth, consider joining the **Family Guild**. We always welcome a new face among us.

If interested pleased call the Rectory 622-5470 or just come to our next meeting which is scheduled for ...

Monday, December 17th

6:30 p.m. – Rectory Fellowship Room

FAMILY GUILD GIFT CARD CALENDAR

The **Family Guild** will be sponsoring the **Gift Card Calendar Raffle for March 2019**. The members of the Guild would like to extend the opportunity to all parishioners to sponsor any type of **Gift Card** or make a monetary donation to purchase a gift card.



If you are interested, please call the Rectory 622-5470.

CHRISTMAS ENVELOPES

The Christmas envelope again this year can be found in your recent envelope packet for December and January. There will be no special mailing of the Christmas envelope. If you do not receive regular envelopes or did not receive a Christmas envelope in the mail, they are available on the tables in the rear of church.

Once again, we ask for your generous support in the Christmas collection. May we suggest a **\$35.00** Christmas donation to the parish. If you can afford to give more, it is greatly appreciated. Once again, thank you for your continued generosity.

*Observe good faith and justice toward all nations.
Cultivate peace and harmony with all.*

... George Washington

DIOCESAN NEWS & EVENTS

COUNSELOR Catholic Charities Diocese of Allentown is hiring a part-time (20-25 hr. /week) counselor based at the **Pottsville Office** location with possible travel in the five-county service region. The counselor provides individual, family, and marriage counseling for those seeking mental health services. Applicants are required to have a master's degree in related field with counseling licensure or licensure eligible. Applicants must be willing to provide services that align with the ethical, moral, and social teachings of the Catholic Church. Send cover letter and résumé to CCAD@allentowndiocese.org. Please specify **POTTSVILLE COUNSELOR** in the subject line.

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER – The birth of the CHRIST-CHILD was a sign of hope for this world. Consider attending a *Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend*, for hope and rebirth in your relationship! For information call 1-732-904-9636 or www.aweekendforyourmarriage.org.

NEW TEEN MINISTRY *Schuylkill Catholic Young Church* is the new Schuylkill County regional youth ministry of the Diocese of Allentown. Teens are invited to participate in the upcoming “Alpha” series, which includes free dinner. Alpha is an opportunity to explore life, faith and meaning. Know a teen with questions about life? Invite them to Alpha. Please RSVP to Father Dave at the rectory 622-5470 or email stjbparrish@comcast.net. Alpha will be held on **Sundays 6 – 8 p.m. at the Frackville Youth Center, 7 S. Broad Mountain Ave, Frackville, from January 27 through March 24.**

FROM OUR PARISH NURSE ... Walnuts can help improve blood cholesterol levels, according to a recent analysis of 26 clinical trials in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. Most of the studies had participants consume 1 to 2 ounces of walnuts a day for 4 to 8 weeks. Walnut eaters had, on average, a 7-point drop in total cholesterol and nearly 6-point drop in LDL (“bad”) cholesterol compared to people who didn’t eat walnuts. Triglyceride levels also declined modestly. Like all nuts, walnuts are rich in unsaturated fats, fiber, sterols, polyphenols, and other compounds that can improve blood lipid levels, as well as key vitamins and minerals. Unlike other nuts, walnuts are rich in alpha-linolenic acid, an omega-3 fat related to those in fish. The study was funded in part by the California Walnut Commission and the NKH.

ATTENTION PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL TEENS

STEUBENVILLE YOUTH CONFERENCE 2019

Dates: July 19-21, 2019

Please see St. John’s Facebook Page for more details and how to register!

Registration is due to Diocese by **JANUARY 15th**, **SO PLEASE DON’T DELAY IF INTERESTED!!**

Please contact **Josette Peckman** **570-449-9480** for more details.

NEIGHBORING EVENTS

ST. PAULINE VISINTAINER ... You are invited to take part in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on **Monday, December 17th at 5 p.m.** followed by Veneration of the first-class relic of St. Pauline Visintainer, Patron Saint of Diabetics and of all who are sick at Our Lady’s Chapel in St. Patrick’s.

PHILADELPHIA FLOWER SHOW ... hosted by St. Ambrose Women’s Club on **March 2, 2019**. Tour includes: Admission to Philadelphia Flower Show and a Deluxe Motor Coach Transportation. Departs from St. Ambrose Church at 9 a.m. Depart Flower Show at 5:30 p.m. Return to St. Ambrose Church at 7:30 p.m. **Adults: \$62.00; Children (2-16) \$50.00.** Reservations and money due by **January 31, 2019**. Checks can be made to the St. Ambrose Woman’s Auxiliary Club. Contact Karen Holly at 570-573-1608.

SPONSOR OF THE WEEK

We appreciate advertisers who support St. John’s by advertising in our bulletin. Please patronize their business and let them know you saw their ad in our bulletin.

Cerullo, Datte & Burke, P.C.

Attorneys at Law

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