



“ Blessed are you
among women, and
blessed is the fruit
of your womb.
And how does this
happen to me, that
the mother of
my Lord should
come to me? ”

LUKE 1:42-43



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Mass Intentions
 for the Week

**THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
 DECEMBER 23, 2018**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22

The Mass of Anticipation for 4th Sunday of Advent
 4:00PM Michael Alix—Birthday Remembrance

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23

Fourth Sunday of Advent
 7:30 AM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church
 9:00 AM Albert Edward Hyde—8th Anniversary
 10:30AM Janet Fayle—10th Anniversary
 5:00PM Dina Coelho—Memorial

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24

Late Advent Weekday
 7:30AM Pat Franzone—16th Anniversary

Vigil of Christmas
 4:00PM Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25

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

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26

St. Stephen, the First Martyr
 7:30AM Deceased of Miller & Loeffler Families—Mem.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27

St. John, Apostle & Evangelist
 7:30AM Fred & Evelyn Buoro—Memorial

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs
 7:30AM John Gardner—Memorial

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29

Fifth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord
 8:30AM Deceased of the Primeau Family—Memorial

The Mass of Anticipation for the Feast of the Holy Family
 4:00PM John Murphy—10th Anniversary

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
 7:30 AM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church
 9:00 AM Vincenza Masiello—Birthday Remembrance
 10:30AM Gene & Mary Verri—6th Anniversary
 5:00PM Special Intention





Dear Parishioners:

In Austria, celebrations are underway this year to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the beloved Christmas carol, "Silent Night." In the original German it is "Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht", which means "Silent Night, Holy Night." It is the most popular Christmas Carol of all time and the version sung by Bing Crosby is the third best-selling single of all-time.

The original church where "Silent Night" was first heard, St. Nikolai in Oberndorf, Austria is now a pilgrimage site. Every year on Christmas Eve the bells chime to the tune of the world-renowned Christmas carol from the church tower as pilgrims gather for Holy Mass.

"Silent Night" was composed and first performed during the difficult and impoverished times of Europe following the Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815).

These wars which had caused such great hardship had just come to an end when early on the morning of Christmas Eve, 1818, Father Joseph Mohr of the newly established St. Nicholas Parish requested the local school teacher and organist, Franz Gruber to write a "fitting melody" for his lyrics.

Gruber was to compose a melody for two solo voices together to be accompanied with choir. The parish priest wanted the music to be beautifully wedded to the God inspired words to "Silent Night." Later that day, Franz Gruber presented his melody and music to Fr Joseph, who was overjoyed at the work.

Since the parish organ

was malfunctioning, Fr Mohr asked the parts to be written with an accompanying guitar. He would sing the tenor part and provide the accompanying guitar while Gruber sang the bass. The song was met with "general approval by all" by the small and impoverished congregation of St. Nikolai.

This beautiful hymn is written about one of the most Holy Nights in all of history. It reflects how God is still present in the stillness and silence, not only on Christmas Eve, but every day. Yes, our loving God is always present in the silence of our hearts.

"Silent Night" reminds us of our need for silent prayer and adoration of our loving God in our lives. Such prayer and adoration have never been in greater need in the midst of the loud and noisy culture in which we now live. This Christmas Carol beautifully and simply reflects Fr. Mohr's desire to bring peace to the anxious people of his congregation.

These simple folk were living in the midst of the great economic hardship of post-war Europe including hunger, homelessness, unemployment, poverty and great suffering. The prophetic Fr Mohr penned the beautifully inspired words of "Silent Night" to which Franz Gruber leant his musical gift. These two men together created one of the loveliest marriages of words and music in any Christmas Carol.

Christmas Eve has always been a most sacred and holy night. In the Church, we sing sacred hymns and carols. We bless our crèche. We proclaim the birth of our Lord. And we

prayerfully sing: "Silent Night, Holy Night, all is calm, all is bright, round yon' virgin, mother and child, holy infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace; sleep in heavenly peace."

Robert Cardinal Sarah in his book, the Power of Silence, reminds us: "Through silence, we return to our heavenly origin, where there is nothing but calm, peace, repose, silent contemplation, and adoration of the radiant face of God."

As we approach the most silent and holy of nights on Christmas, join us at Mass to commemorate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Join us in joyful song and silent prayer as we give thanks to God for the gift of His Son born on Christmas. Join us as we call upon the strong Son of God to help carry our crosses.

Before we enter the joyful noise and distractions of family celebrations, take some time to come in silent adoration before the Christ Child. Kneel humbly before the King of Kings and Prince of Peace. Make Christmas 2018, a silent night, a holy night of faith, hope and love.

On behalf of Fr. Barrow, Fr. Connors, Deacon Dowd, Sister Lourdes and Sister Emma, I wish you a very Merry Christmas! Please know of our prayers for you as we celebrate Masses on Christmas. May the blessings of the Christ Child be yours this Christmas. A Happy and Holy Christmas!

Father Healey



What is a gift?

Everyone knows that Christmas is about gift giving. As such, in the hustle and bustle of Christmas a pivotal and timely work to consider is Josef Pieper's Leisure the Basis of Culture. In it Pieper argues that the key to the moral and spiritual crisis of modern society consist in the refusal to receive and accept a gift. He asks the question, most appropriate to ask at Christmas: Have we lost the ability to receive gifts? Or to put it another way: Do we think that everything we receive is acquired, earned or achieved?

Subconsciously, what we call "gifts" during this season are no longer gifts in the proper sense of the term. Case in point: I ask our school children the following question: if I give student Michael a gift but I do not give a gift to every other children is that fair? The students respond: "No!" Then I have to remind them that a gift is something unearned and hence does not concern fairness. Likewise I hear family and friends say: I need to get something for so and so; I expect to get presents from my parents, I deserve/want this for Christmas, and so on. When we go out shopping for Christmas, there is the expectation that presents will be under the tree. Ironically at Christmas it is so easy to forget the true meaning of "gift."

All of this points to a more serious spiritual crisis: that we are unable to receive the great gift of salvation which God offers to us. The grace of salvation is something entirely unearned and undeserved. Understood as such, it leads to gratitude, an essential part of the spiritual life. Having received grace as a gift and been transformed by it, we are then able to give and be a conduit of grace to others. Worship, and particularly the Mass, where we receive the incarnate Christ who came at Christmas, is the source and summit of grace. When we are bored at Mass it signals our inability to be at rest and see the Mass as gift rather than as entertainment. How we ourselves give to others, in our workplaces and in our families, is based first on what we receive. You can't give what you don't receive. And our salvation/rescue can only be received.

Receptivity concerns not only objects and things, but also concepts, ideas, and values. The person who cannot receive is someone who determines for himself or herself what is true and or value. Truth itself is no longer received from without, but produced from within. In such a mindset, God's offer of salvation is often ignored or seen as unimportant.

In reality, everything we have, our talents, our ideas, our time, our families, our workplaces, our lives; all of these things are gifts to us from our Creator God. I am not suggesting that we stop exchanging gifts. Rather, I am suggesting that we are conscious of the meaning of gift this Christmas.

Weekly Collection

Weekly Budget results are not available due to the Christmas print deadline.

Thank You for Your Generous Support!

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

OLM Parish Office Hours



The OLM Parish Office is closed for Christmas from Noon on Friday, December 21st and reopens on Thursday, December 27th at 8:00AM.

Merry Christmas

*"...this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
...the babe, the son of Mary."*



***The Our Lady of Mercy Parish Staff
wish all parishioners a Merry
Christmas and a Happy New Year!***



We wish all our OLM School students, families, faculty, staff and alumni a Blessed Christmas Season. Enjoy the Christmas break and see you on Wednesday, January 2, 2019! Happy New Year!

Mr. Scott W. Fuller
Principal



We thank you for your generous support of OLM Outreach throughout the year and especially in this Christmas Season. We wish you the Blessings of the Christ Child at Christmas and the New Year!

Gratefully,
Doug Green



We wish all our Religious Education students, families and teachers a Merry Christmas and Blessings for the New Year! RE Classes resume on January 6, 2019!!

Doug Green & Mickey St. Jean
OLM Religious Education

Nativity of the Lord



In comparison to the celebration of Easter which dates back to the second century, the celebration of Christmas is of late origin, dating back only to the fourth century.

No claim is made for December 25 being the actual date of Jesus' birth, but it is probably no accident that this celebration of the coming of the true light falls at a time of increasing daylight.

Expanding that symbolism, four separate, carefully chosen and crafted sets of readings and prayers are prescribed for the various times of celebration of this solemnity: vigil, midnight, dawn, and day.

The images contained in these readings and prayers journey from early hope to radiant fulfillment.



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.



OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH
EAST GREENWICH, RHODE ISLAND
CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR'S SCHEDULE

CONFESSIONS FOR CHRISTMAS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22

2:00 pm - 3:45 pm · Three priests available

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm · Three priests available

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24

Vigil Mass of Christmas at 4:00pm

Concert of Carols at 11:30pm

CHRISTMAS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25

Mass of Christmas Night at 12:00am Midnight

Mass of Christmas Day at 7:30am, 9:00am & 10:30am

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29

Confessions at 3:00pm

Mass of Anticipation at 4:00pm

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30

Masses at 7:30am, 9:00am, 10:30am & 5:00pm

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Vigil Mass at 4:00 pm

TUESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2019

NEW YEAR'S DAY

Masses at 8:30 am and 12:00 pm noon