

... & They
Shall Name
Him

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Words:
Music:
Arr. & Harm.

Piano
Emmanuel

O come, O come Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

Oh, come, oh, come, great Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In Ancient times once gave the law
In cloud, and majesty and awe.

Oh, come, strong branch of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satans tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave.
Oh, come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heavenly home:
Make safe the way that leads on high
And close the path to misery.

O Come Thou Dayspring, from on high



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THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 18, 2016

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17

The Mass of Anticipation for the Fourth Sunday of Advent
 4:00PM Michael & Katherine Banas—Memorial

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

7:30 AM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church
 9:00 AM Janet Fayle—8th Anniversary
 10:30 AM Kate Bedard—7th Anniversary
 5:00PM Filomena Gruber—Birthday Remembrance

MONDAY, DECEMBER 19

Late Advent Weekday
 7:30AM Carolyn Lombardi—Birthday Remembrance

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20

Late Advent Weekday
 7:30AM Antoinette Mulcahy—Memorial

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21

Late Advent Weekday/St. Peter Canisius, Priest & Doctor of the Church
 7:30AM Fred Buoro—Memorial

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22

Late Advent Weekday
 7:30AM Michael Monteleone—Birthday Remembrance

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23

Late Advent Weekday/St. John of Kanty, Priest
 7:30AM Deceased of Miller & Loeffler Families—Mem.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24—CHRISTMAS EVE

Late Advent Weekday
 8:30AM Pat Franzone—14th Anniversary
Vigil Mass for the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord
 4:00PM Albert Catanio—Memorial

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25—CHRISTMAS

The Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord

12:00AM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church
 7:30 AM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church
 9:00 AM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church
 10:30AM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church





Dear Parishioners:

One of the most popular songs of this time of preparation for Christmas is the hymn "*O Come, O Come Emmanuel*." The word 'Emmanuel', as you know, means "*God is with us*." This is the great message of Christmas.

Christmas is not just a remembrance of a past event where God was with us when He was born, and then for the next 33 years. Nor is it just our hopeful anticipation of His coming at the end of time. Christ is with us here and now, at all times and in every circumstance.

Just before He ascended into Heaven, He made this promise: "*behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age*." God is faithful to His promises. We, in faith, are called to trust those promises, especially when we do not understand or cannot see His presence in the midst of our difficult circumstances in life.

So we must turn to our patroness Mary and look to her example for inspiration. She found herself in a seemingly impossible situation when told by the Angel Gabriel that she would bear the Son of God. She naturally asks a question of the angel. It is not a question born of doubt but from wonder at how this great mystery would be accomplished through her.

Following the example of Mary, when we find ourselves facing that which is seemingly impossible, we are called to make an act of faith, trusting that God is indeed with us and that with God "*all things are possible*."

It does not mean that we cannot ask the question 'how' or 'why,' but we have to be content that we may not receive an answer right away, or at all on this side of eternity. We place our faith completely in God without any

reservations or conditions, trusting in His presence among us.

As we draw close to the Feast of the Incarnation and the celebration of the birth of Lord, let us be reminded that by His entrance into the world, He has come to remain with us. His birth has brought a great light to "*the people who walked in darkness*." As we hear in the Gospel on Christmas morning, that "*light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it*."

No darkness can ever overcome the light of Christ dwelling among us. Christmas is a time for us to renew our faith in that promise, and to remain steadfast in following that light which leads us to Him in Heaven.

During this final week of Advent, let us open our hearts that we might be prepared to welcome Emmanuel, God with us, at Mass, at Christmas, and every day of our lives. Let us truly believe in the meaning of Christmas, that God is with us yesterday, today and forever.

I invite you to consider making a good Confession before Christmas and truly prepare yourself spiritually for the feast. Pope Francis reminds us: "*God never ever tires of forgiving us! Well, the problem is that we ourselves tire, we do not want to ask, we grow weary of asking for forgiveness. He never tires of forgiving, but at times we get tired of asking for forgiveness*."

On Monday, December 19th we have added an extra hour of Confession time at Our Lady of Mercy. Beginning at 6:00pm until 8:00pm there will be two priests available each hour for Confessions. We've invited some guest priests to help. So take the

time to examine your conscience, confess your sins, and receive God's mercy and forgiveness. It is the best gift you could get for Christmas!

I am happy to announce that Fr. Connors will indeed be home from Rome for Christmas, and is staying with us at OLM. Also, Fr. Nathan Ricci, who was ordained just last June for our Diocese, is also coming home from his studies in Rome and is to stay with us at OLM. You will see both of them around OLM at Christmas as they will be celebrating Masses during their stay here.

I offer my gratitude to the many parishioners who were so generous to the OLM Outreach Collection this month. These funds help us serve the poor and needy, locally, with Christmas food and gift cards. Also, we are able to financially support the homeless and hungry across our state through various Catholic Charities like Emmanuel House and McCauley House.

Also, thanks to some generous OLM School families we were able to help several Refugee Families who have been relocated to RI by our Diocesan Office of Refugee Services. These refugees from across the world arrive here with nothing but the clothing on their backs. The generosity of our school families is greatly appreciated.

Take some time this week to pray and reflect on Christmas. Be sure to go to Confession before Christmas! *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!* Be well. Do good. God Bless. Go Pats! A very Merry Christmas to all!

Father Healey



What is Prevenient Grace?

Last week the Church celebrated the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Catholic priests around the world prayed during the Offertory Prayer: "...grant that, as we profess her, on account of your prevenient grace, to be untouched by any stain of sin, so, through her intercession, we may be delivered from all our faults." This is a curious word that the Church uses in her liturgy. We do not often hear of "prevenient grace," yet it remains a concept that illustrates for us God's gratuity and how He moves our lives.

Further, prevenient grace is not just something that applies to Mary. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraph 2670 we read: "'No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit.' Every time we begin to pray to Jesus it is the Holy Spirit who draws us on the way of prayer by his *prevenient* grace."

So what is prevenient grace? It is the idea that prior to our own movement toward God, God's grace is already present in us moving us toward him. Grace is unconditional and precedes our movements toward God. The first reception of grace is not something given to someone because of a decision to accept it. Our *free* acceptance to say yes to God and follow Him is itself the effect of grace.

Some erroneously divide the spiritual life into two moments. They incorrectly suggest that first an individual professes faith in God and subsequently God dispenses grace to the individual. God's grace cannot be frustrated. Throughout the entire process of a person coming to believe in God, His grace goes before and sustains the person.

This is a complex topic, but it gets to the heart of a very important truth. God does not wait for us to love Him; He loves us first. The concept of prevenient grace illustrates such passages as: "In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that He [first] loved us and sent His Son as expiation for our sins" (1 Jn. 4:10). God is the Father in the prodigal son, who runs out to greet His son. He does not wait for us to come to Him, but He searches us out. Once He finds us the good things that we do are inspired by the grace of God. Mary is the preeminent example of God's first movement of love to all of us.

If you have a question about the Catholic Faith, email your questions to Father Barrow at associate@olmparish.org and it might appear in the bulletin!

Weekly Collection 

December 11, 2016

Weekly.....	\$12,195.00
EFT.....	\$2,959.50
	Total=\$15,154.50
Retired Religious Fund.....	\$7,098.00
Immaculate Conception.....	\$2,965.50
Outreach.....	\$867.50
Annual (to date).....	\$79,987.00

If you have been away on vacation or visiting another parish, we kindly ask you to please make up your missed budget envelopes. We depend solely upon your weekly support to meet our weekly parish expenses.

Thank you for your generous support!

Please remember Our Lady of Mercy Church in your will or estate.



SECOND COLLECTIONS
Next Weekend: The Christmas Collection



We offer our prayers and condolences to the family of Our Lady of Mercy Parishioner **Richard H. Sceery** whose Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated here last week.

May he rest in peace.





Religious Education NEWS

- All RE Classes meet this weekend at regular time for the Christmas Program.
- No RE Classes next weekend due to Christmas.
- All RE Classes resume on January 8, 2017!



Outreach Update

- The **OLM Food Pantry** is always in need of non-perishable food items. Please deposit all donated food in the box in the Church vestibule.
- For more information, contact OLM Outreach Director Doug Green at 884-4410 or via email at outreach@olmparish.org



- Christmas Vacation begins after a half-day on Tuesday, December 20th. School resumes on Tuesday, January 3, 2017.
 - **Science Olympiad:** OLM School is looking for a few volunteers to help coach and mentor students as they prepare for the Science Olympiad. Please contact OLM Science Teacher, Dr. Husak at dhusak@olmschool.org
- Discover the OLM Advantage!**
www.olmschool.org

4th Sunday of Advent



On this Fourth Sunday of Advent, the liturgy focuses on the Blessed Virgin Mary whose story distills the essence of the season as no other figure can.

Her “yes” to God made Christ’s first coming as we know it possible while her unquestioning faith and trust furnish us with a model to follow as we prepare for his second coming at the end of time.



This bulletin insert was written by Marion Eagen, a liturgist and musician in the diocese of Scranton, Pa. © 2002 Resource Publications, Inc., 160 E. Virginia St. #290, San Jose, CA 95112, (408) 286-8505. All rights reserved.

**CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE AT
OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH**



The Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord

Saturday, December 24th

Christmas Vigil Mass at 4:00pm

Concert of Christmas Music at 11:30pm

Sunday, December 25th

Mass of Christmas Night at 12:00am

Masses of Christmas Day at

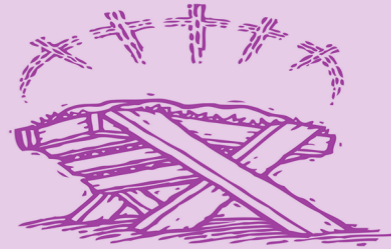
7:30am, 9:00am, & 10:30am

No 5pm Mass on Christmas Day



masstimes.org

MASS TIMES FOR TRAVEL



Christmas Confessions

Monday, December 19th

6:00PM —8:00PM

Two Priests per Hour, including Guest Clergy

No Confessions on Saturday, December 24th

The Lord never tires of forgiving, it is we who tire of asking for forgiveness.

Pope Francis



**Office Hours
For Christmas**



OLM Parish Office

Friday, December 23rd

Office Closes at Noon

Monday, December 26th

Office Closed

Friday, December 30th

Office Closes at Noon

Monday, January 2, 2017

Office is Closed

Please plan accordingly.