

MARY the MOTHER of GOD



6400 Nativity Lane,
Burke, Virginia 22015
nativityburke.org

REV. ROBERT C. CILINSKI, PASTOR
REV. CHRISTOPHER H. HAYES, PAROCHIAL VICAR
REV. EDWARD BRESNAHAN, PAROCHIAL VICAR
REV. CEDRIC P. WILSON, ASSISTING PRIEST/
SPANISH MINISTRY
DEACON RICHARD F. KELLY

SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES OF THE PARISH:

Adrienne Swidal, Parish Secretary
Ann Benson, Business Manager
Carlos Gutierrez, Facility Manager
Cat Sands, Pastoral Minister
Maureen Andersen, Liturgical Minister
Johana Brown, Parish Receptionist
Anna Marty, Receptionist/Baptism Coordinator
Caroline Chase, Receptionist/Bulletin Editor
Ayse Kenner, Mass Intentions
Alison Fram, Director of Young Adult/College Ministry
Rebecca Judge, Director of Youth Ministry
Mary Castellano, Director of Social Media
Jennifer Sturgeon, Director of Marriage Enrichment/
Ecumenical Ministry
Carole Fischl, Co-director of Music
Debbie Doyle, Co-director of Music
Mai Tran, Traditional Choir Director
Sara Prince, Youth Choir Director/Cornerstone Choir
Natacha Hines, Gift Shop

MINISTERS OF OUR SCHOOL:

Maria Kelly, Principal
Richard Godwin, Assistant Principal
Jen Behan, Preschool Director/Extended
Care Director
Shannon Murphy, Administrative Assistant/Registrar
Kim Vu, Business Manager
Mary Helen Chapman, School Secretary

MINISTERS OF OUR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM:

Sister Donatella Merulla, A.R., M.R.E.
Sister Mary Attilia Todaro, A.R., M.R.E.
Fania Jimenez, Administrative Assistant
Jennifer Sturgeon, Confirmation Coordinator

CATHOLIC CHARITIES COUNSELOR

Marguerite Turner, MS, LPC (703) 454 2415



PARISH OFFICE: (703) 455-2400

PARISH FAX: (703) 455-6832

NATIVITY SCHOOL: (703) 455-2300

NATIVITY FAX: (703) 569-8109

PRE-SCHOOL: (703) 455-2300 ext. 136

CCD OFFICE: (703) 455-0372

CCD OFFICE FAX: (703) 455-6832

SUNDAY MASSES:

5:00 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass
7:00 p.m. Vigil Mass in Spanish
7:00 a.m./9:00 a.m./11:00 a.m./
1:00p.m./5:30 p.m.

WEEKDAY MASSES:

7:30 a.m. Monday through Friday
12:00 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday
9:00 a.m. on Saturday

HOLY DAY MASSES:

As Announced

RECONCILIATION:

3:30 - 4:30 p.m. on Saturday
or, if necessary, by appointment

BAPTISM: For more information and how to schedule a baptism,
please visit our website: <https://nativityburke.org/baptism/>

MARRIAGE POLICY: Please contact the Church as soon as
you are engaged, and at least six months prior to your
wedding date.

BULLETIN DEADLINE: Announcements for the bulletin **must**
be submitted **in writing** by 9:00 AM on Tuesday (5 days
prior to publication). Please note: this deadline can change
due to holiday office closings. You may email submissions
to bulletin@nativityburke.org.

WEBMASTER: Emilia Hartline, webmaster@nativityburke.org

SOCIAL MEDIA: Mary Castellano,
socialmedia@nativityburke.org

Assisted hearing devices are available from the
Sacristy staff at all services.



@Nativity Parish Burke



@nativityparishburke_

A Message from our Pastor Fr. Bob Cilinski



Dear parishioners,

Thank you to all who made our Christmas Masses so beautiful! The church was decorated so beautifully, the choirs sang in joyous praise, the Liturgical Ministers, including our altar servers, lectors, ushers, greeters and Eucharistic Ministers who served with love.

Many thanks to our Musicians, Sacristans, Parish Staff, Mass Coordinators, our Priests and Deacons who made our Advent and Christmas liturgies so beautiful. Special thanks to our Art and Environmental Committee chaired by Melinda Engelbrektsson, our Sacristan Maureen Andersen, and our choir directors Carole Fischl, Debbie Doyle, Mai Tran, Ruben Letelier and Sara Prince. Special thanks to the Knights of Columbus who provided parking lot ministry of Welcome and Safety!

Christmas Blessings and a very Happy New Year!

Fr. Bob Cilinski
Fr. Bob Cilinski,
Pastor

SCAM ALERT - PLEASE BEWARE

Most recently, someone using a fake email address pretending to be Fr. Bob Cilinski, was requesting gift cards for the staff.

Please note that Fr. Bob (or any of the other priests)

DOES NOT and will NEVER email, text or ask anyone for gift cards or any kind of financial assistance. Please be careful and delete these kinds of emails or messages immediately. If you are unsure or have any questions, please call the parish office at 703 455 2400.



Engaged and Married Couples are invited to be a part of the Marriage Enrichment Ministry (MEM)

You are invited to the upcoming events and programs

- January - Small groups meet at homes for the Better Together program
- January 27 - Book Fellowship with Fr. Hayes "Spousal Prayer"
- January 28—Virtual Date Night with Greg and Stephanie Schutte on "Day-to-Day Marriage with the End in Mind"
- February 5 - St. John Paul II Shrine Pilgrimage (all day)
- February 18 - Date Night with Messy Family Project "Growing a Family Culture"
- March 25 - Date Night "Marriage & Intimacy"
- April 22 - Mini Retreat (10:00 AM-Noon)
- April to May - six week Marriage Program
- May 20 - Date Night "Comedy & BBQ" combined with the Knights of Columbus

Plus fellowship events: meeting for ice cream with our families, Paradise Springs, hikes, Pizza Friday, Coffee Connections, sharing resources, NFP support, and more. Email Jennifer Sturgeon at marriage@nativityburke.org to be added to our monthly FlockNote, where all our upcoming events are shared.

On This Date in Nativity History June 1990

The Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus approved the change of name of the Nativity Council to Father Vincent S. Sikora Council. Father Sikora was born in Arnold, Pennsylvania, in 1925 of Polish immigrant parents: Walenty and Rosalia (Zalenski) Sikora. After service in the army in World War Two, including two years overseas, Sikora attended Mt. Saint Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and graduated in 1954. He was an assistant pastor at St. Michael's Church in Annandale, and at St. Charles Church in Arlington. He was the Founding Pastor of St. Ambrose Parish in Annandale in 1966. He came to Nativity in the 1980s. He became the Council Chaplain in October 1988, and made an immediate, positive impact on the life and spirit of the Council. He wrote a column for every Council newsletter, and was a constant fixture at Council meetings and around the Parish. He died December 16, 1989. Since 1990, the Council has honored the memory of Father Sikora every December by saying a rosary at his gravesite. In the summary of his life prepared by the Council in their application to the Supreme Council for the name change, Father Sikora was described with these words:

"Father Sikora was a simple, humble, common servant of God. He excelled, but never raised himself in glory. He would not accept praise, only being the tool of God. He would not accept money for personal use, only giving it away to someone in greater need. He would not show anger or resentment, only the acceptance of the will of God in gladness. ...He radiated the love and joy of God to whomever he touched. He was always present when people needed counseling, comfort, and love. ...Father Sikora was an example for all of us."

Our thanks to Mark Sawyer, Jason Hines, and other Nativity Knights for this information.

This historical note is the thirtieth of a weekly Bulletin feature leading up to Nativity's fiftieth anniversary, 11 June 2023.

ALTAR FLOWERS

The Altar Flower Book for 2023 is now open with many dates available. This is a thoughtful way to honor a loved one, living or deceased. If you are interested, please stop by the parish office to sign up. You can now also go online and reserve flowers on our website at: <https://nativityburke.org/altar-flowers/>.

Rosary Ministry News

Attention all rosary makers, past and present. Mark your calendar for January 10th from 1:00-3:00 PM in the Fr. Ready Room for a "Bead" Party.

If you have extra beads or rosary supplies bring them to the meeting. Most of us have a container of various colored beads. By consolidating our beads, we can create interesting rosaries as well as providing supplies for future classes. Help us to bring those lonely beads back to life and to make more rosaries for the foreign missions. For more info, please email: rosaryministry@nativityburke.org.



Dear parishioners,

On January 2, 2023 we will begin the sanctuary renovation of our church as part of our parish 50th Anniversary celebration. A large curtain will be suspended to cover the sanctuary area during the renovation. A temporary altar and tabernacle will be placed in front of the curtain for our prayer and worship. Daily and Sunday Mass will continue to be celebrated in the church. The renovation is scheduled to be completed by March 11, 2023.

WHAT ARE WE RENOVATING ?

THE SANCTUARY FLOOR: The current sanctuary floor is chipped and stained and cannot be restored. There is also an electrical outlet coming out of the steps with red tape as a caution to all. The new sanctuary floor will be a cream color marble floor with border inlets that will enhance the beauty and safety of the altar area.

THE ALTAR: The altar, on which is effected the Sacrifice of the Cross made present under sacramental signs, is also the table of the Lord to which the People of God gather to participate in the Mass, and it also is the center of the thanksgiving that is accomplished through the Eucharist. In every church there should be a fixed altar. The current altar of wood and stone does not line up with the center aisle and has electrical outlets coming out of it in the back. Since we are now going to have a marble floor, the new altar will be built with a dignified cherry stain wood and marble inlets to coordinate with the new marble floor. It will contain relics of various saints.

THE AMBO: The current ambo (pulpit) will be replaced by a cherry wood stain and marble ambo. The design of the new ambo will match the altar as a way of expressing the unity of the Word of God in the Scripture and the Word of God in the Eucharist. There is also a practical motivation for the design of the new pulpit. The current ambo provides little room for the lectionary and homily notes. We also must carry a step stool to the ambo when our children are reading. The renovated ambo will have a shelf for liturgical books and a step installed that can be pulled out when needed by a lector.

THE TABERNACLE: A principal feature of the renovation is the moving of the tabernacle to the center of the sanctuary underneath the Crucifix. This design placement calls attention to the centrality of the Eucharist in our faith. As Pope John Paul II said, *"We are the Church of the Eucharist."* Visually when you walk into the church, your eyes will be drawn to the Altar, Tabernacle and Crucifix in unity on the same axis in the center. These liturgical sacred items will be architecturally what they are spiritually, the axis of our lives.

PRESIDERS CHAIR: Another liturgical change after the Second Vatican Council was the use of the Presiders Chair for the principal prayers of the Mass. As such, we have designed a chair that fits the overall design of the sanctuary. It will be placed on the side wall where the current tabernacle is located. New chairs for the deacon and altar servers are being made. The current chairs are over 30 years old, have served us well, but are in need of an upgrade.

MOSAIC PANELS: We are adding seven mosaic panels on the right side of the church behind the choir section to echo the seven stained glass windows on the left. These mosaic panels will depict the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy, beautifully displaying Christ's command to care for those in need, a charism of Nativity parish. This will highlight the scripture from Matthew 25 when Jesus describes how we will be judged. It will be a teaching reminder to any who say: *"If its not on the final exam, I don't want to study it."* Pope Francis has called us *"to be a church for the poor."* These seven mosaics will also provide a balance visually in the church.... and in our lives.

The cost of this renovation is \$640,000. To date, through the generosity of parishioners, we have raised over half that amount. More are considering a pledge or using our monthly building envelope. If you would like to help contribute, please go to our parish website or call the parish office.

The New Year in which we are to embark, with all its possibilities, will be a special one for our parish as we celebrate our 50th anniversary. May the Christmas season remind us that the greatest gift we can take with us into this New Year, is Jesus Christ whose birth we celebrate and who promises to always be with us. Rejoice in Emmanuel!

Christmas Blessings,

Fr. Bob Cilinski

Fr. Bob Cilinski, Pastor

WORKCAMP 2023

Registration Open!

**JUNE 17-23
FREDERICK COUNTY, VA**


Teens, parents and adult volunteers are invited to a week-long overnight camp providing the high school teens with an opportunity to encounter Christ through service, faith, and fellowship.

Scan the QR Code to learn more!

Questions?
Contact Brigid Williams | wc@nativityburke.org




Mass in Recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 All are welcome to join Bishop Michael Burbidge celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in the holy sacrifice of the Mass hosted at St. Bernadette's Catholic Church, 7600 Old Keene Mill Road in Springfield. Mass will be held on Sunday, January 15, 2023 at 11:00am, with a reception to follow. This Mass is organized and sponsored by the Black Catholic Ministry, Office of Multicultural Ministries of the Diocese of Arlington. For any questions, please email mcm@arlingtondiocese.org or call (703) 841 3881.

 **A message from the Nativity Creation Care Ministry**

The new year is often a time to review our financial habits among our other resolutions. Nativity recently announced that online giving had increased to over 50% of offertory donations. Online giving provides so many benefits to both the parish and the parishioner in time saving, safety and security, and consistency. What is not as often mentioned is the reduction in physical resources. Your commitment to online giving reduces use of paper envelopes and checks, postage and delivery resources among others. Make this the year that you switch to online giving; your new habit will bring many benefits and show care for God's creation, one of the seven themes of Catholic social teaching. Nativity's website notes that: Online donations may be made via OnlineGiving at any time from the comfort of your own home or any place with internet access. Online donations are credited to your tax statement for the end of the year (except when made anonymously), and each user can change his or her preferences or desired donation amounts at any time. *Learn more at: <https://nativityburke.org/online-giving/>*

 **Handmaids of Reparation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus**
Advent Project

Help our Sisters reach their fundraising goal!

The very special Advent season draws near. It's time to begin preparing for the coming of our Lord whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. Families both individual and parish, participate in traditional activities during this Church season. It's also a time to remember our sisters and brothers throughout the world who need physical and spiritual comfort.

Every year our Religious Order, Handmaids of Reparation of the Sacred Heart reaches out to families in our RE program and parish for prayers and monetary support during the Advent season.

To learn more about our Missions, and our Annual Advent Project, and to donate, please visit our website, or scan the QR-Code. Thank you kindly for your prayers and continuous support.

Prayerfully,
 Sister Donatella Merulla and
 Sister Mary Attilia Todaro

To learn more and to donate please visit their site:
handmaidsofrepatriation.org




ECHO Food Room Most Needed Items - December/January Collection will be next weekend, January 7 and 8

Choose sizes appropriate for an average family size of four. Include an assortment of food to ensure a variety of items for clients. Because of the wonderful generosity of the community, ECHO is blessed to already have a more than ample supply of canned pumpkin, cranberry sauce and stuffing. However, we are short on many other items such as personal care products and the items listed below. ECHO cannot give clients food whose expiration date is long past or any open food or repackaged food (no zip-loc bags).

Condiments	Garlic Powder	Laundry Detergent
Masa Flour	Onion Powder	Shaving Cream/Razors
Lemon Juice	Hot Chocolate	Deodorant
Sugar	Tin Fish	Shampoo
Canned Fruit	Canned/Shelf Stable Milk	Toothbrushes (spec. kids)
Honey	Juice - Large Box/Bottles	Facial Tissues
Basmati Rice	Crackers	Feminine Hygiene Products
Pancake Syrup	Canned Meat (Spam is a favorite)	Paper Towels
Cinnamon	Laundry Detergent	Brown Paper Grocery Bags
Instant Coffee	Band Aids	
Toilet paper		

MEM | Book Reflection with Fr. Hayes
 The Marriage Enrichment Ministry invites all engaged and married couples to read *"Spousal Prayer: A Way to Marital Happiness"* by Deacon James Keating and join us for a book reflection with Fr. Hayes taking place on Friday, January 27 at 7:00 pm in the conference room (Training Room) in the back of the church. **To RSVP, visit: <https://nativityburke.org/mem-book/>**

**Nativity is a tithing community
 Giving back a portion of God's blessings in gratitude**

Save the Dates for two Significant Pro-Life Events in Early 2023!

National March for Life in Washington DC – Friday, January 20, 2023

Join us as we march to Capitol Hill! Please let us know if you tentatively plan to attend so travel arrangements can be made! Simply sign up using Sign-Up Genius: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0d4eacac29a2f58-2023>

Depart Nativity ~ 11:00am

Rally at Noon, and March to the Capitol at 1:00pm

Return to Nativity around 3:30pm

"We will celebrate the 50th annual March for Life and the momentous overturn of Roe v. Wade! We will honor those who have gone before us making this historic victory possible. We will present the strategic plan for building a culture of life ... This year, rather than marching to the steps of the Supreme Court, where we have for decades asked our highest Court's Justices to undo the destructive decision that was Roe v. Wade, we will now march to a new front in our battle for life, the steps of the United States Capitol."

Jeanne Mancini, President of the March for Life

Guest speakers/performers for the Rally include:

- Jonathan Roumie, best known for his award-winning role as 'Jesus' in the series, THE CHOSEN
- Coach Tony Dungy, Pro-Football Hall of Famer and a New York Times best-selling author
- We Are Messengers, the Dove-nominated and K-LOVE Award-winning musical group

Virginia Defending Life Day & Virginia March for Life – Wednesday, Feb 1, 2023

Join Bishop Burbidge and us—your personal presence will powerfully support pro-life members of the Virginia General Assembly and encourages others to reconsider their views. We want our legislators to see that we expect them to pass life-affirming legislation. Bishop Burbidge, as the new Chair of the USCCB Pro-Life Committee, is keenly aware of how important this state-level representation is. Although this may be a bit out of the norm for you, we believe you will enjoy the comradery and find it empowering to stand up for this noble cause!

What's the plan?

- 6:30am Depart Nativity
- 8:30am Gather at the Richmond Convention Center
- 10:00am Senate and Delegate Meetings
- 12:00pm March for Life Rally
- 1:00pm Virginia March for Life
- 2:00pm Depart Richmond
- 4:00pm Return to Nativity

Don't worry! Should you be interested in talking, tips for effective advocacy, talking points and legislative updates will be provided by the organizers to make your day fun, easy, and successful. Please let us know if you tentatively plan to attend so sufficient travel arrangements can be made!

Simply sign up using Sign-Up Genius: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0D4EACAC29A2F58-20231>

More details to follow. Please contact Rick and Linda Loffredo at rickloffredo@outlook.com if you have any questions.

MASS INTENTIONS

"We are God's People"
1 Peter 2:10

Monday, January 2nd

7:30 am † Gary Lee

Tuesday, January 3rd

7:30 am Rick Crum
12:00 pm † Janet Hamrick

Wednesday, January 4th

7:30 am † Lucy Klimkos
(Sunrise) 3:00 pm † Eileen A. Mandable

Thursday, January 5th

7:30 am † Jackie Bryan
12:00 pm † Suzanne Harris

Friday, January 6th

7:30 am † Juana Hara-Hirata
9:00 am † Michael Grano

Saturday, January 7th

9:00 am Parishioners
5:00 pm † Joseph Masci
7:00 pm † Julio Esprella

Sunday, January 8th

7:00 am † John P. Rowley, Jr.
9:00 am Monica Shia's Family
11:00 am † Javier Cueva Guzman
1:00 pm † Teresa Le & Ana Le
5:30 pm † Teresa & Gerald Maxwell

In prayer, let us remember
the sick and deceased of the parish
visit nativityburke.org for the Priest Mass Schedule

Basilica of Saint Mary - Yale Glee Club to Perform Free Sacred Music Concert

The Yale Glee Club, Yale's principal undergraduate chorus and oldest musical organization, will present a concert on Friday, January 13, at 7:00pm in the Basilica Church, 310 S Royal Street. Under the direction of Jeffrey Douma, the ensemble will perform a wide and exciting choral repertoire, including the music of Johannes Brahms, newly commissioned works,

Family Christmas Movie Day

January 8, 2:00-4:00pm Hosted for you by
Nativity's Knights of Columbus & Young Family Ministry

January is still the Christmas season in the Catholic Church. We will be showing a Christmas movie for families with young children. Whether you have babies, toddlers, or elementary school age kids (older siblings are of course included, too!), we would love to have you join us for a movie, hot cocoa bar and popcorn. For those who want something more, we will have ample coloring pages, crayons, and toddler toys available as well.

When: Sunday, January 8 | 2:00-4:00 pm

Where: Nativity School Cafeteria

We hope you will join us after the Christmas and New Year break for a little extra Christmas magic!

Pilgrimage to Medjugorje April 30 – May 9, 2023

SPIRITUAL LEADERS: Msgr. Raymond East & Deacon Leo Flynn

Contact DCN. LEO – Leo@theflynnteam.com (703) 328 - 4762

PACKAGE PRICE - \$2699 (BASED on double occupancy)

\$270 extra for Single Supplement

PRICE INCLUDES:

- Round-trip airfare from your desired Airport
- All airport taxes & fuel surcharges
- 8 Nights in Medjugorje at 4* Hotel
- Breakfast and Dinner / or lunch daily (Half board) Wine with dinners
- Assistance of a licensed local guide
- Transfer as per itinerary
- Sightseeing and admission fees as per itinerary Visit the community Cenacolo and Mother’s Village Climb Apparition Hill and Cross Mountain
- Daily Holy Mass
- Whisper Headsets
- Attend daily Evening program and talks
- Meeting with visionaries (Pending availability) Excursion to the places agreed by a spiritual guide Tips to your guide, driver, and hotel staff
- Excursion to the places agreed by a spiritual guide Tips to your guide, driver, and hotel staff
- 81 Tours backpack & portfolio of all travel documents

www.81tours.com

“And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.” - Luke 2:19

After Jesus, we look to Mary as an ideal steward. Her entire life was lived in obedience to God's call. She heard God's message, and immediately said “yes;” Mary teaches us to live with joy and gratitude for the many blessings God has given us. Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, Mary reflects the light of Christ. Like Mary, we are called to reflect Christ's light to the world. We do this through lives of gratitude and generosity.

For Young Adults (21-39)

You are part of a larger community that....

Serves with Christ House cooking breakfast every 3rd Saturday



Grows together in 6-week Bible studies



Plays Basketball every Thursday at 8:30pm in the Father Martin Center



Serves at Mass as a greeters, ushers, musicians and more!

New? Contact our Director Alison Fram to join our newsletter

afram@nativityburke.org
(703) 577-5329



Preventing Homelessness in Fairfax County....

Family PASS provides intensive case management to address the underlying challenges that lead to homelessness: wage disparity and lack of affordable housing in Fairfax County. Our clients are working families who struggle to keep a roof over their heads due to low wages and high housing costs. As needed, we provide emergency rental assistance to avoid eviction, and then work with families to develop educational/career goals that would lead to a living wage. We also work with clients on the following: budget counseling and connecting them to community resources, assist with educational expenses, including tuition, books, technology, etc. assist with utilities, childcare, transportation, and some debt reduction, as it relates to families being able to work, achieving their goals, and stabilizing their family.

To learn more or to donate, visit our website
www.familypassfairfax.org



“In Mary's Footsteps” a group for Widows

Our next meeting of faith and fellowship for widows will be on Monday, January 9th at 11:00am in the "training room" at the back of the church. Meetings are typically held on the second Monday of the month. Please feel free to join this group for widows, run by widows. Questions can be sent to Cat Sands at csands@nativityburke.org. God bless you!



Linktree Universal Sign-up Link: Want to volunteer for an event? All event sign-ups can be done through the following link. https://linktr.ee/fr_sikora_council_7992 Event leads can also fill out a form to announce an event, and file an After Action Report through the link.

Family Christmas Movie Outing: Sign up on the link tree to help set up and serve refreshments for the Nativity Young Family Ministry movie outing. Event will be on 8 January from 12:00-4:30pm in the Nativity Cafeteria.

National March for Life: The annual march in support of the unborn is 20 January. Also, there is still a great need for parade Marshals. Sign up on the link tree for one or the other.

Virginia Defending Life Day & Virginia March for Life: Join Bishop Burbidge and us on 1 February for an exciting, full day of advocacy, prayer and witness at the Virginia General Assembly in Richmond! Sign up on the link tree.

Name Tags: Email Warden Michael Bender at michaelbambender@hotmail.com to order.

Sunday Mass Coffee and Cookies: We are providing coffee and cookies following Sunday morning Masses. Volunteer on linktree.

Handy Knights Ministry: If you are unable to perform basic maintenance tasks or small repairs in your home due to health or other factors, there is a ministry with the Knights of Columbus that may be able to assist – the “Handy Knights.” You can reach us at handyknightsofnativity@gmail.com.

The Fraternal Committee: Brothers helping brothers in need of assistance: Brothers and the families of living and deceased brothers in need of a helping hand, please contact Br. John Landy at navyy8@yahoo.com.

Food for Others: We need volunteers to help with our food distributions. The distribution picks up from the warehouse and delivers to Springfield. It should only take about an hour of your time on Friday evenings once a month based on the current number of volunteers in rotation. If you are interested in helping deliver, contact Br. Matt Stockburger at mstock_w@yahoo.com.

Join the Knights! The Knights of Columbus is an international Order of Catholic men who are called to lead with faith, protect our families, serve others and defend values in a busy changing world. Knights of Columbus membership brings Catholic men together in a powerful way. Join today! Simply go to <https://info.kofc.org/us.html> and enter our council #7992 for local information and to register. E-membership for the first year is free using the new code “blessedmcgivney”. Please email our Deputy Grand Knight at PMDELATTE@gmail.com or the Grand Knight at tjsgk7992@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Council Meetings: 1st and 3rd Tuesdays. Rosary at 7:15 PM; meeting follows at 7:30 PM. Fellowship follows every meeting. Meetings are now in person in the Nativity school cafeteria, with the option to attend virtually as well. The second meeting of the month is devoted to faith formation including the “Into the Breach” video/discussion series and guest speakers.

Calling all 3rd Degree Knights: The 4th Degree is calling. Members of the 4th Degree have the special honor of holding the title “Sir Knight,” participating in patriotic activities, color and honor guards and organizing programs that promote Catholic citizenship. Meetings 2nd Tuesday of the month; 7:30 pm rosary; 7:45 pm business meeting followed by fellowship. If you are interested in becoming a 4th Degree Sir Knight, please contact our Faithful Navigator Mark Corzine (wfn2996@gmail.com) for more information.

We Still Need Some Helping Hands!! Yours!!

No Hands But Yours is an original Nativity ministry that as Father Bob frequently and eloquently reminds us, does God’s work by serving those less fortunate members of His flock. We work distributing food, clothing and personal items to the poor and homeless both in DC (McPherson Square and tent encampments) and northern VA every Sunday morning, rain or shine. We also share Panera bread donations with local area foodbanks on Mondays and Wednesdays, and visit other DC sites on Wednesday mornings as well.

Through the generosity of a few committed parishioners, we have been able to and continue to provide bagged lunches (sandwich, banana, cookies, chips, and napkin), coffee, hot chocolate, bottled water, toilet paper, hand sanitizer, socks, undergarments, and as funds are available, hats, gloves, clothes, winter jackets, pants, shoes, sleeping bags, tarps and tents each Sunday and Wednesdays.

Our drivers and helpers leave from the Nativity parking lot after the 7:00am Mass, to distribute these lunches, supplies and donated clothing items. Those whom we have served tell us, “we know we can depend on you every Sunday to take care of us.” In truth, as much as we try, there are many who go unserved or underserved. The need is great and as everyone knows, the cost of living has stretched our budget. Join us: We need your financial support and/or your time in this effort. With winter now upon us, our ministry needs more drivers (to commit to drive once every 6 weeks) and parishioners who are willing to provide bagged lunches (we currently distribute 160 -200 lunches and 96 plus rolls of toilet paper as well as five-six cases of water weekly).

If you want to help, please contact Manuel Ponciano at 202-262-6659 or email:

Manuel Ponciano>	mamuelmar10@yahoo.com
Joe McKane >	joeinexp@gmail.com
Jim Valentine>	val6405@gmail.com
John Rubino>	john.albert.rubino@gmail.com
Jim Housel>	jchousel60@gmail.com

or leave a note in our Parish Office and one of us will get back with you shortly. If you can’t spare your time right now, you can financially contribute to the “No Hands But Yours” ministry on our parish website. Please consider doing so!! For those wishing to also lend us a hand in providing some of the items listed above, the Ministry has set up a convenient on-line means of doing so, as seen below: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080B4AAFAC22A1FA7-nohands>. All you need to do is scroll down to see what’s needed and when, check the one(s) that work for you, and then hit the orange “Submit and Sign-Up” button at the end of the page. Almost painless!! And we accept any food/adult winter clothing items after morning mass throughout the week as well...

And remember always, that “Christ has no body now but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours...”
– St Teresa of Avila



CHILDREN’S ROSARY

Rosaries and prayer books are provided. No prior knowledge of the Rosary is needed. Parents are encouraged to attend in the role of “guardian angels” of the prayer movement. Second Saturday of each month in the Training Room from 4:00 - 4:30pm.



NATIVITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL
A Blue Ribbon School of Excellence

nativityschool.org



Join Us ~ OPEN HOUSE on Sunday, January 29
10:00 am - 12:00 NOON
We Have a Seat for Your Child ~
For details, contact Shannon Murphy at (703) 455-2300,
or smurph@nativityschool.org.



Nativity Star Shines Brightly Over Nativity School

This Christmas Season – instead of viewing the pageant from home as they did last year – the audience filled the Father Martin Center, as our Nativity Stars took their talents to the stage to tell the story of Jesus’ birth. Each class played a part, singing Christmas favorites for us throughout the evening, as the Fifth Graders engaged the audience with a stellar performance from King Herod and his entourage; the Shepherds; the Three Wise Men; Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus. Heartfelt thanks to Mr. Smith, our Pageant Director and Music Teacher, and to Mrs. Peters, part of our Lunchroom Staff, who helped move the performers through their paces -- AND to our very talented Nativity Stars, performing powerfully.

Upcoming Dates At-A-Glance!

- Jan. 3: School Resumes!
- Jan. 6: High School Application Deadline
- Jan. 9: Third Grade Field Trip
- Jan. 13: 12 NOON Dismissal
- Jan. 13: Father/Father Figure Breakfast
- Jan. 16: Martin Luther King Day - No School
- Jan. 20: March for Life Day
- Jan. 20: Interims
- Jan. 21: PTO-Sponsored Talent Show
- Jan. 23: 100th Day of School!
- Jan. 29: Catholic Schools Week Begins!



Join us at Nativity to see how your child would spend his or her days here -- learning, praying, sharing, and laughing. Yes, Catholic education is worth the investment! Nativity Catholic School is committed to making Catholic education accessible to those who desire it, and offers financial assistance to make their dream come true.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Contact: *Rebecca Judge*
cym@nativityburke.org

Get connected to our Youth Ministry community by filling out the free 2022-2023 registration form. See the website to register or scan the QR codes below.

LIFE TEEN: GRADES 9-12

Sundays | 6:30-8:30pm

Dinner

Fellowship

Prayer & Formation



EDGE: GRADES 6-8

Alternating Sundays 3:30-5pm
& Fridays 7-8:30pm
See website for schedule

Meet new friends

Play games

Explore your faith



EPIPHANY PARTY & WHITE ELEPHANT - JANUARY 8

Join us for our first Youth Ministry gathering of the new year as we celebrate our annual Epiphany Party! Bring a wrapped gift under \$15 if you want to participate in the White Elephant gift exchange!

Edge 3:30-5:00pm
Life Teen 6:30-8:30pm



PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The Prayer Shawl meeting for this month will be held on Monday morning, January 9th at 9:30am in the Fr. Ready room. All are welcome, hope to see you there!

Join Bishop Burbidge at 9am on January 20th for a Mass in Defense of Human Life

The morning of the March for Life



Pilgrimage to Saint John Paul II National Shrine

Join us on Sunday, February 5th from 10 AM- 4 PM at Saint John II National Shrine. Couples will come together for Mass, Adoration, Prayer at the Hour of Mercy followed by the Chaplet, Special Presentation on Marriage, Sacred Art Tour, and "A Gift of Love: The Life of Saint John Paul II" exhibit. \$25/couple.

Contact Jennifer Sturgeon for more details:
jsturgeon@nativityburke.org

The Nativity Knights of Columbus invites every family of our parish to engage in the Consecration to the Holy Family at the end of all Masses on New Year's Day weekend. It is our hope that this process may help strengthen our families and to devote ourselves to the ideal model of familial love set by Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Overview:

To help families live out the joy of Christ, KofC Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William E. Lori has composed a prayer through which families will come together to consecrate themselves under the protection of the Holy Family. In this prayer, we ask for the aid or intercession of the perfect son Jesus Christ, Mary the perfect mother, and Joseph who is a model for every father. Preparing for the Consecration to the Holy Family is not a single event. It is choosing a way of life for your family. Through this consecration, each participant is consciously choosing to be a beacon of God's love through his Church.

How to prepare for a Consecration to the Holy Family

Preparation for a Consecration to the Holy Family involves deciding that you are not only dedicating your family to the Holy Family's intercession but also acknowledging that your family is sacred.

The decision to consecrate your family needs to be intentional and a process through which you completely surrender your family to God through the Holy Family. You are accepting the truth that salvation history was changed forever by a family and that through your domestic church, you are called to exemplify their example.

Four suggested steps before Praying the Consecration to the Holy Family:

Discuss the importance of this consecration as a family and why you are doing it.

Each member of your family is strongly encouraged to go to the Sacrament of Confession.

As a family, intentionally choose something to fast from. The fast can be for at least a week. As our physical bodies are drawn to things of the world, it is strongly encouraged that you fast from something that you would normally do or consume. Fasting helps to discipline our minds and hearts to refrain from secular activities and be more focused on God.

○ Lord Jesus,
you lived in the home of Mary and Joseph in Nazareth.
There you grew in age, wisdom and grace
as you prepared to fulfill your mission
as our Redeemer.
We entrust our family to you.

○ Blessed Mary,
you are the Mother of our Savior.
At Nazareth you cared for Jesus
and nurtured him in the peace and joy of your home.
We entrust our family to you.

○ Saint Joseph,
you provided a secure and loving home for Jesus and Mary,
and gave us a model of fatherhood
while showing us the dignity of work.
We entrust our family to you.

Holy Family,
we consecrate ourselves and our family to you.
May we be completely united
in a love that is lasting, faithful
and open to the gift of new life.
Help us to grow in virtue,
to forgive one another from our hearts,
and to live in peace all our days.
Keep us strong in faith, persevering in prayer,
diligent in our work, and generous toward those in need.
May our home, O Holy Family,
truly become a domestic church
where we reflect your example in our daily life. Amen.
Jesus, Mary and Joseph, pray for us!

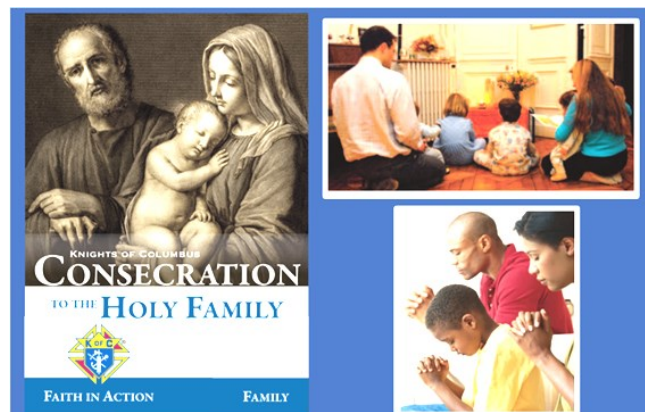


Prayer composed by Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, Supreme Chaplain.

Prepare for the commitment you are making. Consecration to the Holy Family is not a single event. You have chosen a way of life for your family. You and your family are consciously choosing to be a beacon of light of God's love through His Church.

Go to the Nativity Website to learn more about this activity:
<https://nativityburke.org/category/upcoming-events/>

At the end of each Mass on the weekend of Dec 31 / Jan 1, the celebrant will lead the congregation in this prayer to consecrate families to the Holy Family:



HOW TO *High School*

7th & 8th Grade Workshop

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- Organize Your Planner
- Enjoy High School
- Find Your Thing
- Explore Your Brain
- Achieve Great Things



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Snow Date: Saturday January 21, 2023

Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother Of God

Numbers 6:22-27
Ps 67:2-3,5-6,8
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:16-21

Monday January 2
Sts. Basil the Great & Gregory of Nazianzen

1 John 2:22-28
Ps 98:1-4
John 1:19-28

Tuesday January 3

1 John 2:29-3:6
Ps 98:1,3cd-6
John 1:29-34

Wednesday January 4
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

1 John 3:7-10
Ps 98:1,7-9
John 1:35-42

Thursday January 5
St. John Neumann

1 John 3:11-21
Ps 100:1b-5
John 1:43-51

Friday January 6

1 John 5:5-13
Ps 147:12-15,19-20
Mark 1:7-11
or Luke 3:23-38

Saturday January 7

1 John 5:14-21
Ps 149:1-5,6a,9b
John 2:1-11



Today, consecrate the new year to the Mother of Christ, to her protection and help, asking God to make this a year of many blessings.

In the first reading, God teaches Moses how to pass blessings onto others. The responsorial psalm includes a request for God to bless us. The second reading describes the greatest blessing we've received: our adoption by God the Father.

The people who heard the testimony of the shepherds in the Gospel reading were amazed. How often are you amazed by the Lord? Awe comes from recognizing Jesus in everything. With Jesus, we're blessed even in situations that feel like curses, because he is with us.

To experience this, we have to keep our eyes on Jesus at all times. Look past the problems: There is the victorious Jesus already working on your behalf! He was born for your sake and gave up his life for you; of course he is also doing everything else that will provide God's goodness to you! Look past your emotional reactions to hardships: There is the peace of Christ! It's available

when you decide to trust in the love and the wisdom of Christ. Look past the person who is sinning against you: There is Jesus comforting you! He speaks to you through scripture, through Holy Mass, through perhaps a counselor, and many other ways.

In every situation, keep your eyes on Jesus so that you can see his hand reaching toward you to bless you.

We can learn from Mary to look past the obvious and see God's hidden blessings. When Mary looked at the shepherds, did she see scruffy, stinky strangers? Of course not. She saw numerous blessings. Now look at the scruffy people in your own life – through Mary's eyes. How many blessings do *you* see?

Mary the Mother of God our Savior wants to show you the countless blessings that come from knowing her Son. Ask for her help in keeping your focus on Jesus in the new year.

Reflect & Discuss:

† Count your blessings. Make a list of everything that's good in your life, including past blessings that give you warm, happy memories.

† The Lord has done great things for you. How does this reassure you today?

† What will you do this year to become more aware of God's blessings?

† In what ways has Mary revealed Jesus to you?

**CON MARIA: ¡ PAZ Y
AÑO NUEVO!**
Santa María Madre de Dios
Javier Leoz



¿Qué tal la noche vieja, hermanos? ¿Qué tal el brindis y la familia? ¿Cómo están esas aspiraciones que, en esta mañana/tarde, traemos hasta el altar? ¿No se habrán esfumado en el intervalo desde ayer a hoy, verdad?

Quiero comenzar, amigos, este primer día del Año 2008, invitándolos a vivir con intensidad estas primeras horas: ¡FELIZ AÑO NUEVO! ¡HAGAMOS POSIBLE LA PAZ! ¡SANTA MARIA VIENE CON NOSOTROS!

1. Dejemos atrás lo que ya no tiene remedio. Intentemos, como si fuésemos paredes recién pintadas, reservar un paño limpio para que, Jesús, pueda forjar obras grandes en nosotros. Para que la paz, en nuestra mente limpia y lúcida, además de pensamiento, sea un firme convencimiento de ocuparnos por ella.

Un año viejo se ha cerrado. ¿Que han existido capítulos con alguna que otra falta en nuestra forma de vivir, expresarnos, creer o lo que sea? Dios, que es ante todo Padre, nos da una nueva oportunidad. El, que es Dios del tiempo, que maneja a su antojo el movimiento del reloj (aunque nos parezca que somos nosotros quienes le damos cuerda) asienta ante nosotros doce meses que son, como 12 oportunidades, para intentarlo de nuevo.

¿Intentar el que? El sacar adelante las asignaturas pendientes que, por diversas circunstancias, han quedado en la carterita de nuestro ser discipulado. Una de ellas, y estaremos todos de acuerdo, es la necesidad de la paz. Un año, con daño, no es vida. ¿Por qué no rezamos con coraje y sinceridad al Señor, para que allá donde estemos seamos portadores y alfareros del bien? ¿Que por qué digo esto? Porque tengo temor que, al hablar de la paz del mundo, olvidemos la fraternidad con los hermanos que más cerca tenemos; porque me asalta un cierto miedo de que, al rezar por la paz en el próximo o lejano Oriente, dejemos de lado el cercano continente que son nuestras familias, compañeros de trabajo, alumnos, feligreses, sacerdotes, ciudadanos, vecinos..... ¡Claro que tenemos que orar por la paz en esta Jornada Mundial! Pero también es verdad, amigos, que hemos de pedir al Señor y, especialmente a María, que nos regale el gran don de la paz con nosotros mismos. La persona que está en paz consigo misma, irradia paz. Y, en el mundo, en la política, en la iglesia, en la familia y en todos los ámbitos, hoy más que nunca, son necesarias personas que estén primero en armonía y en paz consigo mismas.

2. En este primer día del año pidamos a la Reina de la Paz, a Santa María Madre de Dios, que no nos conformemos con ser pacíficos. Que trabajemos, además, por conseguir esa conciliación que es garantía de derechos y de vida, de futuro y de alegría.

¿Para qué un nuevo año si, del viejo año, seguimos arrastrando las antiguas guerras? Intentemos, de verdad, allá donde nos movamos –como decía San Francisco de Asís- ser instrumentos de paz, de perdón, de fe y de tantos valores que no están de vigentes, ni en la educación para la ciudadanía ni en otros tantos modales de muchos ciudadanos de a pie.

No quiero extenderme demasiado. Estamos celebrando con intensidad esta Navidad. Que no sean burbuja de una noche, los abrazos, los regalos, los besos o las llamadas o SMS por teléfono. Entre otras cosas porque, el día siguiente, el día que nos aguarda, la semana que viene, el mes que nos espera...pondrá, de 366 días.

al descubierto si –la última noche del año- estábamos movidos por la esperanza, animados por la copa o adornados por el celofán barato.

Que Santa María, la Madre de Dios, la que vivió con paz y en paz toda su existencia, nos acompañe en este peregrinar de 12 meses

¿Que es difícil mantener el “tipo de la fe” “los deseos ofrecidos o recibidos” en la noche más veterana del año 2007?

¡Miremos a María! Con la Madre todo se puede. En la Madre siempre hay respuestas. No nos ha de faltar ni su mano, cuando la nuestra decaiga en su intento de alcanzar los buenos propósitos, ni tampoco su voz ni su protección cuando el desánimo salga a nuestro encuentro.

Y es que la paz y el año nuevo, ¡hay que decirlo alto y claro! serán realidades si nos dejamos llevar por la que supo mucho de paz y vivió como auténtica novedad y entusiasmo todo lo que Dios le puso al frente.



**QUIERO DEJAR, SEÑOR
(Oración para Año Nuevo)**
Javier Leoz

QUIERO DEJAR SEÑOR EN EL AÑO QUE AHORA ACABA

La envidia que me hace soñar con aquello que no me corresponde
e infravalorar los golpes de suerte del que camina junto a mí
La violencia que me convierte en verdugo de innumerables prójimos
La indiferencia ante el que vive horas amargas
y encuentra como respuesta el vacío de mis obras y palabras
La pereza en el afán de superación
Las manos que se cierran ante rostros que sufren
El corazón altanero y ambicioso, hipócrita y egoísta
El pensamiento por lo puramente efímero
La debilidad que me hace vulgar y uniforme en medio del mundo
La mentira que oculta la veracidad de las cosas
La tristeza por los proyectos truncados
La desesperanza que trae mis limitaciones y carácter
La tibieza en mis actitudes
El disfraz que disimula mi franqueza

QUIERO RECOGER, SEÑOR, EN EL AÑO QUE AHORA COMIENZA

Un poco de tu paz para que sean días de sosiego
La conformidad para que no sufra con aquello que carezco
La fraternidad para ver al otro como un amigo y no como un adversario
La fe para no ser esclavo de aquellos grilletes con los que aprietan las dudas
La audacia para resolver los problemas que me asalten
La profundidad para meditar y escutar los misterios
La fortaleza para ser yo mismo
La originalidad para sentirme siempre vivo
La verdad para no ser esclavo de mis falsedades
La alegría para ser portador de optimismo en el mundo que me rodea
La esperanza para soñar con un nuevo hombre y un nuevo orden
La coherencia para que no exista distancia entre el digo y hago
La nitidez para no ser malinterpretado en la percepción de las cosas y de los hechos
El amor para saber que es una puerta por la que se sirve en la tierra y se entra en el cielo
El perdón para comprender que es peso que quito de mis hombros

¿Cuándo festejamos a María, Madre de Dios?
Dogma Mariano. María Madre de Dios

¿Existe la festividad de María, Madre de Dios?
¿Por qué se celebra?

Por: Tere Fernández | Fuente: Catholic.net

El primero de enero celebramos a María como Madre de Dios.

María fue la elegida para ser Madre de Cristo y aceptó esta misión al decir “sí” a Dios. Festejamos el tener una Madre en el cielo que nos ayuda y auxilia en nuestras necesidades y nos ama.

Historia

Todo año que se inicia es “Año del Señor”. Sólo con Él se construye el puente que nos conduce del tiempo a la eternidad. Este día, como todos los demás días, debemos rezar a Dios con infinita confianza. Nuestra vida espiritual debe crecer cada año que pasa. Por esto hoy, que es el primer día del año, le pedimos a María Santísima que nos ayude a lograrlo.

Este día es día de precepto, hay que ir a misa. La misa está dedicada a honrar a María, Madre de Dios y de la Iglesia.

María Madre de Dios. María era una joven Israelita que vivía en Nazaret de Galilea y, como todos los Israelitas, esperaba que se cumpliera la promesa de Dios de mandar un Salvador al mundo. María no era una mujer como todas, pues desde siempre Dios había pensado en ella y había nacido sin pecado original.

El Papa Juan Pablo II a lo largo de su Pontificado nos ha recordado constantemente la grandeza de María. Nos recuerda que estamos bajo la protección de María que es Madre de Dios y Madre Nuestra. Gracias al “sí” de María, Dios se hizo hombre.

Con su respuesta, María cambió el rumbo de la historia. Dijo “sí” aceptando con alegría la voluntad de Dios, entregándose a sí misma como colaboradora de Dios y de su plan de salvación.

María fue la elegida para ser la Madre de Dios y ella respondió al llamado “He aquí la esclava del Señor, hágase en mí según tu palabra”.

La Virgen María nos ayuda a vencer la tentación, conservar el estado de gracia y la amistad con Dios para poder llegar al Cielo.

Si elegimos vivir como hijos de María debemos adoptar varias actitudes:

Abrir nuestro corazón a su amor:

Es dejarnos querer, abandonarnos a su cuidado con total confianza. Ella no se desanima a pesar de nuestros caprichos y debilidades.

Mirarla como nuestra Madre:

Hablarle de nuestras alegrías y penas, contarle nuestros problemas y pedirle ayuda para superarlos.

Demostrarle nuestro cariño:

Hacer lo que a Ella le gustaría que hicieras, que es lo que Dios quiere de nosotros. Acudir a Ella a lo largo del día nos puede ayudar grandemente.

Confiar plenamente en ella:

Todas las gracias que Jesús nos da pasan por las manos de María, y ella mejor que nadie intercede ante su Hijo por nuestras necesidades.

Imitar sus virtudes:

Es la mejor manera de demostrarle nuestro amor.

Debemos aprovechar esta fiesta para ofrecerle a la Virgen el año que comienza, para pedirle su ayuda de Madre para vencer las dificultades y agradecerle su presencia y cuidado maternal en cada momento de nuestras vidas. Al acudir a la Eucaristía, donde está Dios vivo, pedirle que nos ayude a permanecer cerca de María todo el año, porque fue Él quien nos la dio como madre desde el pie de la cruz.

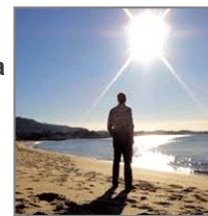
Algunas personas dirán que María no es especial, que eso de que fue Virgen es cuento. Recuerda que fue Jesús mismo quien nos la dejó como Madre (Jn 19, 25-27).

Además, honrar a la Madre es siempre dar gusto al Hijo. A Jesús pues, le agrada cuando decimos cosas bonitas de María, como el “Ave María” del Rosario.



¿Qué deseo en un año nuevo?
Este año será distinto si te abres a Dios, si rompes con tu egoísmo, si empiezas a vivir no para ti mismo, sino para tantos corazones que te encontrarás este año.

Por: P. Fernando Pascual LC | Fuente: Catholic.net



La pregunta me deja un poco inquieto. Porque sé que el “año nuevo” es simplemente una hoja de calendario, un cambio en los números, una simple tradición humana. Porque el tiempo escapa a nuestro control, y fluye sin cesar.

Pero casi todos, al llegar el año nuevo, damos una mirada al año que termina y soñamos en el año que comienza.

Lo pasado queda allí: fijo, inmodificable, casi pétreo. Con sus momentos buenos y sus fracasos, con sus sueños realizados y con los sueños que se evaporaron en el vacío, con las ayudas que me ofrecieron y con las ayudas que pude ofrecer a otros, con mis omisiones y mis cobardías.

Lo futuro inicia, como inició ayer, como inició hace un mes, como iniciará mañana.

Cada instante se presenta como una oportunidad que en parte depende de mi prudencia y de mis decisiones. En otra buena parte, depende de las decisiones de otros. En los dos casos, y aunque no siempre nos demos cuenta, depende de Dios.

De nuevo, ¿qué deseo en un año nuevo? Desearía la paz en Tierra Santa. Para que nadie privase a nadie de su tierra, de su casa, de su familia. Para que las religiones fueran vividas como lo que son: un camino para unir a los hombres bajo la luz de Dios. Para que la tierra donde vivió, murió y resucitó Cristo testimoniase con un estilo de vida nuevo la gran belleza del Evangelio.

Luego, desearía la paz en tantos lugares del planeta. Especialmente en África, donde todavía unos poderosos venden armas para la muerte pero no ofrecen comida para los hambrientos.

Querría, además, que desapareciese el aborto en todos los países del mundo. Lo cual no es ningún sueño imposible: basta con aprender a vivir responsablemente la vocación al amor para que ningún hijo sea visto como un “enemigo” o un obstáculo en el camino de la propia vida. Porque lo mejor que podemos hacer es vivir para los demás. Porque cada niño pide un poquito de amor y de respeto. Porque cada madre que ha empezado a serlo merece ayuda y apoyo, para que no le falten las cosas que más necesite durante los meses de embarazo y los primeros años de su hijo.

En este nuevo año me gustaría dialogar con quien piensa de modo distinto en un clima de respeto, sin insultos, sin desprecios, sin zancadillas. Porque si él y si yo somos humanos, porque si él y si yo queremos encontrar la verdad, podemos ayudarnos precisamente con una palabra nacida desde los corazones que saben escucharse y, más a fondo, que saben amarse...

El año que inicia querría tener más energías, más entusiasmo, más convicción, para enseñar a los otros lo que para mí es el tesoro verdadero: mi fe católica. Enseñarla, sobre todo, con mi vida. Querría ser, en ese sentido, más coherente, más bueno, más abierto, más disponible, más cercano. Especialmente cuando me encuentre con un pobre, con un enfermo, con una persona triste o desesperada, con quien llora porque sabe lo que muchos no se atreven a reconocer: que ha pecado. Porque sólo cuando me ponga ante mis faltas con honestidad clara y completa, descubro mi miseria y comprendo la de los otros. Y porque cuando reconozco mi miseria y la ajena puedo entender que necesitamos al único que puede limpiarnos con su palabra llena de perdón y de esperanza: Dios.


¿Qué deseo en un año nuevo? Quizá deseo demasiado. Quizá he soñado despierto. Quizá me he dejado llevar por una emoción inconsistente. Mientras, el reloj sigue su marcha, y, sin saberlo, me dice: este año será un poco distinto si te abres a Dios, si rompes con tu egoísmo, si empiezas a vivir no para ti mismo, sino para tantos corazones que encontrarás en los mil cruces de camino de este año que está iniciando...

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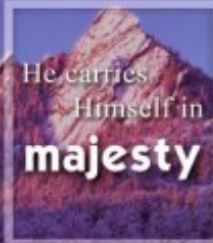
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