

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church

210 South Wellwood Avenue + Lindenhurst, New York 11757 +

Telephone: 631-226-7725 + Fax: 631-225-9597 +

www.olphlindenhurst.com + Facebook: Our Lady of Perpetual Help 



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Daily Readings - Parish Updates - Weekly Bulletin & more!

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*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,
which means "God is with us."*

Matthew 1:23

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
December 22, 2019

PASTORAL STAFF

Pastor: Reverend Monsignor Joseph DeGrocco

Parochial Vicars: Reverend Fidelis Ezeani, Reverend Frank Zero

Deacons: Deacon William Crosby, Deacon Douglas G. Smith, Deacon Robert A. Becker

Business Manager: Mr. Thomas Crennan

Director of Faith Formation: Mrs. April Kleinlaut

Music Director: Mr. Christopher Ferraro

Deacon Frank Odin, Retired

COME AND PRAY...

Our church is open **6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.** seven days a week, except for Thursdays when it closes after the 12:15 p.m. Mass for cleaning. Come in and spend some time in prayer.

MASS SCHEDULE

Monday – Friday

6:30 a.m. and 12:15 p.m.

Saturday Morning:

8:00 a.m.

Saturday Afternoon (Sunday Anticipated):

5:00 p.m.

Sunday Masses:

8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m.,
12:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m.

LITURGY OF THE HOURS

We pray Evening Prayer each Saturday and Sunday after the 5:00 p.m. Mass.

We pray Daytime Prayer each Wednesday at 1:50 p.m.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Mondays following the 12:15 p.m. Mass (except on Holy Days of Obligation)

Saturday: 4:00 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is always available by making an appointment with one of our priests.

OLPH NOVENA DEVOTIONS

Monday afternoons
at 12:45 p.m. in the church

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Wednesday: 12:45 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Sunday: 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

First Saturday: 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday- Friday: 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Sunday: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

DOWNLOAD THE OLPH APP

Catholic Life Every Day

with the Our Lady of Perpetual Help App

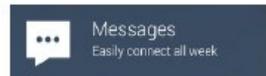
Step 1: Open App Store or Google Play

Step 2: Search "myParish app" & press download 

Step 3: Open up the myParish app and type in "Our Lady of Perpetual Help Roman Catholic Church"

Step 4: Set OLPH as your main parish

Step 5: Explore the great features in our parish app!



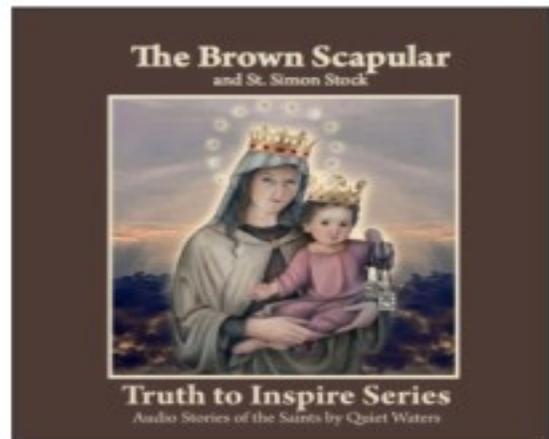
FORMED PICK OF THE WEEK

The Brown Scapular and St. Simon Stock

Where Does the Brown Scapular Come From?

In this exciting audio drama for youth, follow the miraculous story of Saint Simon Stock who abandoned worldly comforts when Our Blessed Mother asked him to spread devotion to her Brown Scapular. Celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel with your kids, and remind them that following God's will is always an adventure!

Listen on formed.org



Q: How do new parishioners register for an account?

A: Registering for FORMED is easier than ever:

Go to formed.org/signup

Select your parish

Register with your name and email address

Check that email account for a link to begin using FORMED

Q: Do parishioners still need to use our parish code or custom registration URL?

A: Registering has become a lot easier and parish codes and custom registration urls are no longer needed for your parishioners to register for FORMED through your parish! Now, parishioners simply need to go to formed.org/signup and find your parish to register.

Q: Will parishioners user emails and passwords still work?

A: Passwords are being phased out. Parishioner emails will still work. Parishioners do not need to re-register to sign in.

PASTOR'S PAGE

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Happy Fourth Sunday of Advent! Even though Christmas is only a few days away, do your best to stay with Advent until the very end; there is much spiritual wealth to be found in the last days of Advent. Our Mass prayers for the Fourth Sunday of Advent exemplify this.

The Collect (Opening Prayer) we pray at Mass is the familiar prayer that concludes the Angelus. The prayer connects the Incarnation (God becoming man) with the Paschal Mystery (the death and resurrection of Christ): the words of the prayer lead us from the Annunciation, through the Incarnation, to a sharing in the Passion and Resurrection. It's a stark reminder to us that although at different times throughout the liturgical year we highlight or emphasize particular aspects of the mystery of Christ's life, at its core liturgy is always about the Paschal Mystery, and it is this mystery that is celebrated at every liturgy, regardless of the season or occasion.

The Prayer over the Offerings at Mass invokes the action of the Holy Spirit, asking that just as the Spirit filled "with his power the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary," so too may He sanctify the gifts we have placed upon the altar. The Spirit at work in the Annunciation is the same Spirit at work in our liturgy today who transforms the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. Come Holy Spirit!

In the Prayer after Communion, the Church acknowledges the nearness of the celebration of the Nativity of the Lord, praying that "we may press forward all the more eagerly to the worthy celebration of the mystery."

Once again, the official prayers of the Church found in the Mass give us so much to reflect on! "Press forward" spiritually in these last days of Advent!

Help with our Christmas decorations, inside and out!

I'll remind you that if you are available, come down to help us decorate the church inside and out! Outdoor Christmas decorations (along the fence along Wellwood Avenue) will be put up Monday morning, December 23 at 10:00 a.m.; indoor Christmas decorations (mainly all

our poinsettia plants and other arrangements) will be put out Monday evening, December 23 starting at 7:00 p.m. Join in the spirit of fun and festivity!

Prepare now to be kind to the crowds!

So, of course, the great Masses of Christmas will be celebrated on Tuesday night, Christmas Eve, and Wednesday, Christmas Day, of this week. Let's all remember to be patient with all the extra people who will be coming to our Christmas Masses. Yes, it will be more crowded; yes, parking will be more difficult than usual; yes, there will be people coming who do not come to Mass very often; yes, someone may come and sit it "your" seat. Nonetheless, it is our responsibility and our Christian duty to welcome everyone who comes, and to treat them with kindness and charity. Think of it this way: your kind greeting may be the exact thing that convinces someone to come back to Mass more often! At all the Christmas Masses, show everyone why OLPH is "the place to be!"

Don't forget about January 1, the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

Remember, too, that Wednesday of next week, January 1, is a Holy Day of Obligation — the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. See the schedule of Masses for December 31 and January 1 printed elsewhere in the bulletin. What a great way to begin the new calendar year — with a Solemnity dedicated to Our Blessed Mother...so that we might entrust the upcoming year to her maternal intercession. How appropriate especially for us, under the patronage of Mary as Our Lady of Perpetual Help!

Brick Memorialization

I again remind you that our brick memorialization program is ongoing. You can memorialize a brick in our "Let the Children Come to Me Prayer Garden." We are continuing to run the flyer and the form in our bulletin, so take advantage of the opportunity as soon as you can. It could make a great last-minute Christmas gift, right? It's a great way

to memorialize a prayer intention, or to honor a deceased loved one. The profits from the bricks continue to be an important help in easing our ongoing financial struggles. Help us out by telling family and friends about this; remember, you don't have to be a parishioner of OLPH, or even be Catholic, to memorialize a brick!

Ministry Directory

Each year at Christmas we release an updated edition of our parish Ministry Directory, a booklet listing all the different ministries, societies and organizations in the parish, giving a brief description of each one and also giving the information as to how anyone can become involved. Its purpose is to be a tool to increase involvement and engagement in the life of the parish. In an effort to use resources in the most cost-effective way possible, we will be printing only a small number of hard copies, to keep on hand in the rectory; the Ministry Directory is always available on line at our website, and everyone is invited to refer to it there or download it and print it out from there. It is also available on our Parish App. So, look

for the 2020 Ministry Directory coming soon!

Christmas Bulletin

We will have a special Christmas Bulletin available as you leave all the Christmas Masses. Be sure to take one home as they are handed out by the Ushers. I hope this Christmas Bulletin serves as a source of welcome to everyone, and winds up being a great tool to deepen people's connection to the life of the parish, especially people who do not come to Mass on a regular basis.

In conclusion...

Together, let's aim high in Christ. Together, let's bring out the best in each other. Together, let's be the best we can be in Christ.

And let's always remember: LOVE IS A GIFT.

Sincerely,



SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT SILENCE BEFORE MASS

POPE FRANCIS SAYS THAT THE TIME BEFORE MASS IS MEANT FOR SILENT PRAYER, NOT CHITCHAT

In a talk he gave this past November, Pope Francis stressed that the time before Mass is a time for silent prayer, when we prepare our hearts for an encounter with the Lord. "When we go to Mass, maybe we arrive five minutes before, and we start to chitchat with those in front of us," the Pope said. However, "it is not meant for chitchat. It is a moment of silence for preparing ourselves for dialogue, a time for the heart to collect itself in order to prepare for the encounter with Jesus," he said, adding that "silence is so important." The Pope also spoke about how the Mass is not a show, but a place where we encounter the Lord. In this encounter, he said, silence is what "prepares us and accompanies us."

That's something for all of us to think about! How well are we doing in following the practice that when the bells ring five minutes before Mass begins, we all give each other the gift of silence, being quiet together to prepare ourselves for Mass? Let's give each other that special gift.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Lighting Your Advent Wreath During the Week

Each day during the fourth week of Advent, at the evening meal, all four candles are lighted. The following prayers accompany the lighting of the candles.

All make the sign of the cross: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Someone at table reads the Scripture assigned to the liturgy of the day (one or both of the readings may be used). See the list of daily readings printed elsewhere in this bulletin. Then the Leader continues:

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

All respond: We lift them up to the Lord.

The Leader prays: God, the Father of mercies, you willed your Son to take flesh, in order to give life back to us. Bless these your gifts with which we are about to nourish our bodies, so that, receiving new strength, we may wait in watchfulness for the glorious coming of Christ. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

After the meal, the Leader says: Let us live soberly, justly, and devoutly in this world as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

All respond: For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Thoughts to Ponder during Advent....

The weekdays from December 17 up to and including December 24 are ordered in a more direct way to preparing for the Nativity of the Lord.

— Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

— Collect of the Mass for the Fourth Sunday of Advent

O Antiphons...

Advent is the season of hope and longing. Jesus is the One who fulfills our hopes and satisfies the longings of our hearts. As our hopes and longings intensify, even the prayer of the Church takes on a special sense of urgency. Throughout the world, Christians invoke Jesus' coming by praying the "O Antiphons." These short but powerful petitions use the ancient Messianic titles to describe who Jesus truly is and what He will do for His people.

On December 22 pray: "O King of all the nations, the only joy of every human heart; O Keystone of the mighty arch of man, come and save the creature you fashioned from the dust."

On December 23 pray: "O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver, desire of the nations, Savior of all people, come and set us free, Lord our God."

On December 24 pray: "Today you will know the Lord is coming, and in the morning you will see his glory."



CHRISTMAS MASSES AT OLPH

Christmas Eve
Tuesday, December 24
 5:00 p.m. and
 12:00 Midnight Mass

*Christmas Carols begin
 at 4:30 & 11:15 p.m.*

Christmas Day
Wednesday, December 25
 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m.
 and 12:00 Noon

*The 5:00 p.m. Mass will not be
 celebrated on Christmas Day.*

JANUARY 1— SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD



**Solemnity of Mary,
 the Holy Mother of God**
(Holy Day of Obligation)
Wednesday, January 1, 2020

Mass Schedule:

**Eve of the Solemnity,
 Tuesday, December 31, 2019:
 5:00 p.m.**
**Wednesday, January 1, 2020:
 10:00 a.m. & 12:15 p.m.**

THE RESPONSORIAL PSALMS OF ADVENT

During Advent, the OLPH Adult Faith Formation Ministry offers a program of study focused on the Responsorial Psalms used in the Mass during the season of Advent. There is no registration or fee for the program; we will simply meet in the **Saint Lucy Room** in the basement of the rectory from **11:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.** for a consideration and discussion of the Responsorial Psalm offered in the Sunday Mass. Bring your Bible and join us for a celebration of the coming of the Lord. For more information, contact Deacon Robert at 631-226-6175 or e-mail to DeaconRobert@oloph.org.

Date	Responsorial Psalm	<i>Psalms of Solemnity of Christmas</i>	Presenter
December 22	Psalm 24	<i>Psalm 98a</i>	Father Frank

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Evening Prayer

All are invited to pray Evening Prayer on Saturdays and Sundays after the 5:00 p.m. Mass. Here we pray the psalms, listen to the Word of God and give thanks to God for the blessings of the day. Evening Prayer is usually about ten to fifteen minutes in length. So come and pray...



Saturdays and Sundays after the 5:00 p.m. Mass

Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help



Each Monday, parishioners pray to seek the help and assistance of the Lord for healing, family, children and the needs of the world, seeking the intercession of the Blessed Mother, concluding with veneration of a relic of St. Catherine Laboure. Take some time each Monday to join in the OLPH Novena.

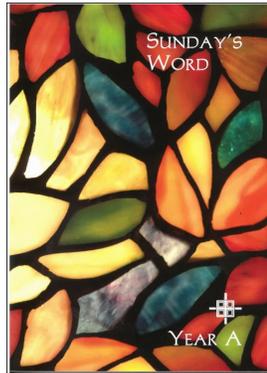
Monday, December 23—12:45 p.m.

Monday, December 30—12:45 p.m.

Monday, January 6—12:45 p.m.

SUNDAY'S WORD BOOKS AVAILABLE

The new *Sunday's Word* books for the new liturgical year (Cycle A) starting with the First Sunday of Advent, December 1, are available at the rectory for the purchase price of \$3.00.



Christmas Spiritual Bouquet Cards

Join in the Mass intentions for the Masses of Christmas by using the Christmas Spiritual Bouquet cards which are now available throughout the church. These cards are a wonderful and meaningful way for you to remember your loved ones at Christmas and to have them prayed for at our Christmas Masses. Return the envelope with your donation in the collection basket or bring it to the rectory, and keep the card to send your Christmas Spiritual Bouquet.



ADULT CONFIRMATION CLASS BEING FORMED



Are you missing something?

Every year on Pentecost, a group of adults complete their initiation into the Church by receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. Through Confirmation, the baptized are joined more perfectly to the Church and strengthened in their faith. Catholics who have not received the Sacrament of Confirmation should receive it before being married. Prospective godparents and sponsors for youth Confirmation must also have received this sacrament.

Preparation for receiving Confirmation as an adult includes ten hours of classroom meeting, weekly attendance at Mass and additional study through Catholic instructional material such as the Formed multimedia platform. Classes meet in the evenings, usually twice a month, with some outside reading and preparation required. A fee of \$20 covers the cost of books and materials.

Classes begin on Monday January 13, 2020. For more information contact Deacon Robert Becker at DeaconRobert@oloph.org or by leaving your contact information at the rectory.

BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS TREE

All make the sign of the cross to begin, and then the Leader continues with this greeting:

Leader: Let us glorify Christ our light, who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and forever.

All respond: Amen.

Leader: My brothers and sisters, amidst signs and wonders Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea: his birth brings joy to our hearts and enlightenment to our minds. With this tree, decorated and adorned, may we welcome Christ among us; may its lights guide us to the perfect light.

Then someone proclaims the reading:

Reader: Listen to the words of the letter of St. Paul to Titus: But when the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, he saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life. The word of the Lord.

All respond: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Let us ask God to send his blessing upon us and upon this sign of our faith in the Lord. Our response will be: Lord, give light to our hearts.

That this tree of lights may remind us of the tree of glory on which Christ accomplished our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. R/.

That the joy of Christmas may always be in our home, let us pray to the Lord. R/.

That the peace of Christ may dwell in our hearts and in the world, let us pray to the Lord. R/

Then the Leader continues: Lord our God, we praise you for the light of creation: the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night. We praise you for the light of Israel: the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures. We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son: he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace, who fills us with the wonder of your love. Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we illumine this tree. May the light and cheer it gives be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts. May all who delight in this tree come to the knowledge and joy of salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The lights of the tree are now illuminated. Then the Leader concludes:

Leader: May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy, now and forever.

All respond: Amen.

The blessing concludes with a verse from O Come, O Come, Emmanuel:

**O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.**



Blessing of a Manger/Nativity Scene

*The manger scene is blessed each year on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. All make the sign of the cross and the Leader begins: **Our help is in the name of the Lord.***

*All respond: **Who made heaven and earth.***

Then someone proclaims the reading:

Reader: Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke: In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole 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 room for them in the inn. Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader: God of every nation and people, from the very beginning of creation you have made manifest your love: when our need for a Savior was great you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary. To our lives he brings joy and peace, justice, mercy and love. Lord, bless all who look upon this manger; may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise our thoughts to him, who is God-with-us and Savior of all, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Christmas songs and carols may be sung, for example, It Came Upon the Midnight Clear.



CHRISTMAS LETTER FROM BISHOP BARRES



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Christmas 2019

To the People of God of the Diocese of Rockville Centre:

In his December 1, 2019 Apostolic Letter *Admirabile Signum: On the Meaning and Importance of the Nativity Scene*, Our Holy Father Pope Francis writes:

“The nativity scene is like a living Gospel rising up from the pages of sacred Scripture...I wish to encourage the beautiful family tradition of preparing the nativity scene in the days before Christmas, but also the custom of setting it up in the workplace, in schools, hospitals, prisons and town squares.

Great imagination and creativity is always shown in employing the most diverse materials to create small masterpieces of beauty. As children, we learn from our parents and grandparents to carry on this joyful tradition, which encapsulates a wealth of popular piety. *It is my hope that this custom will never be lost and that, wherever it has fallen into disuse, it can be discovered and revived.*”

The Holy Father captures so poignantly how we creatively share our Catholic faith generation to generation through the Nativity sets and creches that bring Christ’s light and love into our homes, our parishes and our public squares.

He also captures how the poor, the outcast, the ignored, the forgotten and the vulnerable have a privileged place in every Nativity scene: “The presence of the poor and the lowly in the nativity scene remind us that God became man for the sake of those who feel most in need of his love and who ask him to draw near to them. Jesus, ‘gentle and humble in heart’ (Mt 11:29), was born in poverty and led a simple life in order to teach us to recognize what is essential and to act accordingly. The nativity scene clearly teaches that we cannot let ourselves be fooled by wealth and fleeting promises of happiness. We see Herod’s palace in the background, closed and deaf to the tidings of joy. By being born in a manger, God himself launches the only true revolution that can give hope and dignity to the disinherited and the outcast: the revolution of love, the revolution of tenderness. From the manger, Jesus proclaims, in a meek yet powerful way, the need for sharing with the poor as the path to a more human and fraternal world in which no one is excluded or marginalized.”

As we celebrate the joy of Christmas and the power and presence of the Prince of Peace in our families, in the Church and in the World, we realize at the same time that the Christmas Crib can never be separated from the agony of Calvary’s Cross.

DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Even as we rejoice this Christmas of 2019, we remember and stand with the poor, the hungry, the addicted, the mentally ill, the global refugees and non-documented immigrants, and survivors of sexual abuse.

As we pray before the Christmas manger and see the beauty, the hope, the possibility in the birth of Jesus, we are compelled to remember that far too many children do not receive the welcome and joy they deserve for the miracle of their existence.

We cannot forget this Christmas season the great sadness that New York State, through the passage of the horrific Reproductive Health Act¹, has enshrined into law the killing of innocent human beings through abortion up until the moment of actual birth and beyond, as this radical law permits the killing of those children who survive abortion.

Together, we invoke the power of the Prince of Peace and His compassionate Word found in the Beatitudes and in His call to serve the poor and the most vulnerable among us in Matthew 25. Our Lord gives us the courage and the voice as the Catholic Church in New York State and around the world to speak of the beauty, the sanctity and the dignity of every human life.

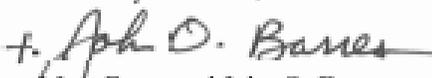
We will continue to be “a sign of contradiction” by witnessing relentlessly and courageously to the Gospel of Human Life. As is said in the first words of the *Didache*, the earliest known non-Scriptural Christian writing: “There are two Ways, one of Life and one of Death...” We will always stand with our earliest ancestors in the Christian faith in favor of the Way of Life and opposed to the Way of Death.

We will continue to seek the intercession of St. Thomas More, patron of statesmen, politicians and lawyers for the conversion of the public servants who have supported this tragic legislation.

The Cistercian biblical scholar Father Simeon writes: “The Child, while present only in Bethlehem by his poverty and weakness, is already present in the pattern of the constellations by his splendor and his glory.”²

May our praise and glory of the Prince of Peace fill our hearts and homes and give us the courage and prayerful determination to bring the Joy of the Gospel and the Splendor of Truth to every public square in New York State and throughout the world.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend John O. Barres
Bishop of Rockville Centre

¹ <https://www.drvc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/ReproductiveHealthCareAct.pdf>

² Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (Fr. Simeon), *Fire of Mercy Heart of the World: Meditations on the Gospel according to St. Matthew Volume 1* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 76.

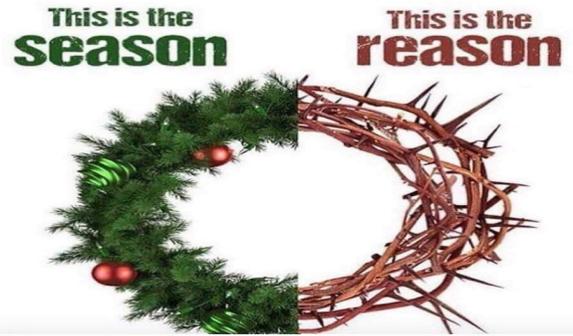
OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION

Located in the Rectory
Phone # 631.226.7725 x. 253
Email: religioused@oloph.org
Director: Mrs. April Kleinlaut
(akleinlaut@oloph.org)

OFFICE HOURS

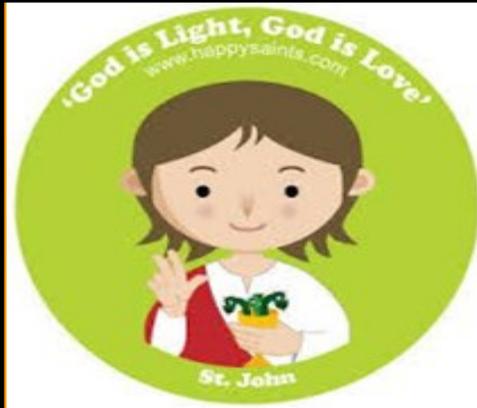
Monday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 12:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Thursday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Friday: CLOSED
Saturday: By Appointment

On Wednesday, December 25 there is no class due to Christmas. Enjoy the day with your family, and don't forget why we celebrate this Holy Day. See you at Mass!



On Saturday, December 28 there is no class due to the Christmas break. Don't forget to keep Christ in Christmas and go to Mass with your family! Keep an eye out for our special "Happy Saint" Christmas Card!

Thanks to our presenters who helped Level 3 learn different ways to pray!



Happy Saint of the Day! St. John the Apostle!
St. John, the Apostle and Evangelist, was the son of Zebedee and brother to St. James the Great. Jesus would call them the "Brothers of Thunder." John stayed by Jesus' side throughout His whole ministry and even stood by Mary when Jesus was crucified. Jesus left Mary in John's care.

PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY

- † Bereavement Ministry: Linda Arpino—631.592.1062—forubabe77@gmail.com
- † Blue Door Thrift Boutique: Tricia Buckley—631.561.5790—thebluedoor@oloph.org
- † Catholics for the Freedom of Religion: Kathy Feldman—631 225-9864—cdfeldman@optonline.net
- † Community Meal: Mary Leon—mleon719@yahoo.com
- † Homeless Ministry: Regina Muir—631.226.2709—rmuir11@aol.com—Peggy Pannullo—631. 921.5994—justin97@aol.com
- † Hospital Visitors: Peter O'Neill—631-226-6340—oneillp@optonline.net
- † Middle Ages: Gail Tonnessen—631.957.1449—gtonness@optonline.net
- † Nursing Ministry: Regina Muir—631.226.2709—rmuir11@aol.com
- † Respect Life Committee: Louise Perrotta—631.412.3831—louiseperrotta@optonline.net
- † St. Vincent de Paul Society: Deborah Deasy—631.226.7725, x. 234
- † Senior Moments/Spirituality: Virginia Beyerer—631-226-6635
- † Special Needs Ministry: Jessica Becker—631.226.6175—jbecker@oloph.org

Food Pantry List!

CANNED MEATS
WHITE RICE
BAKED BEANS
COFFEE
SHELF STABLE MILK
PANCAKE MIX/SYRUP
CANNED FRUIT
SOUP WITH MEAT
TOILETRIES
PAPER PRODUCTS

Thank you
 for your continued generosity.
 Cut out this list and bring it
 with you when you go shopping!

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Located in the “New” School Building
 Use the parking lot located on the corner of
 Gates & High Streets

631.226.7725 x. 234

The office is open:

Monday, Wednesday and Friday

9:00 a.m.—12 Noon

1st & 3rd Saturdays 1:30 p.m.—3:00 p.m.

In today's Gospel, we hear that Jesus will be named Emmanuel, which means “God is with us.” The mystery of the birth of Jesus is supremely a mystery of love. May each Christmas find us more and more like him: more humble, more holy, more happy and more full of God.

Your gifts to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul helped those who are poor and suffering to find Emmanuel and they also came to know that “God is with us.”

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!

**TO OUR ANONYMOUS SUPPORTERS WHO LEAVE FOOD ON THE
 SANCTUARY STEPS AND MONEY IN THE POOR BOXES...THANK YOU!**

...when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing
(Matthew 6:3)

This teaching of Jesus is lived and practiced by so many of our fellow parishioners at OLPH. We are blessed by secret benefactors who anonymously make regular donations of food and other necessities, leaving them on the steps of the sanctuary, or dropping off at the Pantry during office hours. Also, take a look in the Sunday bulletin weekly collection breakdown. The contributions put into the poor boxes as you leave church add up and are the major source of our funding. You know who you are, but we're not sure that you realize how much your quiet acts of charity mean to the members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at OLPH, and to those whom we strive to serve. Thank you and may God bless you!!!

PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY

HOMELESS MINISTRY

DONATIONS:

We can use gift cards (Visa, Amazon, etc.) or financial donations, and we'll do the shopping for the items most often needed.

We have a **DESPERATE** need for:

New packages of men's underwear S-3XL

New packages of men's socks

Hats and gloves

Clean, gently used men's jeans,

hoodies, waterproof coats and sneakers

Donations can be dropped off at the Parish Office from 9:00 a.m.—9:00 p.m. daily and 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. on the weekends.

MIDDLE AGES

*Are you a lady in your 40s, 50s, or 60s?
Are you looking to meet other women who share your interest in spirituality, socializing and social action?*

Our next meeting:

Tuesday, January 7

7:00 p.m. in Room 24

Call Gail Tonnessen at 631-957-1449
or email her at gtonness@optonline.net

RESPECT LIFE

UPDATE ON THE ABORTION ISSUE

- *More than 1/2 Americans do NOT believe in unrestricted abortions.*
- *One-third of all abortion clinics have closed in the last 5 years....(Life News)*
- *Over 330 abortion workers left the abortion industry through former Planned Parenthood director Abby Johnson's "And Then There Were None" ministry.*

*Do you believe in life?...
or death for the child of God?*

DONATE TO THE BLUE DOOR BOUTIQUE!

When can I drop off a donation?

We accept donations any time the Boutique is open.
Our hours of operation are M, W, F 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and
1st & 3rd Saturdays 1:30—3:00 p.m.

What do you accept?

We have limited space in the Blue Door, so we can only accept clothing in new or very good condition, household items (dishes, glasses, serving pieces), decorative items (frames, candles, artwork, etc.). **Nothing electric, no toys, games, stuffed animals, books, bedding.**

PLEASE NOTE: We are also **UNABLE** to accept holiday items **AFTER** the holiday has passed as we no longer have space to store these items until the next year.



Entrance to Blue Door Boutique is located by the driveway between the Village Museum and the Convent.

THE
*blue*door
BOUTIQUE

HOURS OF OPERATION
M, W, F 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
1st & 3rd SAT 1:30-3:00 p.m.

SERVING AND SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Parish Phone: (631) 226-7725 Parish Fax: (631) 225-9597

Directory of Phone Extensions

Name	Ext	Email
Carmel Becker, Bulletin	246	cbecker@oloph.org
Carole Carrano, Parish Secretary	212	ccarrano@oloph.org
Linda Coppola, Business Office Assistant	214	lcoppola@oloph.org
Thomas Crennan, Business Manager	204	tcrennan@oloph.org
Msgr. Joseph DeGrocco, Pastor	206	msgrjoe@oloph.org
Fr. Fidelis Ezeani, Associate Pastor	226	fadaprince4christ@yahoo.com
Faith Formation Office	253	religioused@oloph.org
Christopher Ferraro, Director of Music	210	cferraro@oloph.org
April Kleinlaut, Director of Faith Formation	257	akleinlaut@oloph.org
Rectory Reception Desk	200	
St. Vincent de Paul	234	stvincentdepaul@oloph.org
Josephine Vagelatos, Administrative Assistant to the Pastor	206	jvagelatos@oloph.org
Fr. Frank Zero, Associate Pastor	203	fzero@oloph.org

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Baptism ceremonies are held on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. Parents wishing to have a child baptized must attend a baptism preparation session before the baptism; these sessions are held on the first and third Thursdays of the month excluding holidays. Contact the Parish Office to begin the process of having your child baptized.

PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK & ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Those who are seriously ill or facing surgery, as well as those in danger of death, should receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Please call the Parish Office and ask for one of our priests.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

Adults who wish to be baptized, or who have been baptized in another Christian faith and wish to become Catholic, or who have been baptized Catholic and wish to be confirmed and receive Holy Communion, are invited to join the process of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Please contact Jeffrey Gaab at (631) 965-0076 or e-mail at jsg375@gmail.com to begin the process.

ADULT CONFIRMATION

Adults who have been baptized Catholic and who have received Holy Communion but who still need the Sacrament of Confirmation should enroll in our Adult Confirmation Classes. Please contact Deacon Robert Becker at 631-226-6175 or e-mail to DeaconRobert@oloph.org.

THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Please contact the Parish Office at least SIX MONTHS before the desired date of your wedding.

YOUR PASTORAL COUNCIL

Vincent Boccanfuso
Eileen Corticchia (Chair)
Msgr. Joe DeGrocco
Jeffrey Gaab
Joselyn Kalt
Mary Leon
Rachelle Louis-Jacques
Carlton Mitchell
Kevin Sabella, Jr.
Kevin Sabella, Sr.
Adele Venezia

Please feel free to speak to any member of the Pastoral Council with any questions you might have.

YOUR PARISH TRUSTEES

Gerry Chille
John Reynolds

YOUR PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEE

David Barrett
Bill Bendernagel
Gerry Chille (Chair)
Thomas Crennan
Meg Danaher, CFP®, CLU®
Msgr. Joe DeGrocco
Christine Donovan
Marie Gagneron
Kenneth Hale
Bob Meade
Bob Mehm
John Reynolds
Kevin Sabella, Sr.

Please feel free to speak to any member of the Finance Committee with any questions you might have.

YOUR PARISH LITURGY COMMITTEE

Fauvette Auguste
Deacon Robert Becker
Mark Costantino
Msgr. Joe DeGrocco
Chris Ferraro
MaryAnn Haas
Jenine Jimenez-Spina
Denise Martinez
Barbara McPhail
Deacon Doug Smith
Mike Williams

Please feel free to speak to any member of the Liturgy Committee with any questions you might have.

PRAYING FOR AND SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

BANNS OF MARRIAGE

Please pray for the following members of our parish community preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony.

Second Announcement:

***David Miller, Jr. & Grace Moran
Dylan Kurt & Christina Chille***

WE CELEBRATE

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people.

-Rite of Baptism



Lilly Jay Renna

**We welcome the newest members
of the Catholic community here at OLPH!**

WE REMEMBER

We remember those who have died in our parish community this week:

***Marlene Rief
Hector Rodriguez***

“O God, who through the ending of present things open up the beginning of things to come, grant, we pray, that the soul of your servant may be led to you to attain the inheritance of eternal redemption.”

LOST & FOUND

Are you missing something? Keys, wallet, glasses... Check the “Lost & Found.”

All items found after Masses and events in the church must be picked up in the sacristy no later than December 31.

All remaining items will be donated.



WE BELIEVE

We pray for the sick of our parish...

<i>James Gallagher</i>	<i>Patricia &</i>
<i>Bunny Rieger</i>	<i>Richard Kleczkowski</i>
<i>Marion Klein</i>	<i>Marjorie Santoli</i>
<i>Rose Ricca</i>	<i>Joe Juliano</i>
<i>Bill Doran</i>	<i>Robert Scott</i>
<i>Joseph Chiusa</i>	<i>Linda Baffa</i>
<i>Louise Durko</i>	<i>Richard DeVilla</i>
<i>Lawrence Falco</i>	<i>John Pius</i>
<i>Toby Leger</i>	<i>Maren Tormey</i>
<i>Gordon G. Hinds</i>	<i>Joann Puleo</i>
<i>Nora R. Mc Mahon</i>	<i>Loretto Dinardo</i>

If a family member or close friend is ill, please let us know so our community can pray for them. To have your name or the name of a loved one listed in our parish bulletin, please call the Parish Office. **Please make sure the person is aware the request has been made and that they are agreeable with their name printed in the bulletin.** The name will remain on the list for about four weeks.

PERPETUAL HELP MASS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2019 5:00 P.M. MASS

<i>Lucy Bianco</i>	<i>Requested by Deborah Hawry Lynko</i>
<i>Alex Polanco</i>	<i>Requested by Thelma Polanco</i>
<i>Ben Lauricella</i>	<i>Requested by Catherine Lubrano</i>
<i>Benedict Barbera</i>	<i>Requested by Stella Barbera</i>
<i>The Intentions of RoseMarie Parthe (Living)</i>	
<i>Walter Mischke</i>	<i>Requested by The Dietz Family</i>
<i>Therese Zambrano (Samara)</i>	<i>Requested by Elena Cunningham, Jennifer, Warren & Samara Spann</i>
<i>Francis McGovern</i>	<i>Requested by RoseAnn Koch</i>
<i>John Mathes</i>	<i>Requested by Eric & Stephanie Kopf</i>
<i>Edward Doelger</i>	<i>Requested by Diane Doelger</i>

MASSES FOR THE WEEK**PARISH SCHEDULE**

MONDAY, December 23— LATE ADVENT WEEKDAY <i>(Saint John of Kanty, Priest)</i>	
6:30	Filomena & Salvatore Mascio
12:15	John Wesley Cole, Jr.
TUESDAY, December 24— LATE ADVENT WEEKDAY	
6:30	Dominick M. Barone
THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD <i>(Christmas)</i>	
5:00	For the People of the Parish
12:00	Dominick M. Barone
WEDNESDAY, December 25— THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD <i>(Christmas)</i>	
8:00	For the Intentions of the Christmas Spiritual Bouquet
10:00	For the Intentions of the Christmas Spiritual Bouquet
12:00	For the Intentions of the Christmas Spiritual Bouquet
THURSDAY, December 26— SAINT STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR	
6:30	Catherine Lundberg
12:15	Gaspar & Maria Piazza
FRIDAY, December 27— SAINT JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST	
6:30	For the Repose of the Souls of the McCarthy Family
12:15	Albert & Ann Fry
SATURDAY, December 28— THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS	
8:00	Salvatore Bologna
Saturday Afternoon (Sunday Anticipated): THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH	
5:00	Dominick & Ann DeGirolamo
Sunday, December 29 THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH	
8:00	For the People of the Parish
10:00	For the Living & Deceased Members of the Knights of Columbus
12:00	Burt Koza
5:00	Doreen Dormer

Monday, December 23, 2019

9:00 a.m.	St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry	Room 24
10:00 a.m.	Blue Door Boutique	Convent
12:45 p.m.	Devotions	Church
1:00 p.m.	Adult Choir Rehearsal	Room 18
4:30 p.m.	Youth Choir Rehearsal	Church

Tuesday, December 24, 2019

**ALL OFFICES WILL CLOSE AT 12:00 NOON.
NO EVENING RECEPTION DESK HOURS.**

6:00 p.m.	Alcoholics Anonymous	Cafeteria
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Wednesday, December 25, 2019

**ALL OFFICES REMAIN CLOSED AND ACTIVITIES
CANCELLED FOR CHRISTMAS. THE RECTORY
RECEPTION DESK WILL RE-OPEN THURSDAY
DECEMBER 26 AT 9:00 A.M.**

Thursday, December 26, 2019

1:00 p.m.-on	Church closed for cleaning	Church
7:00 p.m.	Spanish Prayer Group	Cafeteria
7:00 p.m.	Bereavement Ministry	Room 20/22
8:00 p.m.	Narcotics Anonymous	Room 24

Friday, December 27, 2019

9:00 a.m.	St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry	Room 24
10:00 a.m.	Blue Door Boutique	Convent

Saturday, December 28, 2019

8:30, 10:00	<i>No Religious Ed. Classes</i>	
12:00 p.m.	Bereavement Ministry	Room 22/24
4:00 p.m.	Confessions	Church
6:00 p.m.	Evening Prayer	Church
6:30 p.m.	Alcoholics Anonymous	Cafeteria

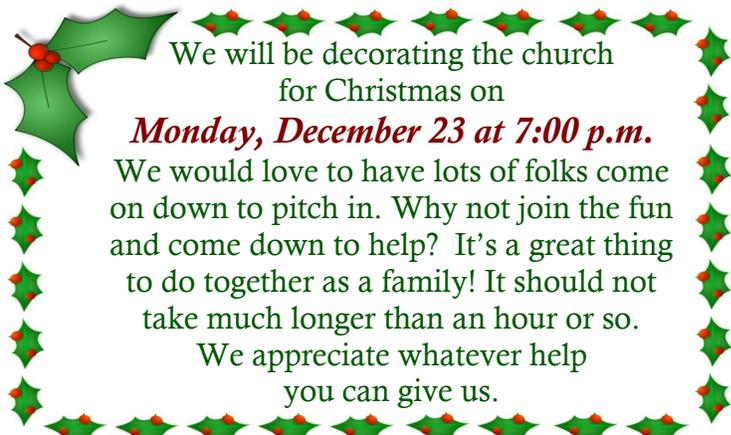
Sunday, December 29, 2019

9:15 a.m.	RCIC	Room 18
2:00 p.m.	Baptisms	Church
2:30 p.m.	Wedding Rehearsal	Church
6:00 p.m.	Evening Prayer	Church
6:00 p.m.	Alcoholics Anonymous	Cafeteria



OFFERING UPDATE December 14/15, 2019

Mass Time	Attendance	# of Envelopes	Weekly Collection
5:00 p.m.	282	100	\$2,522.00
8:00 a.m.	246	133	3,357.00
10:00 a.m.	487	122	3,187.00
12:00 p.m.	370	121	3,190.00
5:00 p.m.	237	47	1,466.00
Coin			8.73
Mail-ins:			678.00
Children's Env.		16	32.42
Faith Direct			2,351.50
TOTAL	1,622	539	\$16,792.65
2018 total	1,669	542	\$17,441.77
Candles			\$1,082.40
Poor Box			\$386.05



We will be decorating the church for Christmas on

Monday, December 23 at 7:00 p.m.

We would love to have lots of folks come on down to pitch in. Why not join the fun and come down to help? It's a great thing to do together as a family! It should not take much longer than an hour or so.

We appreciate whatever help you can give us.

**HELP ALSO NEEDED
FOR OUTDOOR DECORATING**

We could use some help with our outdoor decorations—putting up the Christmas decorations which will be used on the fence along Wellwood Avenue. This decorating will be done on **Monday, December 23 starting at 10:00 a.m.** Please consider coming down and helping out; it would be greatly appreciated! Thank you!

DEADLINES FOR BULLETIN

All requests for items printed in the bulletin must first have approval from Msgr. DeGrococo or ministry moderator. *All material must be submitted as a Word document* no later than the dates listed below to Carmel Becker at cbecker@oloph.org. *Editing and sizes are at the discretion of the editor.*

December 29—passed
January 5—passed
January 12—January 3

**SUPER 72 RAFFLE
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR
DECEMBER 2019 WINNERS**

\$1000 - Ms. Jane E. Niederhausen
\$250 - John Neilan
\$100 - Rose Pezzanite
\$100 - Emily Kavanagh
\$100 - Anne Gravano
\$100 - Louise-Annette Vita
Christmas \$250 Drawing—
Ms. Karen Warnetski

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Our Lady of Perpetual
Help Church.

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Amazon donates.

[Go to smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)

PREPARING FOR**Sunday, December 29, 2019****THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH**

*The angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said,
“Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel.”*

Matthew 2:19-20

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

The author of this first reading, Jesus Ben Sira, was a Jewish wisdom teacher writing around 200 BC who provided instruction on how to live wisely. He gave advice for right living on many topics but underlying all his advice was the notion that we should love, hope, trust, and be humble before God. From this attitude, all else would flow, including how we are to treat our parents, which is what we hear today. God has given us parents with authority over us for our good and so we should love and respect them, especially when they are old and frail. Just as we should love and respect God, our ultimate father, so we should love and respect our earthly parents. If we do, abundant blessings will be ours.

Colossians 3:12-21

Paul addresses this letter to church members he calls “chosen ones, holy and beloved” of God. That’s us, too. So since we are holy and beloved of Christ, we should act that way. As God has poured out his love to us, we should pour it out to each other, both in the church and in our own families. To that end, Paul gives some instructions to each member of the family—husbands, wives, and children. While the advice for wives to be subordinate to their husbands may sound jarring to today’s ears, what would have sounded even more shocking to the original recipients of this letter would be the advice that husbands love their wives. In the first century, husbands typically had complete control over their wives, yet Paul reminds them that their wives are also “holy and beloved” and worthy of the same love that Christ gave us. That’s good advice for ears of any time to hear.

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

We hear in today’s Gospel how Joseph took care of his young family by leading them to safety in Egypt and then back again to Israel. Each time, an angel sent by God told him in a dream what to do. What would you do if an angel told you in a dream to do something? Would you uproot your family and move them to a foreign country? What faith and strength Joseph had to trust so completely in God! We pray for that faith and strength for each of us today.

Readings for the Week

Take time each day to read the daily readings of the Church.

Monday, December 23, 2019:

Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24
+ Luke 1:57-66

Tuesday, December 24, 2019:

(Morn) 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a,
16 + Luke 1:67-79
(Vigil) Isaiah 62:1-5 + Acts 13:16-17,
22-25 + Matthew 1:1-25
(Midnight) Isaiah 9:1-6
+ Titus 2:11-14 + Luke 2:1-14

Wednesday, December 25, 2019:

(Day) Isaiah 52:7-10
+ Hebrews 1:1-6
+ John 1:1-18

Thursday, December 26, 2019:

Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59
+ Matthew 10:17-22

Friday, December 27, 2019:

1 John 1:1-4 + John 20:1a, 2-8

Saturday, December 28, 2019:

1 John 1:5-2:2
+ Matthew 2:13-18

Sunday, December 29, 2019:

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
+ Colossians 3:12-21
+ Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

THE COMMUNION RITE

Sharing a meal is a very human experience. When family and friends gather around a table more is accomplished than consuming food. Relationships are built; unity is fostered; bonds are strengthened. It is actually this experience of meal-sharing that can help us appreciate our experience of Holy Communion.

The theological dimension, too, helps us to understand this sacrament. In the Old Testament, God asked the Chosen People share in various sacrifices (cf. Exodus 12:1-8; Leviticus 7:11-19). Depending on the sacrifice, the faithful were encouraged to eat the meat, grain or fruit of the offering. But Jesus Christ turned the former ideas of ritual sacrifices inside-out. Jesus became both Priest and Victim! We still feast on his everlasting sacrifice when we follow his command to “take and eat” and “take and drink” (Mk 14: 12-24; 1 Cor 11:23-26). The Lord commanded that “his Body and Blood should be received as spiritual food by those of the faithful who are properly disposed” (GIRM 80). As so, at the Lord’s invitation, we gather around his altar of sacrifice and dine on his sacred meal.

The Communion Rite can be examined in three distinct parts: The preparation for Communion, the reception of Holy Communion, and the period after Communion.

Preparing for Holy Communion

First, we take some time to prepare to receive Jesus. We are about to enter into a life-changing, intimate encounter with Christ and we need to prepare. We begin with the prayer that Christ himself taught us to pray (Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:1-4) — the Lord’s Prayer.

In the third century, Tertullian reminded us that the **Lord’s Prayer** is “truly the summary of the whole Gospel.” It makes sense, therefore, that this prayer is perfectly placed just before we are to receive the Eucharist. In it, we turn to Jesus’ Father and ours. We give God praise, we pray for our needs (our “daily bread”), and we ask God to forgive our sins. All this should be a necessary precondition for the reception of Holy Communion. The priest, alone, prays an “embolism” (a brief insertion) in which he asks God to deliver us from all evil, free us from sin, and keep us safe from all distress. The concluding acclamation (*For the kingdom...*) has its origins in eastern traditions and it has long been associated with the Lord’s Prayer. (Other Christian communities often make it part of the prayer.)

The Kiss of Peace is an ancient gesture. Saint Paul reminded the Christians of Rome to “greet one another with a holy kiss” (Romans 16:16), and it is mentioned throughout early Christian literature. In the Middle Ages, an actual kiss was replaced by the use of “pax board” — a wooden or brass board which was passed around for everyone to kiss. In recent times, the rite of peace has been revived, but the gesture is usually that of a handshake. When we exchange a sign of peace, we show our willingness to live by the peace of Christ and we pray that the peace of Christ may dwell in those whom we encounter.

The ritual of the **Breaking of the Bread** originates in the Gospel narratives of the Last Supper. Saint Paul tells us that the one loaf of bread is a sign of our oneness in Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). Using larger, unleavened loaves at our Eucharistic celebrations could foster an awareness of this fundamental symbolism. Most often, we use individual hosts which are distributed from one vessel into multiple communion vessels (ciboria). During the Breaking of the Bread, the ancient litany *Lamb of God* is sung or recited.

Distribution of Holy Communion

The entirety of the Mass — the Introductory Rites, the readings, the intercessions, etc. — has been orienting us toward unity. Even in the Eucharistic Prayer we prayed “that partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit” (Eucharistic Prayer II). The source and climax of this unity is our reception of the sacrament of unity — Holy Communion.

Scripture reminds us that we, though many, partake of one bread; we are members of one body (1 Cor 10:16, 17). In Holy Communion, the Body of Christ gives life to the Body of Christ, the Church. The minister, while holding the consecrated host, simply says “The Body of Christ.” We respond “Amen.” This is an Aramaic word, translated literally as “so be it” or more simply as “I believe.” This exchange of faith is actually very ancient — we find it in the writings of St. Augustine (Sermon 262, c. 405-411).

The restoration of the chalice to the faithful was one of the most significant liturgical developments in recent decades. When we receive the Blood of Christ, we likewise respond “Amen.” This is a fuller sign of our sharing in the one sacrifice of Christ who shed his Blood for us. [See the “Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America” (April 7, 2002) as well as GIRM 281-287.]

The normal posture for receiving Holy Communion in the dioceses of the United States is standing, unless an individual might choose to kneel. When we receive the Body of Christ or the Blood of Christ, we bow our heads as a sign of reverence. The consecrated host can be received on the tongue or in the hand at the discretion of the communicant (GIRM 160).

Together, we process to receive Holy Communion. As a further sign of our unity, a Communion chant, hymn, or the prescribed antiphon is sung. It begins when the priest is receiving Holy Communion and continues as long as the faithful are receiving Communion (GIRM 86, 159). The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* says this music expresses “the spiritual union of the communicants by means of the unity of their voices, to show gladness of heart, and to bring out more clearly the ‘communitarian’ character of the procession to receive the Eucharist” (GIRM 86).

Period after Communion

After receiving Holy Communion, the faithful may observe a period of silence. This silence is an opportunity to prayerfully thank God for his gift of the Eucharist. A psalm, canticle of praise or suitable hymn (GIRM 88) may also promote meditation. This music is not meant to be a solo performance, but a hymn in which the entire assembly takes part (ibid.) Finally, at the priest’s prompting, the faithful unite their intentions to the Prayer after Communion. The Priest prays for the community of faith, asking that they may experience the effects of Holy Communion.

CONCLUSION

Jesus not only comes to you and to me. He comes to us. Our entire community should be changed because of that. How can we better live out our Eucharistic communion? ■



Written by Rita Thron and Fr. Ryan Rojo.

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