

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Parishioners,

If John the Baptist were going through a security check at the airport, he might have grumbled as he removed his sandals and put them in the carrier. He might have said, *"Here are my sandals, but I am not worthy to unloose the strap of the sandals of the one who is coming."*

The security officers might have looked at his passport, questioning if he was the Messiah or Elijah. They might have padded him down and asked him to step in to the adjoining room where they could question him further. *"Who are?" "Why do you baptize?"*

After the security team gave up, finding nothing, John was cleared. As he headed for his gate, John may have dared to call back: *"There is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me."*

Yours in Christ,

Father Dave

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, December 18 – 9:00 a.m.

EMILY LEINHEISER (Robert & Kathleen Verbosh)

Tuesday, December 19 – 9:00 a.m.

JAMES & EMMA BURNS (Joe & Ann Burns)

Wednesday, December 20 – 9:00 a.m.

RAMON GRAPSY (Joan Grapsy)

Thursday, December 21 – 9:00 a.m.

ROBERT LOTZ (Rita Lotz)

Friday, December 22 – 9:00 a.m.

FRANKLIN PLATTS (Donna Platts)

Saturday, December 23 – 5 p.m.

SYLVIA & FRANCIS BERCHER (Grandchildren)

Sunday – December 24 – 8:15 a.m.

WILLIAM ELISON (John & Joyce Gerace)

Sunday – December 24 10:30 a.m.

CHARLES LORENZ (Bill & Dot Elison)

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CHRISTMAS EVE

Sunday, December 24

4 p.m. - PARISHIONERS OF ST. JOHN'S
(Preludes 3:30 pm)

6 p.m. - PARISHIONERS OF ST. JOHN'S
(Children's Mass)

10 p.m. - PARISHIONERS OF ST. JOHN'S
(Carols 9:30 pm)

CHRISTMAS DAY

Monday - December 25

10 a.m. - PARISHIONERS OF ST. JOHN'S

WEEKLY COLLECTION

December 9/10: \$ 4,199.48; Retired Religious: \$1,488

We thank our parishioners for their sacrificial giving.

CANDLE DONATIONS

BVM - IMO George Holley by Mary Ann Holley

St. Joseph – IMO George Holley by Mary Ann Holley

Tabernacle - IMO George Holley by Mary Ann Holley

Sanctuary

1. IMO Dorothy Rosenberger by Paul Rosenberger

2,3,4. IMO George Holley by Mary Ann Holley

Guardian Angels

1&2. IMO Ramon Grapsy by Joan Grapsy

SCHEDULE

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

5:00 p.m. – Saturday – December 23rd

Reader: Heidi Gorski

Euch.Min.: Paul & Mary Ann Filiac, (Larry Lonergan)

Servers: Alyssa Sheriff, Noah & Helena Fredericks

Cantor: Mary Bound

8:15 a.m. – Sunday – December 24th

Reader: Michelle Ambrose

Euch.Min.: Mike Ambrose, Dave Smith

Servers: Luke Schane, Bryan Daniels, Caroline Hobbs

Cantor: Tina Seiger

10:30 a.m. – Sunday – December 24th

Reader: Frank Murphy

Euch.Min.: Bobbi Murray, Joyce Gerace, (Dr. Visot)

Servers: Bethany, Trinity, Izabella Reedy

Cantor: Dave Derbes

CHRISTMAS EVE

4:00 p.m. – Sunday – December 24th

Reader: Patty O'Neill

Euch.Min.: Carol Lasco, Debbie Guers, Mary Modesto,

Joe Rehnert, Carol Forster, Sharon Snyder,

Phil Markovich,

Servers: Caitlin Coyle, Olivia Tokonitz,

Ryan & Dylan Schreffler

Cantor: Debbie Purcell

6:00 p.m. Sunday – December 24th

Reader: Jennifer Daubert

Euch.Min.: George & Brian Forney

Servers: Hayden, Ty, Jackson Daubert,

Samantha Heenan

Cantor: Ensemble

10:00 p.m. Sunday – December 24th

Reader: Tyler Cooper

Euch.Min.: Dan & Hermine Murphy

Servers: Josh Cooper, Evelyn Datte, Gabriella Quinn,

Noah Lecher

Cantor: Melody Newhard Kirk

CHRISTMAS DAY

10:00 a.m. Monday – December 25th

Reader: Michelle Ambrose

Euch.Min.: Michael Ambrose

Servers: Ryan & Emma Seiger, Sophie Murray

Cantor: Tina Seiger

FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

"I warmly welcome all Catholics 'home for Christmas.' No matter how long since your last visit, your spiritual home awaits you ready and waiting to welcome you home! I invite all my brother priests, deacons, religious, and practicing Catholics, through their example of holiness, perseverance, and joy, to be a source of encouragement to their brothers and sisters away from their spiritual home, and to invite one inactive Catholic back home for Christmas. Please know of my prayers for a blessed and Merry Christmas to you and your families!"
- Bishop Alfred A. Schlert

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

When have you found your voice
and stood up for the truth?

Next Week's Readings

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (December 23/24)

Reading I: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

Reading II: Romans 16:25-27

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

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: Fred & Magdalene Maskerines, Mary Connell, Jerry Schoenauer, Dorothy Blum, Carl Forster, Ray Dee, Dorothy Prokop, Beth Resnick, Carol Heacock, Mark Sitcoske, Caitlyn McGarri, Joseph LeBlanc, Doug Broughton, Mackenzie Miller.

DIVINE MERCY PERPETUAL ADORATION

Open Hours with Jesus

Pray that your hearts will be open to Perpetual Adoration and His invitation, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28

We need adorers for the following hours:

Monday 10 p.m.; Wednesday 11 a.m.;

Thursday 8 p.m.; Friday 10 a.m. & 7 p.m.

Saturday 4 a.m., 12 p.m.,

Sunday 12 a.m. & 4 a.m.

Whenever you are unable to cover your Holy Hour, for whatever reason, we are always able to get a sub.
Please call Aleece 449-7678.

2018 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.

CONFIRMATION PRAYER

SPONSORS



Our 8th graders are preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation on **Wednesday, April 25th**. Please consider supporting this important decision by praying for one or more candidates. Papers containing the names of the candidates are located at the church exits. Please take one and during this time of preparation, please pray for that person in a special way and write notes of encouragement. Our parish will be doubly blessed!

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 20th** from 6 to 7 p.m. in Church

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.

Sacrament of Reconciliation Schedule

Wednesday	December 20	4:30 to 5:30 p.m.
Thursday	December 21	7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Saturday	December 23	4:15 to 4:45 p.m.
Sunday	December 24	7:45 to 8:00 a.m.
Sunday	December 24	10:00 to 10:15 a.m.

RETIRED FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

Religious give thanks. A religious sister writes, "When we see the generous response of so many thousands of persons in order to help us, religious men and women, we are left speechless." Senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests across the country send heartfelt thanks and prayers for your donation to last week's *Retirement Fund for Religious* collection.

DIOCESAN NEWS & EVENTS

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 email www.aweekendforyourmarriage.org.

CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Saturday, December 23 – 5 p.m.
Sunday, December 24 – 8:15 & 10:30 a.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES

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

CHRISTMAS DAY MASS

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

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY MASSES

Saturday, December 30 – 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, December 31 – 8:15 & 10:30 a.m.

SOLEMNITY OF MARY MASSES

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

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Wednesday,	December 20:	4:30 to 5:30 p.m.
Thursday,	December 21:	7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Saturday,	December 23	4:15 to 4:45 p.m.
Sunday,	December 24	7:45 to 8:00 a.m.
Sunday,	December 24	10:00 to 10:15 a.m.

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.

CHURCH DECORATING: Your help is needed. !!! All are welcome to help decorate church for Christmas.

Sunday, December 17th
after 10:30 a.m. Mass

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.

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

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



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.

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 will be available by calling the Rectory 570-622-5470.**



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

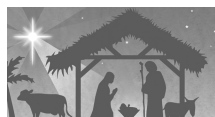
A special thank you to our Catholic Women's Union here at St. John's for their generous gift this year of **\$3,000**. This donation is the result of all their hard work and efforts over this past year.

CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALE – THANK YOU

The members of St. John's **Catholic Women's Union** would like to thank everyone who donated cookies or gave monetary donations, and those who supported us by purchasing treats at our *Ninth Annual Christmas Cookie Sale* held December 9/10. The Christmas spirit of giving came through with the wonderful generosity of those who donated cookies. The fundraiser was a huge success. Thank you to the women on the Cookie Committee who gave of their time at this busy season and also anyone who worked at the sale. We are a small group of women, but we are mighty and strong in our efforts to raise money for the church. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Blessed and Joyous New Year.



St. John's Catholic Women's Union



-- 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, Divine Providence Convent, 310 N. River Road, Des Plaines, IL 60016

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

THANK YOU – ADVENT CANDLES

A special thank you to Dolores Smith and Family for the donation of the Advent Candles,
In memory of Edward Smith.



CHILDREN'S BOX ENVELOPES



If your child(ren) would like to receive a box of weekly contribution envelopes for 2018, please contact the rectory during the week at ... 622-5470 ext.3.

NATIVITY BVM SCHOOL ...

POSITION AVAILABLE ... accepting applications for a **Head Track & Field Coach**. Head Coaching experience preferred for Track & Field.

Interested candidates should send résumé, certifications and all clearances to:

Nativity BVM High School
Attn: Mrs. Lynn Sabol, Principal
One Lawton's Hill, Pottsville, Pa. 17901
lsabol@nativitybvm.net

ASSUMPTION BVM SCHOOL ...

POSITION AVAILABLE ... **First Grade Teacher**
Assumption BVM School is seeking a qualified applicant for a first grade teaching position. Requirements can be found on www.allentowndiocese.org. Please send all information to Mrs. Teresa Keating at Assumption BVM School.

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."

NEIGHBORING EVENTS

ST. PAULINE VISINTAINER ... You are invited to take part in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on **Monday, December 18th 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.

BERMUDA CRUISE Join St. Ambrose Travelers on a cruise to Bermuda from **June 10-17, 2018**. Motor coach transportation included, leaving from Sch. Haven to NYC to embark on the Norwegian Escape. Six Masses on board, ultimate beverage package, dining package, prepaid gratuities, onboard credit and more! Contact Jeff at 570-391-4239 for more information or to book today!

KARATE CLASSES Interested in learning a traditional martial art? You are in luck! Karate classes held twice weekly on the second floor of the Russell Building. Classes are held Wednesday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. and Saturday mornings from 9 to 11 a.m. Ages 6 and up welcome. Classes taught by Sensei Dennis Tobash. For more information please call 484-357-2539.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Knights of Columbus Council 431 is recruiting new members to join our Catholic Men's organization. If you would like to join an organization committed to charitable causes, Catholic outreach in the community and offering outstanding programs for members and their families please consider joining more than 12 million Catholic men around the world in Knights of Columbus membership. During the month of October Council 431 is offering free membership and initiation fees for the first year for new members.

For further information please call Grand Knight Dave Donlin at 570-573-1841 or email him at dadmtd515p@comcast.net

FAMILY MATTERS

Violence in the Media. No harangue here – but, really do we need it? We ask the Lord to direct the parents of our parish to be proactive in guiding their children to see that violence and harshness in the media is not Jesus' way of peace and love.

You pray for my family, and I'll pray for yours.

DO REMEMBER

Do remember your parish in your last will and testament ... an act of thanksgiving for all God's gifts to you. Future generations will be the beneficiaries of your kindness, even as we have benefited from our generous ancestors.

FROM OUR PARISH NURSE ...

To absorb more beta carotene and other carotenoids from salads and vegetable-based dishes, add some avocado. It's well known that carotenoids are better absorbed when consumed with some fat (this is true of all fat-soluble vitamins and phytochemicals). This was recently confirmed by researchers from Ohio State University, who fed 12 people beta-carotene-rich tomato sauce and then carrots, both with or without avocados, which are high in fat (mostly monounsaturated). More beta carotene was absorbed from both the sauce and carrots when people also ate about 5 ounces of avocado. Moreover, avocado consumption resulted in greatly increased conversion of beta carotene into vitamin A in the body; this is an important way we get the vitamin A we need. This study, published in the *Journal of Nutrition*, focused on avocados because it was funded by the Hass Avocado Board, but other fat-containing foods, such as oil-based salad dressing or cheese, would have similar effects.

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

Martin J. Cerullo	(mcerullo@cdblawn.net)	Garfield Square 450 West Market St. P.O. Box 450 Pottsville, PA 17901
Paul J. Datte	(pdatte@cdblawn.net)	
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WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S

This week we welcome **David Zula** and his daughter **Rebecca** to St. John's Parish Family. David is a school principal and Rebecca is in the 5th grade at Minersville.



Warmly embrace the **Zula's** into our parish family with a big dose of St. John's Hospitality by writing to 11 Upper Beechwood Ave., Pottsville 17901.

*But I can enter Your house because of Your great love.
I can worship in Your holy temple because of my reverence for You, Lord.* ... Psalm 5:8