

Hope



**6400 Nativity Lane,
Burke, Virginia 22015
nativityburke.org**



VERY REV. MSGR. ROBERT C. CILINSKI, PASTOR
REV. EDWARD BRESNAHAN, PAROCHIAL VICAR
REV. JONATHAN BENNETT, PAROCHIAL VICAR
**REV. CEDRIC P. WILSON, ASSISTING PRIEST/
SPANISH MINISTRY**
DEC. 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 & Family Ministries/Social Action Ministries
Rebecca Judge, Director of Youth Ministry
Mary Castellano, Director of Social Media
Anna Lisa Licud, Coordinator Marriage Enrichment
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.
Maria Ammirati, Religious Education Coordinator
Fania Jimenez, Administrative Assistant

CATHOLIC CHARITIES COUNSELOR

Marguerite Turner, MS, LPC (703) 454-2415 or
mmtturner@ccda.net

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
R.E. OFFICE: (703) 455-0372
R.E. 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./
1:00 p.m./5:30 p.m.
Monthly Sensory Mass on the
second Sunday of every month
at the 1:00pm Mass

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**

**A Message from our Pastor
Msgr. Bob Cilinski**



*“May the Lord make you increase in love for one another”
THES. - 3:12*

My dear parishioners,

Today we begin the beautiful season of Advent. “It is now the hour to wake from sleep. You must be prepared.” As we begin a new liturgical year, our scriptures are very focused on our role—we must be ready, we must be awake, we must be aware, not only of Christ to come again, but also of the Christ who is in our midst.

We are told to stay awake and to keep our eyes open. We need only look at our neighbor in the pews to see an opportunity for kindness, caring and charity. In this season of lavish giving, we can turn our attention to the least of our brothers and sisters and dedicate ourselves to relieve their suffering (Poor Boxes, Giving Tree, Catholic Charities). In this way we can give Advent its due - a time of watching and waiting, full of expectation of the Lord’s coming. Let us not let our preparing for Christ be lost in the holiday bustle and stress. Trust in the Lord. Welcome Him in those around you at home and in the stranger whom we meet. May patience and calm be our Advent gift of peace that will allow us to see Christ everywhere.

We welcome the S.P.R.E.D. community from across the diocese to Nativity next Sunday at our 1:00 pm Sensory Mass and celebrate with our children who have special needs. Nativity offers S.P.R.E.D. as part of our Religious Education program. There are 26 students participating and many catechists. Many thanks to the Sisters and to Joyce Kelly who coordinates the program. It is an example of extravagant love and storing up treasure in heaven.

Today we begin our new level of giving for our offertory renewal. Thank you for your sacrificed giving!

Love and blessings,

Bob Cilinski
Msgr. Robert C. Cilinski
Pastor

Advent Wreath Prayers



If you are setting up an Advent wreath in your home this year, here are some prayers you could say while you light its candles. You may say these before or after a meal, when waking up, before going to bed, or whenever you and the members of your household gather for prayer. Before you say the prayer, read and talk over the Gospel you heard at Sunday Mass that week.

Week 1: O God, who asks us to be watchful and alert because we do not know when you will come, let this candle give us light and help us stay awake. At those times when we you ask us to act, give us strength to respond at once. Through Christ our Lord.

Week 2: O God, who sent John The Baptist to proclaim a baptism of repentance, let these two candles prepare the way for the Lord within us. Forgive our sins and fill us with your Holy Spirit. Make us ready to celebrate the birth of our Savior. Through Christ our Lord.

Week 3: O God, who sent John The Baptist as a voice crying out in the desert, open our ears to hear his message as we light the pink candle. Shape our lives so that they will become a straight path to you. Make us ready to greet your Son when he comes to us. Through Christ our Lord.

Week 4: O God, who sent your angel Gabriel to announce good news to Mary, make us happy with your word of life. Let our hearts be so filled with love for you that they glow with the lights of these four candles. May we live in a way that will please you. Through Christ our Lord.

Sick / Homebound Visits

Are you or someone you know sick and/or homebound for any reason? We can arrange home visits from the parish and provide prayer and the sacraments. We would love to bring God’s Grace and Peace to anyone in difficult times.

Please contact Cat Sands, Pastoral Minister, at csands@nativityburke.org to schedule a visit.

Breakfast with Santa
The Knights of Columbus invite all the Children of Nativity Parish to join them in the Parish Cafeteria on:
Saturday morning, December 7th from 9:30AM to 11:00AM for fun, fellowship and a chance to meet and have breakfast with Santa.

There will be a continental breakfast, Christmas crafts and a little something from Santa for all boys and girls who attend. So that Santa knows you will be there, we request you let his elves know that you plan to attend; send them your family name, and the number of children and adults coming. Please email: 24oedwyworkhard@gmail.com.

Together in **Hope**

2024 Parish Christmas Collection

Make a gift today!
Donate online at ccda.net/Christmas or scan the QR code

The Women of Nativity (WON) Annual Advent Tree

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO CHOSE AN ORNAMENT THIS YEAR! NOW WE ARE COUNTING ON YOU TO PLEASE RETURN THE GIFTS TO THE CHURCH NARTHEX THIS WEEKEND AND NEXT.

NOVEMBER 30 & DECEMBER 1 AND DECEMBER 7 & 8. WRAPPING INSTRUCTIONS FOR EACH GIFT ARE ON THE BACK OF THE ORNAMENT. SEVERAL OF THE ORGANIZATIONS WE SERVICE HAVE REQUESTED THE GIFTS BE UNWRAPPED FOR EASIER DISTRIBUTION AND TO MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THEIR PROGRAM INVOLVING YOUNG CHILDREN. PLEASE SECURELY ATTACH THE ORNAMENT YOU HAVE CHOSEN FROM THE TREE TO THE GIFT. THIS HELPS US GREATLY IN SEPARATING AND BAGGING THE GIFTS FOR THE VARIOUS GROUPS.

GIFT CARDS SHOULD BE PLACED IN AN ENVELOPE WITH THE RECIPIENT MARKED ON THE OUTSIDE. IT IS EASIER TO HANDLE GIFT CARDS IF THEY ARE NOT WRAPPED. IT IS IMPORTANT TO RETURN GIFTS ON THE SCHEDULED DATES TO MEET THE DELIVERY.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE CHARITIES: THE LAST DAY TO RETURN THE GIFTS IS DECEMBER 8, IT WOULD BE SAD IF WE COULD NOT FULFILL A CHILD'S REQUEST. AGAIN, WE THANK OUR CARING PARISHIONERS WHO WILL MAKE THIS A SPECIAL AND HAPPY HOLIDAY FOR MANY OF OUR LESS FORTUNATE NEIGHBORS!

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT PATRICE CHADBOURNE AT PATDAVCHAD@YAHOO.COM OR KATHY MC HUGH AT IRISH5579@GMAIL.COM WITH ANY QUESTIONS.



Pray the Pro-Life Rosary with Us!



When: Usually Fridays after Nativity's 7:30am Mass. Where: 900 S. Washington Street, Falls Church. Join Nativity in peacefully praying the Pro-Life Rosary on the sidewalk in front of the Falls Church abortion facility for mothers in need and for the protection of human life.

Nativity Creation Care Fair Trade Holiday Market

In the school cafeteria • 6400 Nativity Lane, Burke
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30 ✨ 4:00-7:00 PM
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1 ✨ 8:00 AM-5:30 PM



We Believe...

- People and the planet should not be exploited for the things we buy.
- People should be paid fairly for their work.
- Small, local businesses are the heartbeat of our communities.
- Our everyday purchases can have a positive impact on the world.
- Every product has a story.
- Your purchase is an important part of the fair trade cycle.

Buying fair is an extension of our faith.

Fair Trade Winds will donate 10% of sales to Nativity Creation Care Sustainability and Garden programs.

Reusable fabric bags donated by Virginia Green Baggers—while supplies last.

QUESTIONS OR WANT TO VOLUNTEER?
NATIVITYCREATIONCARE@GMAIL.COM

WWW.FAIRTRADEWINDS.NET
Cash, check, or credit cards accepted.

High School Retreat December 20 - 22



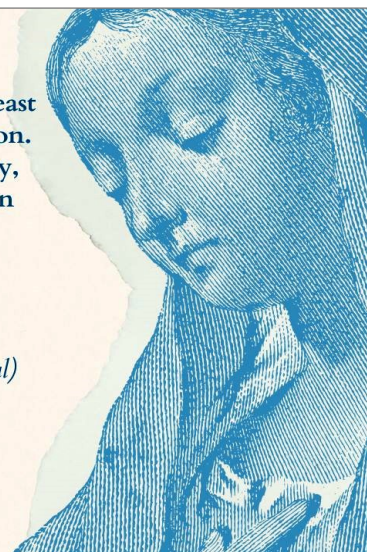
Come be renewed in your faith, build community, and unwind in the breathtaking views of the Potomac. You can expect a weekend of small groups connections, Mass, adoration & confession, games, and great food! Register on the parish website by December 10.

Contact Rebecca at cym@nativityburke.org



Sunday, December 8 is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. As the feast falls on a Sunday, this Holy Day of Obligation will be observed on Monday, December 9.

Mass Times:
7:30am, 9:00am, 12:00pm
5:00pm and 7:00pm (bilingual)



**VISIT THE NATIVITY GIFT SHOP
FOR ALL YOUR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SHOPPING**

Besides delicious Fair Trade coffee and chocolate, the Gift Shop has ingredients for split pea soup, lentil soup, and Firehouse chili. These packets are from the Women’s Bean Project of the USA where impoverished women learn the skills required for gainful employment and self sufficiency, in a safe and accepting work environment.

The Gift shop also carries many wonderful Advent & Christmas items: ornaments, advent candles, Nativity sets, cards etc. Open after all Masses. (except the 5:30pm Sunday Mass, volunteers urgently needed)



**Family Ministry
Calendar Updates**

In place of our regular monthly gatherings on 12/7 and 1/4, we invite families:

***Attend “Breakfast with Santa”
on 12/7 at 9:30am**

***Join the email list to find out about a meet-up
in January outside of the Christmas break.**



 **Register for Breakfast
with Santa**

 **Join the Family Ministry
email list**

**Monthly Sensory Mass | Next Sunday - December 8
At 1:00 pm - Nativity Catholic Church**

In an effort to embrace and welcome the neurodiverse members of our community, Nativity Catholic Church is hosting a monthly Sensory Mass on the second Sunday of every month at the 1:00 pm Mass. All are welcome to attend! A special invitation is extended to any person in need of sensory accommodations.

A Sensory Mass requires a welcoming stigma-free environment and accommodations to help reduce over-stimulation and sensory overload. The Mass will include softer music, dimmer lighting, pictorial resources, and self-regulation tools for those with special needs. Families are encouraged to bring any regulation tool (noise reduction items, quiet fidgets, flexible seating items, weighted objects, etc.) that can support focused attention and provide comfort to a person so they can feel safe in their environment and they can better participate in the Holy Mass.



**Nativity Catholic Church Invites you to a
Celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
on Saturday, December 14th at 6:45pm**

Mass will be followed by a procession to the Father Martin Center and a reception. There will be a Mariachi Band alongside Latin American dancers. All are invited!

**Iglesia de la Natividad te invita a una celebración de
nuestra Señora de Guadalupe El sábado 14 de diciembre a
las 6:45pm. La Misa comienza a las 6:45pm, seguida por
una procesión al Centro Padre Martin (gimnasio).**

**Habrà una banda de mariachis junto a
los Bailarines Folklorico.**

Invocamos tu intercesión, Mader, nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Nos apareces de maneras que podemos entender. Oramos por todos nuestros hermanos católicos cristianos que sufren persecución religiosa por su fe. Les pedimos que los cubran en su manto, les den coraje de corazón y firme fe en la presencia de su hijo en su sufrimiento.

PRIME TIME SINGLE CATHOLICS (PTSC)

We are a social group, mostly aged 60 and over. (35 to 59? Ask about our free associate-membership group.) Meet us for: Ice & Lights Show--Tailgate Party at Cameron Run Park (Dec. 1); Square Dancing at Greenspring Village (Dec. 3, 17); Christmas Party (Dec. 7); Lunch (Dec. 12); Mass at Blessed Sacrament Church (Dec. 15); Walk at Frying Pan Park (Dec. 18); Christmas Concert at Constitution Hall (Dec. 22); Christmas Dinner (Dec. 25); Christ House meal (Dec. 28); New Year's Eve daytime celebration (Dec. 31); New Year's Day lunch (Jan. 1).

For details, visit our website: bit.ly/ptsc.

With questions or to RSVP, email Tom at ptscnva@gmail.com.

CALLING ALL 8-12TH GRADERS!



AUDITIONS

AND INTEREST MEETING FOR THE ARLINGTON DIOCESE
ONE ACT PLAY AND SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

For Thespians, Film Makers and Stage/Tech Crew
Music Room: Thursday, Dec. 12, 7-8:30 p.m.

Info: Barbara Schwartz, theaterenativityburke.org

nativity players theater ministry

Interested in advertising in the bulletin? Call Mike Jurosky at 717-648-5996 or email: mjurosky@diocesan.com

You're Invited

*Advent's
Journey
of
Hope*



Experience the joyful Advent season of the coming of Christ by reflecting on the Gospels, meditating on the music, and experiencing the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. A perfect time for us to reflect on our journey as we welcome Christ into our hearts. Join us and Mark Forrest, Irish Tenor, for this evening of prayer.

Location: Nativity Catholic Church
6400 Nativity Lane, Burke, VA 22015
Date: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 Time: 7:00 PM
Contact: 703-455-2400



MARK FORREST.COM



**MASS INTENTIONS &
MASS SCHEDULE**
"We are God's People"
1 Peter 2:10

Monday, December 2nd

7:30 am † Rita Johnson

Tuesday, December 3rd

7:30 am † Mary Ann Pilot

12:00 pm † Lisa Bubak

Wednesday, December 4th

7:30 am † John Michael Woods

Thursday, December 5th

7:30 am † Mary Weinkauf

12:00 pm † John Heavy

Friday, December 6th

7:30 am † Nicolas & Virginia Gavilan

9:00 am † Bertha Cueva

Saturday, December 7th

9:00 am † Rosalinda & Mario Cavazos Geraldine

5:00 pm † Larry Brindza

7:00 pm † Jaime B. Ruiz

Sunday, December 8th

7:00 am † Joan Boos

9:00 am † Helen Bubak

11:00 am † Conner McGowan

1:00 pm Parishioners (*Sensory Mass*)

5:30 pm † Gloria Summers

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



**A message from Nativity Creation Care Ministry
The Fair Trade Shopping Event is finally here!**

Nativity Creation Care Ministry invites you to make a difference with your holiday shopping this year! The ministry is sponsoring a Fair Trade Shopping event in the Nativity School cafeteria this weekend.

Please consider all your gift giving needs and shop the Fair Trade sale in the school cafeteria on Saturday November 30 from 4:00-7:00 pm and on Sunday December 1 from 8:00 am-5:30 pm. Haitian metal art, clothing accessories, one of a kind jewelry, holiday décor, household items, children's items, cookie and soup mixes, coffee and more will be offered—each item has a story to tell about the artisans who created it. Fair Trade is endorsed as a means of sustainable development by Catholic Relief Services and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. Bring your visiting family and friends! Credit cards accepted.

If you absolutely can't make it in person or if you think of additional gift needs after you get home, you can still shop online at www.fairtradewinds.net and your purchase will make a difference to these Fair Trade artisans. In addition, Fair Trade Winds will donate 10% of sales to Nativity Creation Care's sustainability and garden programs. Use code NATIVITY2024 at checkout through Monday December 9. Please share with your friends and family! Questions? nativitycreationcare@gmail.com.



**NATIVITY ITALIAN HERITAGE &
CULTURAL SOCIETY
FESTA DI NATALE**

**DINNER AND GALA EVENT ON DECEMBER 7 AT 7:00PM,
DOORS OPEN AT 6:30PM. LIVE MUSIC FEATURING LAURA FARRELL,
DINNER CATERED BY BOYD & PARKER EVENTS.**

TICKET AND EVENT INFORMATION:

**TICKETS ARE \$42 AND ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE USING THE QR CODE
OR LINK BELOW. THERE ARE STILL A FEW TICKETS AVAILABLE!
FOR MORE INFORMATION OR IF YOU ARE HAVING DIFFICULTY ACCESSING
THE ONLINE FEATURE YOU CAN CONTACT:**

MARTIN NOVAK AT 703-371-6693 OR JAISON HARRIS AT 856-466-5037

[HTTP://HTTPS://EVENTS.EVENTGROOVE.COM/EVENT/FESTA-DI-NATALE-93226](http://EVENTS.EVENTGROOVE.COM/EVENT/FESTA-DI-NATALE-93226)



Follow Bishop Burbidge on X!
Bishop Burbidge has over 25,000 followers on Twitter! His daily reflections and posts are popular and insightful. Follow him @BishopBurbidge.

**ECHO Collection NEXT weekend 7/8 December
Food Room Most Needed Items**

ECHO's Food Room continues to break records. We collected 495 lbs on November 2/3.

- Choose sizes appropriate for our average family size of four.
- Include an assortment of food to ensure a variety of items.
- We are short on many other items such as personal care products and the items listed below.

ECHO's policy is to not give expired, open or repackaged food to clients. PLEASE do not bring these items or glass jars!!

Protein Items, e.g., can chicken, Spam, chili, Tin Fish (tuna, sardines, salmon, etc.), Canned Fruit, Bagged Beans (black, red, or garbanzo preferred), Lentils, Spaghetti (pasta and sauce) Instant and Ground Coffee, Canned Tomatoes, Tomato (paste and Tomato Sauce), Baked Beans, Bagged Rice (white, jasmine or basmati), Instant (Box) Potatoes, Crackers, Ramen, Can milk, shelf stable milk, Boxed Pasta, Juice (Bottles or box), Tea (Green, Herbal or Black), Healthy Snacks, Spices (garlic, onion, cinnamon, salt, pepper), Masa (Corn) Flour, Boxed cereal, Lemon or Lime Juice, Jelly and Honey, Tortillas, Cooking Oil, Brown Paper Bags, Reusable Grocery Bags. Children's Toothbrushes, Laundry Detergent, Toilet Paper, Deodorant, Shampoo, Facial Tissues, Dish Soap, Paper Towels Body/Hand Lotion, Band Aids, Shaving Cream/Razors, Diapers - Sizes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, Baby Wipes, Sanitary Napkins.

NATIVITY CHRISTMAS BAZAAR
sponsored by the Craft Group

THE ANNUAL NATIVITY CHRISTMAS BAZAAR WILL AGAIN BE OFFERING VARIOUS ITEMS FOR SALE SUCH AS:
SCARVES, HATS, SWEATERS, BABY ITEMS & BLANKETS, CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS & DECORATIONS, AND MANY OTHER GREAT GIFTS. SO PLEASE STOP BY AND GET A HEAD START ON YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING!!

LOCATION: FR. READY ROOM
WHEN: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14TH FROM 9:00AM TO 1:00PM AND AFTER THE 5:00PM MASS.
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15TH AFTER THE 7:00AM, 9:00AM, 11:00AM AND 1:00PM MASSES.

ALL PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT NATIVITY MINISTRIES AND VARIOUS COMMUNITY CHARITIES.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!!





YOUTH MINISTRY

LIFE TEEN: GRADES 9-12
DINNER - FELLOWSHIP - PRAYER & FORMATION
Sundays | 6:30-8:30pm



EDGE: GRADES 6-8
Twice a month: Sunday 3:30-5:00pm
& Friday 7:00-8:30pm
See website for full schedule



WORKCAMP APPLICATION OPEN
The WorkCamp application is open on our website for high school participants and adult volunteers! Apply by January 20 - meetings start January 26.

GIRLS SMALL GROUP
Join us for our girls small group Advent Mini-Series: December 4, 11, & 18 from 7:30-9:00 p.m. in the Well. Email us if you're interested in joining:
[See website for full schedule](mailto:cym@nativityburke.org)
Before attending, please register for the 2024-2025 year of ministry using our free, online forms.

✉ cym@nativityburke.org 📷 [@nativitycym](https://www.instagram.com/nativitycym)



Pro-Life Corner

National March For Life (MFL) - Friday, January 24, 2025: Join people of goodwill from across our country in peacefully and joyfully rallying around the basic truth that every human life – including the unborn and their mothers – is beautiful, has unique dignity, and worthy of protection. Save the date.

Virginia Pro-Life Day in Richmond - January 29, 2025: Support Life issues and enjoy the camaraderie of fellow parishioners across the state. Your personal presence is vital in supporting pro-life members of the General Assembly or encouraging those who have voted against pro-life bills in the past to reconsider their views. Contact rickloffredo@outlook.com if interested in attending.

Tepeyac Pro-Life OB/GYN: Faith-based Pro-life OB/GYN: restoring integrity of human person with modern medicine and healing of Christ. tepeyacobgyn.com, 703.273.9440.

Gabriel Project - Pregnancy Outreach for Expectant Mothers: Offers emotional, spiritual, material, and financial support through a pregnancy helpline and parish-based volunteer “Angel” Support, helpforpregnantwomen.org, 866.444.3553.

A Woman's Choice Center - Providing Compassionate Support: Free pregnancy, medical, educational, and support services for women and families, awomanschoicecenter.com, 703.538.4305.

Mary's Comfort of VA: Ensuring Expectant Mothers Shelter, Support and New Beginnings: Provides full support, including training in parenting and life skills, career coaching and educational advancement, maryscomfortva.org, 703.455.4500.



St. Margaret of Cortona - Transitional and Maternity Housing: Helping single mothers in exceptionally difficult circumstances: Assisting mothers with children who may be transitioning from homeless and domestic violence shelters to independent living; and Assisting women pregnant with their first child or pregnant moms who already have other children and find themselves at significant risk in their current living situations. [https://www.cdda.net/need-help/housing/family-housing-\(st-margaret\)](https://www.cdda.net/need-help/housing/family-housing-(st-margaret)), or call 703.910.4845.

Mary's Shelter: Sheltering Women and Their Children: Provides an expectant mother, and any additional children she may have, with housing for up to three years in order to further her education and/or secure employment. <https://marysshelterva.org/>, 540.374.3407.

Catholic Charities Pregnancy and Adoption Services: Provides transformative services to individuals, couples and families whose lives are impacted by unplanned pregnancy, parenting in a crisis situation and/or whose lives have been touched by adoption. <https://www.cdda.net/need-help/pregnancy-and-adoption-services/>, 703.841.3830

Project Rachel: Help after Abortion: A safe place to share your emotions and work toward healing. For confidential inquiries and to learn more. helpafterabortion.org, 703.841.2504.

Rachel's Vineyard - A safe place to renew, rebuild and redeem broken hearts: Weekend retreats offer you a supportive, confidential and non-judgmental environment. www.rachelsvineyard.org/, 877.467.3463.



PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY:

The next Prayer Shawl meeting will be held on Monday morning, December 16th at 9:30 am in the Fr. Ready room. This ministry is open to all members of our community!

Love working with children? Want flexibility? Consider subbing at Nativity School... Please Join Us!

We are in need of substitute teachers with the following minimum qualifications:

- Ability to follow a lesson plan and give effective instructions in the absence of the teacher
- Proficiency in maintaining effective classroom
- 2-Plus years of college
- Management skills
- Diocesan-compliant and Successful background check

Contact Mrs. Shannon Murphy at (703) 455-2300 and/or smurph@nativityschool.org.



**Handmaids Of Reparation of the
Sacred Heart of Jesus**
6400 Nativity Lane, Burke, VA 22015



October 2024

Dear Nativity Family,

We hope this letter finds you well and filled with God’s grace. We are reaching out on behalf of the dedicated religious sisters of our mission, who work tirelessly to spread faith, love, and compassion in the Congo. With gratitude and hope, we invite you to support our mission through three key efforts:



1. **School and Convent Construction** – Help us lay the foundation for education in the Congo by building a school and convent, transforming young lives and ensuring the future of our mission.
2. **Clinic Support in Nassian, Ivory Coast** – Your gift will sustain medical care for those with limited access to healthcare, offering healing and hope to the most vulnerable.
3. **Food Pantry for Rural Areas** – Your donation will help us expand food distribution to families in rural areas, addressing hunger and nourishing bodies and spirits.
4. **Retirement and Financial Support for Our Sisters** – Assist us in providing medical care and financial support for our sisters as they retire, ensuring their well-being after years of devoted service.
5. **Supplies and Education for Our Sisters** – Your support will provide essential resources and learning opportunities for the sisters, enabling them to continue their vital work.

Every donation, big or small, makes a difference. You can donate online at handmaidsofreparation.org, send a check payable to Handmaids of Reparation, or scan the QR code below.

Thank you for your generosity. Your contribution is more than financial support—it’s a beautiful act of faith and solidarity. Please keep our mission in your prayers, and together, let’s bring light and love to the people of Congo.

In faith and gratitude,
Sister Donatella Merulla, A.R
Sister Mary Attilia Todaro, A.R.
And all the Handmaids of Reparation Sisters



 **NATIVITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL**
 A Blue Ribbon School of Excellence
 nativityschool.org 

*Nativity Thanksgiving Pageant:
A Feast For All to Enjoy!*



Each year, we kick off the holiday season with our Kindergarten and First Grade Thanksgiving Program. Singing, dancing, laughing, and loving our way through a sweet, spirited program of fun and faith, our students sang and danced their way through God Bless America; A Gift to You; Thank You, God; and The Turkey Tango.



Our Kindergarten and First Grade Teachers, Mrs. Munoz and Mrs. Colella, directed the choreography, while Mrs. Jordan and Mr. Watling, our Teaching Assistants, helped in the production of this Thanksgiving masterpiece.

I think it must be impossible to leave such a praiseworthy performance by our 5- and 6-year-olds without a smile on your face and a song in your heart. Mine lasted the whole day!

Important Upcoming Dates ~

- Monday, Dec 2 – No School
- Tuesday, Dec 3 – School Resumes
- Wednesday, Dec 4 – Tag Day/Catholic Charities
- Thursday, Dec 5 – HSPT (8th grade)
- Thursday, Dec 5 – Preschool Fun Day Out
- Friday, Dec 6 – St. Nicholas Feast Day
- Monday, Dec 9 – Santa’s Workshop Begins
- Monday, Dec 9 – Pencil Gram Sales Begin
- Tuesday, Dec 10 – Santa’s Ride Donations Due

**Join the Nativity School Extended Care Team!
Love Working With Children? Creative with Fingerpaint?
The following qualifications are necessary:**

- A LOVE of Children!
- ‘Can-Do’ Attitude
- Afternoon Availability, 2:30 to 6:00 pm
- Diocesan Compliance to Work With Kids

**To apply, contact Jen Behan, Director, at
jbehan@nativityschool.org.**

Do you need a ride to a medical appointment or to go grocery shopping and are unable to drive? The Shepherd’s Center–Fairfax Burke provides these services. Feel free to contact the Shepherd’s Center Fairfax Burke at 703-323-4788 for information.

 **KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS**
 IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL. 

Linktree Universal Sign-up Link - Volunteer for an event!
 Scroll down to view all event. https://linktr.ee/fr_sikora_council_7992.

Council Meetings: 1st and 3rd Tuesdays. First meeting is a business meeting, the second meeting of the month is devoted to faith formation. Rosary 7:15 PM; meeting at 7:30 PM. Fellowship follows. Meet in the Nativity school cafeteria.

Linktree Universal Sign-up Link:

Volunteer for an event! Scroll down to view all events. https://linktr.ee/fr_sikora_council_7992

Breakfast with Santa: Saturday, December 7 in the school cafeteria. Sign up to share some holiday cheer with our young families! SUG pending

Food for Others: Volunteer for food distribution to the poor, delivered on designated Thursday or Friday evenings. For Thursdays, contact Br. Mark Sawyer at sawyerkoc7992@verizon.net. Fridays, contact Br. Matt Stockburger at mstock_w@yahoo.com. Deliver food from Giant to the FFO warehouse Tuesday mornings; contact Br. Bob Colella robert.colella.86@gmail.com.

Name Tags: If you have not received your name tag, email warden7992@nativityburke.org.

Nativity Ushers assist at collections: Volunteer for your Mass! Volunteer on Link Tree for a database of potential helpers!

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

Handy Knights Ministry: Parishioners unable to perform basic maintenance tasks or small home repairs due to health or other factors, contact the “Handy Knights.” Email handyknightsofnativity@gmail.com.

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

3rd Degree Knights - Grow with 4th Degree: participate in patriotic activities that promote Catholic citizenship. There is no regular meeting in November due to the Flag Retirement Ceremony (see above). Next meeting is December 10. If you are interested, please contact our Faithful Navigator Mark Corzine at fn2996@vakofc.org.

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. Please email our Deputy Grand Knight, Michael Bender, at dgk7992@nativityburke.org.

or the Grand Knight, Chris Odell with any questions.

or the Grand Knight, Chris Odell with any questions.

Novena to
 Our Lady of Guadalupe
 for Couples Struggling with
 Infertility, Miscarriage
 & Infant Loss

December 4th - 12th

Sign up for the novena, submit your intentions & find more information at:
OurFruitfulLove.com/novena 





Parish Christmas Collection I December 7-8, 2024

Your support of Catholic Charities helps serve the poor, protect the vulnerable, and welcome the newcomer – serving our neighbors **right here in our diocese.**

The need continues to grow:

“I called so many different people... Catholic Charities was the only one that said that they could help me.”

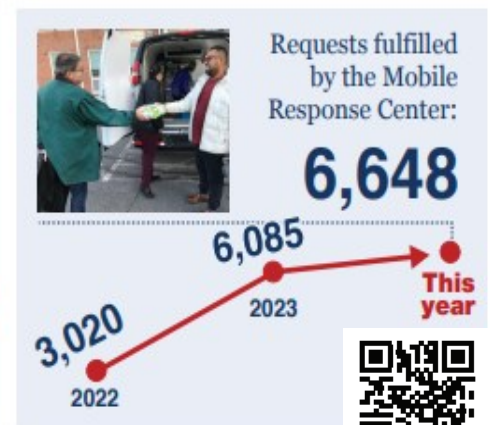
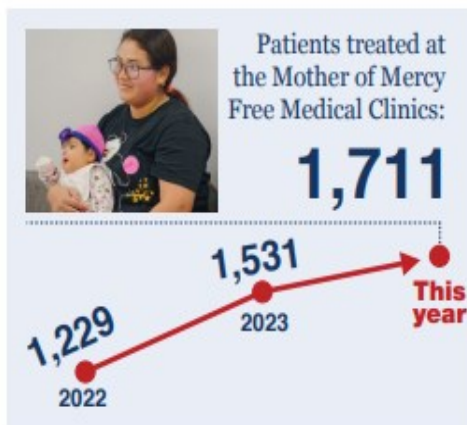
CRYSTAL
Received emergency assistance after transplant surgery

“God led me to Catholic Charities Christ House. He made that call.”

DORIAN
Former Christ House resident

“They usually come over here and say, ‘is anybody picking up your food today?’ And then sometimes they’ll bring it over to me.”

GEORGIA
Receives food from Catholic Charities St. Lucy Project



Source: Catholic Charities tracking systems, fiscal years 2022-2024



Marriage Enrichment Ministry

Communications in Marriage

ART OF BEING PRESENT

Date Night!

Saturday, January 11

6:30- 8:30 PM

Nativity Cafeteria

Childcare &
Dinner Provided



Register at:

<https://nativityburke.org/date-night/>

Contact: Anna Lisa Licud


marriage@nativityburke.org




Jeanine Turner

*Professor & Author
Georgetown University*

DIocese of Arlington
YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY



EXALT
EVENING OF WORSHIP



YOUNG ADULT HOLY HOUR
Join us in worship, prayer, and reconciliation.

Friday, December 6
7 - 8:30 P.M.

Nativity Catholic Church
Burke, VA


Gifts for Seminarian Education Endowment Fund (SEEF)
Please support our seminarians and SEEF, a permanent endowment fund established in 2011. SEEF's income provides funding for annual seminarian expenses such as room, board, tuition, health insurance and books, which total almost \$45,000 per seminarian. Please give generously!
To donate, make checks payable to: "Foundation for the CDA - SEEF." Mail to: The Foundation, 200 N. Glebe Road, Suite 811, Arlington, VA 22203. Questions: contact John French at john.french@arlingtondiocese.org or (703) 841-3819.



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after abortion




Bilingual Holy Hour for Hispanic Vocations
at
Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church
SATURDAY, JANUARY 25
11:15 AM

Join us for a Holy Hour offered for the priesthood, consecrated life, and the perseverance of all vocations.

All are welcome!

*Sponsored by:
The Serra Club of Arlington*



The Serra Club of Arlington are lay Catholics of all ages and from all walks of life who promote vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life, support priests in their sacred ministry, and assist fellow members to recognize and respond in their own lives, to God's call to holiness in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit.

For more information, please visit serraclubarlington.org.

save the date




Nativity
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

GALA & AUCTION


bids, booty, and a pirate mystery

Saturday, April 5, 2025
6:30 p.m.
Nativity Catholic School
Fr. Martin Center

Live Your Faith, Adopt a Child.
Foster Care Adoption is a Pro Life Choice



Scan the QR code to learn more about Catholic Charities Waiting Child Adoption Program



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DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

Parents who have lost children:

Join us for Mass and a Morning of Reflection this Advent season

Saturday, December 7 | **St. Leo the Great**
3700 Blenheim Blvd., Fairfax, VA

9 am - 12 pm
(Parish Mass at 9 am)

Event is free, but please register at:
arlingtondiocese.org/event/parentsmass
(Space is limited)

 Office of Marriage, Family and Respect Life
703.841.2550 | familylife@arlingtondiocese.org | @arlingtonfamily





2024 Porto Charities CHRISTMAS Party

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FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

**5:30PM/MASS
6:30PM/RECEPTION**

**\$50/ADULT
\$95/COUPLE**

**CRAFTS, PHOTOS WITH SANTA,
CAROLING & DJ DANCING**

**UNDER 18: FREE!
ADULT W/DISABILITY: \$15**



Ticket includes beer, wine, and non-alcoholic beverages. Special Christmas dinner catered by Ford's Fish Shack.

CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF JESUS WITH PORTO FAMILIES!



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Columbus®**

SISTERS OF LIFE



Adviento. Alguien llega**Reflexiones Adviento y Navidad**

En cada adviento revivimos, con la fe, y volvemos hacer presente en la esperanza la primera venida de Cristo.

Por: P. Antonio Rivero, L.C. | Fuente: Catholic.net

Adviento. Sí, llegada de Alguien importante, para algo importante, por algo importante, a un lugar importante. Descubramos el sentido profundo de este tiempo litúrgico tan sencillo, austero y propicio para la meditación y la esperanza.

En cada adviento revivimos, con la fe, y volvemos hacer presente en la esperanza la primera venida de Cristo en su carne sencilla, prestada por María, hace más de dos mil años. Y al mismo tiempo ese adviento, todo adviento, nos lanza y nos proyecta y nos hace desear la última venida de Cristo al final de los tiempos en toda su gloria y majestad, como nos describe san Mateo en el capítulo 25: “Ven, Señor Jesús”. Pero también en cada adviento, si vivimos en clave de amor y de fe, podemos recibir y descubrir la venida intermedia de Cristo en su Eucaristía –detrás de ese pan y vino, que ya no es pan ni vino, sino el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo-, en el prójimo necesitado –pregunten, si no, a san Martín de Tours cuando dio la mitad de su manto a ese pobre aterido de frío en pleno invierno francés hace ya muchos, muchos años, y en la noche Cristo se le apareció vestido con esa mitad del manto para agradecerle ese hermoso gesto de caridad-, o también descubrir el rostro de Cristo detrás de ese dolor o adversidad de la vida. Cristo continúa viniendo. El adviento es continuo y eterno. El hombre vive en perpetuo adviento. Cristo viene siempre, cada año, cada mes, cada semana, cada día, cada hora y cada minuto. Basta estar atento y no embotado en las mil preocupaciones.

Quién llega: Es Jesucristo, nuestro Señor, nuestro Salvador, el Redentor del mundo, el Señor de la vida y de la historia, mi Amigo, El Agua viva que sacia mi sed de felicidad, el Pan de vida que nutre mi alma, el Buen Pastor que me conoce y me ama y da su vida por mí, la Luz verdadera que ilumina mi sendero, el Camino hacia la Vida eterna, la Verdad del Padre que no engaña, la Vida auténtica que vivifica.

Cómo llega: Llegó humilde, pobre, sufrido, puro hace más de dos mil años en Belén. Llega escondido en ese trozo de pan y en esas gotas de vino en cada Eucaristía, pero que ya no son pan ni vino, sino el Cuerpo sacrosanto y la Sangre bendita de Cristo resucitado y glorioso. Y llega disfrazado en ese prójimo enfermo, pobre, necesitado, antipático, a quien podemos descubrir con la fe límpida y el amor comprensivo. Y llega silencioso o con estruendo en ese accidente en la carretera, en esa enfermedad que no entendemos, en esa muerte del ser querido, para recordarnos que Él atravesó también por esas situaciones humanas y les dio sentido hondo y profundo.

Por qué llega: porque quiere hacernos partícipes de su amor y amistad. Quiere renovar una vez más su alianza con nosotros. El amor es el motor de estas continuas venidas de Cristo a nuestro mundo, a nuestra casa, a nuestra alma. No hay otra razón.

Para qué llega: para dar un sentido de trascendencia a nuestra vida, para decirnos que somos peregrinos en este mundo y que hay que seguir caminando y cantando. Llega para enjugar nuestras lágrimas amargas. Llega para agradecernos esos detalles de amor que con Él tenemos a diario. Llega para hablarnos del Padre, a quien Él tanto ama. Llega para alimentar nuestras ansias de felicidad. Llega para curar nuestras heridas, provocadas por nuestras pasiones aliadas con el enemigo de nuestra alma. Llega para recordarnos que no estamos solos, que Él está a nuestro lado como baluarte y sostén. Llega para pedirnos también una mano y nuestros labios y nuestro corazón, porque quiere que prediquemos su Palabra por todos los rincones del mundo.

Dónde llega: llega a nuestro mundo convulso y desorientado y hambriento de paz, de calor, de caridad y de un trozo de pan; a nuestras familias tal vez divididas o en armonía; a nuestros corazones inquietos como el de san Agustín de Hipona, corazón que sólo descansó en Dios. Quiere llegar a todos los parlamentos internacionales y nacionales para dar sentido y moralidad a las leyes que ahí se emanan. Quiere llegar al palacio del rico, como a la choza del pobre. Quiere llegar junto al lecho de un enfermo en el hospital, como también a ese salón de fiestas, dónde él no viene a aguar nuestras alegrías humanas sino a purificarlas y orientarlas. Quiere llegar al mundo de los niños, para cuidarles su inocencia y pureza. Quiere llegar al mundo de los jóvenes, para sostenerles en sus luchas duras y enseñarles lo que es el verdadero amor. Quiere llegar al mundo de los adultos para decirles que es posible la alegría y el entusiasmo en medio del trabajo agotador y exhausto de cada día. Quiere llegar a cada familia para llevarles el calor del amor, reflejo del amor trinitario. Quiere llegar al mundo de los ancianos para sostenerles con el báculo del aliento y la caricia de la sonrisa. Quiere llegar al mundo de los gobernantes para decirles que su autoridad proviene de Dios, que deben buscar el bien común y que deberán dar cuenta de ella.

Cuántas veces llega: si estamos atentos, no hay minuto en que no percibamos la venida de Cristo a nuestra vida. Basta estar con los ojos de la fe bien abiertos, con el corazón despierto y preparado por la honestidad, y con las manos siempre tendidas para el abrazo de ese Cristo que sabe venir de mil maneras. Por tanto, podemos decir que siempre es adviento. Es más, nuestra vida debe ser vivida en actitud de adviento: alguien llega. No vayamos a estar somnolientos y distraídos.

Cómo prepararnos: nos ayudará en este tiempo leer al profeta Isaías, meditar en san Juan Bautista que encontramos al inicio de los evangelios y contemplar a María. Isaías con su nostalgia del Mesías nos prepara para la última venida de Cristo. San Juan Bautista nos prepara para esas venidas intermedias de Cristo en cada acontecimiento diario y sobre todo en la Eucaristía. Y María nos hará vivir, rememorar en la fe ese primer adviento que Ella vivió con tanta esperanza, amor y silencio, para poder abrazar a ese Niño Jesús sencillo, envuelto en pañales y recostado en un pesebre.

Adviento, tiempo de gracia y bendición. Llega alguien, sí. Llega Dios. Y Dios es todo. Dios no quita nada. Dios da todo lo que hace hermosa a una vida. Y hay que abrirle la puerta y Él entrará y cenará con nosotros y nosotros con Él. Y nos hará partícipes de su amor y felicidad. ¡Qué triste quien no le abra la puerta a Cristo, dejándolo fuera, helándose y despreciado, con sus Dones entre sus Manos benditas! ¿Habrá alguien así, desalmado y sin sentimientos? ¡No lo creo! Al menos no lo quiero creer.



Advent Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 December</p> <p>Light the first violet candle in the Advent wreath, symbolizing Hope. Reflect on God's faithfulness and the hope of salvation. (See 1 Peter 3:15 for inspiration.)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>How will you draw closer to Christ during Advent? Will you deepen your faith through intentional prayer, heartfelt penance, generous almsgiving, or a renewed focus on the Sacraments?</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Practice the Heroic Minute as proposed by St. Josemaría Escrivá. Get out of bed immediately when you wake (don't press the "snooze" button) and offer the day to God.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Set out the stable and the empty manger from your Nativity scene. Slowly add the figures throughout Advent.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Advent is a busy time for Catholic parishes. Call or email your parish office and ask how you can help.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Attend First Friday Mass, in honor of Jesus' Sacred Heart. Pray, "O Sacred Heart of Jesus, make my heart like yours." And He will.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Perform a thorough examination of conscience today. Then attend Confession to ready your soul to greet the Savior.</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Light two violet candles in the Advent wreath each night this week. Sit in silence and enjoy the quiet. Read Luke 2:1-7.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Immaculate Conception</p> <p>God preserved Mary from sin to be Jesus' mother. Attend Mass and pray a Rosary in her honor.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>A loving gaze is one of the kindest gifts we can offer. Today, Look at everyone through eyes of compassion and kindness, letting love illuminate each encounter.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Ask Jesus to heal whatever keeps you from experiencing God's bountiful love.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Our Lady of Guadalupe</p> <p>To honor Our Lady of Guadalupe, place a rose in a vase and pray for expectant mothers.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>St. Francis de Sales said, "Have patience with all things, but... chiefly with yourself." Practice patience with everyone today, especially yourself.</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Gather friends and neighbors and go Christmas caroling at a nursing home or homeless shelter.</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Gaudete Sunday</p> <p>Light two violet candles and the rose one for joy to mark the halfway point of Advent.</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Reach out to your parish office to find out how you can make Christmas brighter for a family in need. Your kindness could be their Christmas miracle.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Put a lamp or candle in a window to welcome the Christ Child. Light it every night until Christmas.</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Today, offer a small sacrifice out of love, just for God.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Visit the Blessed Sacrament, where Jesus promises to remain with us (Matthew 28:20). Renew your faith in His steadfast love.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Refusing to forgive can destroy our interior peace. Ask for the grace to let go and move on.</p>	<p>21</p> <p>The King is coming! Tidy up your home and prepare to welcome Him.</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Light all four candles in the wreath, including the last one for peace. Remember we are awaiting Christ and the peace He brings to those faithful to Him (Luke 2:14).</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Read Luke 2:1-19 and decide how you can make room in your heart for Christ. What steps will you take to welcome His presence and live out His love each day?</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Meditate on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary or pray Evening Prayer tonight to ready your heart for the birth of the Messiah.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Rejoice!</p> <p>Place the Christ Child in the manger and rejoice!</p>	<p><i>"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn" (Luke 2:1-7).</i></p>		

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

December 2024

Church of the Nativity

Rev. Robert C. Cilinski, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. John of the Cross

Born in Castile, Spain, St. Juan de Yepes lived in poverty. St. John embraced poverty and suffering throughout his life. In 1563, he entered the Carmelite Order. He befriended St. Teresa of Ávila, who encouraged and supported him in his efforts at reform. He faced opposition and he was imprisoned in a tower. From this experience came the mystical poetry and inspired writings on the interior life that made him a Doctor of the Church.



Close to the Infant Jesus

"You are nowhere but close to the Infant Jesus, trembling with cold in the stable of Bethlehem...Therefore, I beg you to love the crib of the Child of Bethlehem...stay close to him and be sure that Jesus is in the midst of your hearts more than you could believe or imagine." St. Padre Pio

"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory" (John 1:14).



The best gifts come on Christmas

Christmas brings a joy that goes beyond presents—it's a season rich with the gifts God offers: love, hope, family, and the promise of Heaven. These gifts touch every heart, young and old, and hold profound meaning.

The gift of love. God chose to come into the world as a baby, sharing in our human experience. His love surpasses anything we could imagine. He invites us to embrace His love and let it transform us.

The gift of hope. Although we have moments of sin and can turn from God, the Child born on that first Christmas offers freedom from sin and the hope of a brighter future. This hope

renews us and promises a better path forward.

The gift of family. Family provides strength, comfort, and support. Baptism welcomes us into Christ's divine family, where we are bound by an unbreakable connection. *"See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God"* (1 John 3:1).

The gift of Heaven. The most awesome gift is Heaven itself. Without Jesus' miraculous birth, Heaven would be out of reach. He bridged the gap between Heaven and Earth, offering the promise of eternal joy. This Christmas, we can cherish the enduring gifts of love, hope, family, and Heaven that make the season truly meaningful.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics display nativity scenes?

The tradition of displaying nativity scenes began with St. Francis of Assisi, who was awed that God humbled Himself to be born in humility and poverty. To illustrate, he displayed a manger scene in a cave near the Franciscans' chapel —



complete with donkey and ox. He celebrated Christmas Mass and, according to an eyewitness, the wax figure of the Christ Child came alive. This pious tradition continues, reminding us that *"the*

Word became flesh and dwelt among us"(John 1:14).

Two Advent practices for a joyful Christmas

Each Advent, God invites us to deepen our friendship with Him and draw closer to His love. The key to a joyful Christmas lies in responding to this invitation by dedicating daily time to God and helping those in need.

Do the one thing needful: Pope Francis encourages us to "waste time" with God through prayer, even for just 15–20 minutes. This could be offering daily prayers for a special intention, meditating on the Christmas Story a verse at a time, or simply being peacefully



present to Him, who is always present to us. Continue spending time with Him after the season ends.

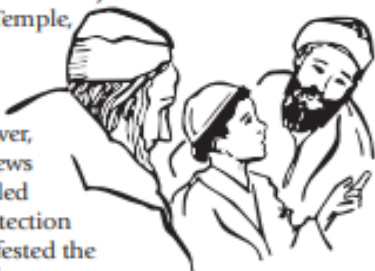
Go in haste to love: Just as Mary went "with haste" (Luke 1:39) to serve her cousin Elizabeth, we, too, are called to act quickly in love. While no one can do everything, everyone can do something. When we serve others even in small ways, we receive a greater gift in return (Matthew 25:40).

Embrace these practices for a deeper, more joyful Christmas open to God's love.

from Scripture

Luke 2:41-52, Love and obedience

The Feast of the Holy Family (December 29) includes the story of finding Jesus in the Temple, a story of love and obedience. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover, as was the custom for Jews of that time. They traveled in a large group for protection against bandits who infested the hill country. So it wasn't surprising that His parents didn't miss Jesus as they started the return trip. Upon discovering Him missing, they hurried back to Jerusalem.



On the third day of searching, they found Jesus in the Temple. He was

questioning the priests and amazing them with His understanding.

However, Mary asked how He could have caused His parents so much worry and Jesus replied, "Did you not know I must be in my Father's house?"

Though they were puzzled by His answer, Mary and Joseph took Jesus back to Nazareth. He remained there in obedience to His parents until it was time for His public ministry. We learn from this story to obey not only God but also those in valid authority over us.

Q & A How do I use an Advent Wreath?

The Advent Wreath is a circle of evergreen branches, symbolizing God's eternal and unending love. It includes three purple (violet) candles and one pink (rose) candle. On the first Sunday of Advent, and each night that week, the first purple candle, known as the Prophet's Candle, is lit to symbolize hope. On the second Sunday and throughout that week, light both the first and second purple candles.



The second candle, called the Bethlehem Candle, represents faith. The pink candle, lit during the third week, symbolizes joy and marks Gaudete Sunday. During the fourth week of Advent, all three purple candles and the pink candle are lit. The fourth candle, known as the Angel's Candle, represents peace.

Consider meditating on Scripture as you light the candles. Week 1 (hope) - Isaiah 9:2-7, week 2 (faith) - Micah 5:2-5a, week 3 (joy) - Luke 2:8-14, and week 4 (peace) - Luke 1:26-38.

Feasts & Celebrations

December 1 - First Sunday in Advent. We anticipate Christ's birth and His coming on the Last Day. Catholics everywhere light candles in an Advent wreath to signal the coming of the light of Christ.

December 4 - St. John Damascene (749). A Doctor of the Church and the last of the Greek Fathers, St. John was born in Muslim-ruled Syria and was counselor to the caliph. He is known for his writings in favor of the use of sacred images for devotion.

December 9 - Immaculate

Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We commemorate that Mary was conceived in St. Anne's womb without original sin, preparing Mary to be the Mother of God. Pope Pius IX declared this doctrine in 1854. This year, it's still considered a holy day of obligation and Mass attendance is required.

December 28 - Feast of the Holy Innocents (1st century). Today, we remember the infants massacred by King Herod's soldiers (Matthew 2:16-18). We also pray for the safety of unborn children.



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