





PARISH DIRECTORY

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THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 24, 2017

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23

Mass of Anticipation for the Fourth Sunday of Advent
 4:00PM Albert Catanio—Memorial

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 CHRISTMAS EVE

The Fourth Sunday of Advent
 7:30 AM Pat Franzone—15th Anniversary
 9:00 AM Janet Fayle—9th Anniversary
 10:30AM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church

Vigil Mass of the Nativity of the Lord
 4:00PM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25 CHRISTMAS DAY

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

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26

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

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27

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

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs
 7:30AM Frank Almonte—Memorial

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29

Fifth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord
 7:30AM The Souls in Purgatory

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30

The Sixth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord
 8:30AM John Murphy—9th Anniversary

Mass of Anticipation for the Feast of the Holy Family
 4:00PM Jane Standing—Memorial

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

The Feast of the Holy Family
 7:30 AM Jean Ingraham—Memorial
 9:00 AM Linda Canning—Memorial
 10:30AM Gene & Mary Verri—Memorial
 5:00PM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church





Dear Parishioners:

The Season of Advent draws to a close very quickly this weekend as Christmas is on Monday. The name Advent itself means “the coming” of the Lord and of nothing less than our Lord and Savior. The very last line of the Bible cries out, “*Come Lord Jesus!*” The Lord wants us to anticipate nothing less than Himself.

As we approach Christmas with joy and faith and the days of our expectation, preparation, and anticipation end, we might ask ourselves on what are we waiting for? Yes, we await the feast of our faith with the celebration of Christmas.

But more importantly we wait for Jesus Christ, the Word made Flesh. We wait for His grace and mercy that surely comes into our lives. We wait for Him to answer our prayers, sure that He will, but unsure when, where, or how. We wait for reasons to explain and understand suffering, struggle, and worries. We wait for Him to call us to be with Him for all eternity.

And, lest we forget, the Lord Jesus waits for us! Yes Jesus waits for us to open up to His grace and mercy. Jesus waits for us to admit that, as a matter of fact, we do need a Savior! Jesus waits for us to admit that He is the answer to the questions our lives of searching pose. Jesus waits for our ultimate return to Him, for He “*has gone to prepare a place for us.*”

So on Christmas Eve we might ask ourselves, indeed

what are we waiting for? But in reality our question should be, who have we been preparing to welcome this Holy Night?

The Advent hymn reminds us of the one for whom we wait. It’s lyrics read: “*Dear Savior, haste! Come, come to earth. Dispel the night and show your face, and bid us hail the dawn of grace. O come, Divine Messiah, the world in silence waits the day when hope shall sing its triumph, and sadness flee away!*”

Yes, the Divine Messiah comes! In our waiting is the very arrival and deep down inside, cradled in our soul, where no one but the One who truly counts can detect, is again an empty manger where the Son of God wants to be re-born.

So let us loudly acclaim “*Come, Lord Jesus!*” “*Come Lord Jesus*” into our lives and into our homes. “*Come Lord Jesus*” into our often cold and dark world! St. Augustine said: “*What greater cause is there of the Lord’s coming than to show God’s love for us?*”

On Christmas, the great feast of the Incarnation, we celebrate God’s love for us. With joy we celebrate the coming of our Messiah who dispelled the darkness of the world. With faith we welcome the Light of Christ that pierces the darkness of sin and sadness of our world and our lives.

Yes, there are dark things wrong with our world, but the celebration of the Lord’s Nativity is even greater for that, since the Divine Light has come from Heaven, and “*the darkness has never*

overcome it.”

The Incarnation of Christ is a central mystery of our Catholic faith. As the Advent Season quickly ends and the Feast of the Incarnation soon arrives, let us prayerfully meditate upon our God who humbled Himself to become one of us. Only then are we truly blessed to see how the humble and tender Christ Child born in a manger pulls us away from darkness and draws us into the light of His goodness, peace and love.

For on Christmas we celebrate the reality that Jesus Christ, the God made Man, is truly real, present, and good! May He be ever more so, to you and yours, this Christmas. In the name of Fr. Barrow, Fr. Connors, Deacon Dowd and myself, I offer our best wishes to all parishioners for a Holy Christmas Season. Be assured of our remembrance for you and your families as we offer Holy Mass on Christmas.

I extend Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman’s Christmas Blessing to you and to all: “*May each Christmas, as it comes, find us more and more like Him who at this time became a little child, for our sake; more simple-minded, more humble, more affectionate, more resigned, more happy, more full of God.*”

Merry Christmas!



How do we get on the nice list?

As children Christmas Eve was a night of anticipation as we anxiously pined for Christmas morning to see what presents Santa Claus had brought for us. We knew, of course, that in order to get presents we had to have our names written on the “nice list” (a list not remotely as important as having our names written in the book of life from Luke 10:20). Heaven forbid, if we were on the naughty list! This raises the question we probably never thought of as children: what does it mean to be nice? Is it as simple as refraining from “naughty” behavior? Insofar as we abstain from immorality we are guaranteed a place on the nice list? Is it necessary to perform good deeds? Let us assume that we make the nice list, then what do we receive? Well what we want of course!

This is not an indictment of Santa Claus, but of a certain conception of God and the moral/spiritual life. How many of us treat God like Santa? God is a bearded old man who, when we are nice, gives us blessings and gifts, and when we are bad, gives us coal? With such a conception of God, rather than allowing us to enter the mysterious nature of the divine persons, the spiritual life becomes simply following (apparently) arbitrary rules. In this case God ceases to be a person and instead becomes a force, or a feeling. Such a caricature invites disbelief and mockery of the divine.

Of course Christmas tells us a very different story about God. God comes to us in the humblest of ways, in a tiny child born in a manger to save us from our sins. This ultimate act of generosity of God by which he invites us into a joy filled and dynamic life. In this way God does not give us what we want, but what we need. Excitingly by God’s grace we can over time transform ourselves and realize that what we need and what God wants for us are not mutually exclusive, but the same. To be “nice” in this sense means to become perfect; what God intended us to be.

If you have questions about the Catholic Faith, please send them to Fr. Barrow via email at associate@olmparish.org



Weekly Collection

December 17, 2017

Weekly.....	\$16,222.00
EFT.....	\$2,204.00
	Total=\$18,426.00
Outreach.....	\$5,340.00
Annual (to date).....	\$114,011.00

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.

O, Come let us adore Him



The Parish Office is closed for Christmas and reopens on Wednesday, December 27th at 8:00AM. The Office closes for the New Year’s Holiday on Friday, December 29th at Noon and reopens on Tuesday, January 2, 2018 at 8:00am.





We wish all our OLM School Faculty, Staff, Students, Parents and Alumni a Happy and Holy Christmas! May the blessings of Christmas be yours now and in the New Year!

Mr. Scott W. Fuller, Principal
www.olmschool.org



We wish all of our RE families a very Merry and Blessed Christmas. Have a happy, healthy vacation time! Thank you to all who gave so generously to the Christmas collection of personal care items for the homeless. Mrs. Mickey St. Jean & Mr. Doug Green OLM Religious Education Directors



A sincere thank you for all your generous support of OLM Outreach throughout the year and your bountiful charity during this Christmas Season. May the blessings of the Christ Child be yours! Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Doug Green
OLM Outreach Director



OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH



CHRISTMAS EVE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

Vigil Mass of Christmas at 4:00pm

Concert of Carols with Choir & Orchestra at 11:30pm

CHRISTMAS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25

Mass of Christmas Night at 12:00am

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

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30

Confessions at 3:00pm

Vigil Mass at 4:00pm

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

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

THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF MANKIND

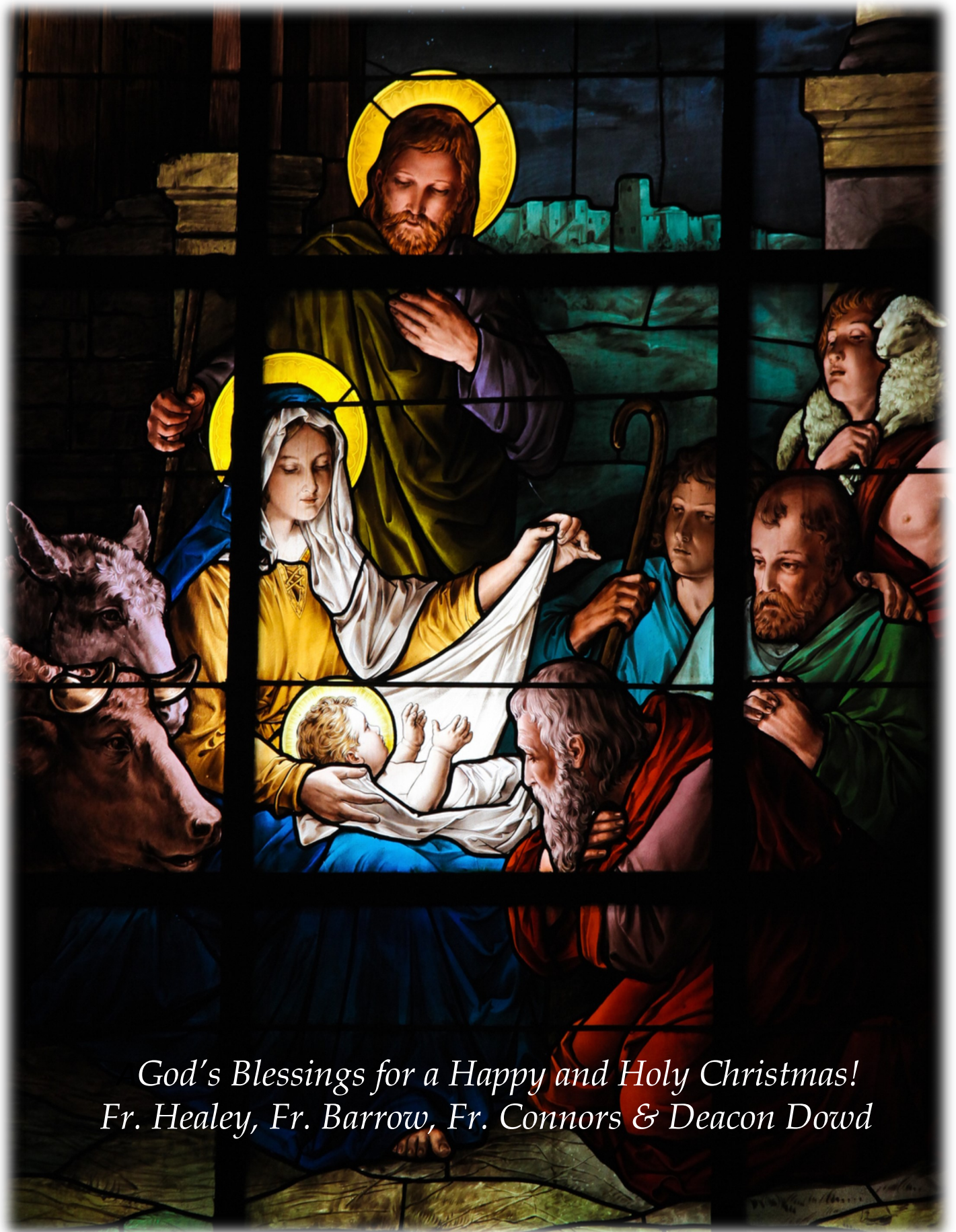
NEW YEAR'S DAY · MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 2018

Mass at 8:30am only

(NB: not a holy day of obligation this year)



**COME HOME FOR
CHRISTMAS**
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WELCOMES YOU



*God's Blessings for a Happy and Holy Christmas!
Fr. Healey, Fr. Barrow, Fr. Connors & Deacon Dowd*