



*O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,*

*O come ye
O come ye to Bethlehem,*

Come and behold Him,

Born the King of angels;

O come, let us adore Him

O come, let us adore Him,

O come, Let us adore Him,

Christ, the Lord.



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THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 20, 2020

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19

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

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20

The Fourth Sunday of Advent
 7:30 AM Evelyn & Michael Simon—Memorial
 9:00AM Patrick Sehl—2nd Anniversary
 10:30AM Janet M. Fayle—12th Annivesary

MONDAY, DECEMBER 21

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

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22

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

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23

Late Advent Weekday; St. John of Kanty, Priest
 7:30AM Jeannine Light—10th Anniversary

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24—CHRISTMAS EVE

Late Advent Weekday
 7:30AM Pat Franzone—18th Anniversary

Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord
 3:00PM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy
 5:00PM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25—CHRISTMAS

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

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26

St. Stephen, The First Martyr
 8:30AM Dec'd of the Loeffler & Miller Family—Memorial

Mass of Anticipation for the Feast of the Holy Family
 4:00PM Mary Leddy—20th Anniversary

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27

The Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
 7:30 AM Catherine McKenna—1st Anniversary
 9:00AM Gene & Mary Verri—Memorial
 10:30AM John Bucci—Birthday Remembrance





Dear Parishioners:

Saint Augustine, the great Doctor of the Church, asked: "What greater cause is there of the Lord's coming than to show God's love for us?" Upon the threshold of the coming of Christ at Christmas, we must ponder and reflect upon God's love for us. For 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 our world's sin and sadness and the darkness in our lives. Yes, there are dark things in our world, but the celebration of the Lord's Nativity is even more extraordinary, for the Divine Light has come from Heaven, and we rejoice that "the darkness has never overcome it."

The Incarnation, the doctrine that God became flesh, and assumed a human nature becoming a man in the form of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the second person of the Trinity, is a central mystery of our Catholic faith. As the Advent Season quickly ends and the Feast of the Incarnation arrives this Friday, let us prayerfully meditate upon our God who humbled Himself to become one of us.

Only then are we indeed blessed to see how the humble and tender Christ Child born in a simple 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, God made Man, is genuinely present and good!

God desires to share the love and communion of his life with us. He makes himself accessible in the incarnate humanity of his only-begotten Son born on Christmas. He does so "that we might share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity."

At the heart of the Christmas story is not merely a warm sentiment for a tiny child, or a sense of nostalgia for a Christmas past. Rather, it is the reality that because of Christmas, we rejoice with faith in the person of Jesus Christ and the salvation and new life he makes possible for us.

The English Catholic artist, mystic, writer, and poet of the 20th Century Caryll Houselander reflects on this reality. Her prayerful poem, entitled, *Be Born in Us*, offers a powerful meditation as we celebrate and contemplate the Birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The poem reads:

"Be born in us, Incarnate Love. Take our flesh and blood, and give us Your humanity. Take our eyes, and give us Your vision. Take our minds, and give us Your pure thought. Take our feet, and set them in Your path. Take our hands, and fold them in Your prayer. Take our hearts, and give them Your will to love. Amen."

I offer thanks to the many parishioners who support OLM Outreach, especially over these last few weeks. Your generous donations of financial support, gift cards, food, and paper goods are much appreciated. It enables us to help those in need in our community at the holidays, but also the many poor, hungry,

homeless, and destitute who seek our assistance daily. In their name, I offer my sincere thanks for your mercy and charity this Christmas.

There are three priests on Monday night, including outside confessors, hearing Confessions from 6:00 PM until 8:00 PM. Seize the opportunity to make a good Confession before Christmas.

God's mercy and forgiveness of sins is a great gift for Christmas. It's free and readily available. All you need to do is deliver yourself to the Confessional Box on Monday. If you do, you'll be able to genuinely rejoice with Christ the Savior on Christmas this Friday!

Along with Fr. Barrow, Fr. Connors, Sister Lourdes, and Sister Emma, I offer prayers and best wishes for a Holy and Happy Christmas Season. Be assured of our remembrance for you and your families as we offer Mass on Christmas.

As we approach Christmas, I extend St. John Henry Newman's Christmas Blessing upon you, your families and 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. Amen"

A Happy and Holy Christmas! God's Blessings!

Ask Father

Is our celebration of Christmas pagan?

One of the charges against the celebration of Christmas alleges that its pagan origins compromise its celebration. Interestingly for much of American history Christmas was outlawed by our country because it was considered idolatry. Even today the allegation that Christmas is merely a pagan holiday is used to discredit Christianity.

The Christian writer G.K. Chesterton once said: "to complain that Christmas feasts or processions or dances are of pagan origin is like saying that our legs are of pagan origin." For Chesterton and for the Catholic Theology, whatever is good, holy and just may not only be preserved but fulfilled. Indeed the Incarnation, which we celebrate at Christmas, is the greatest affirmation that God wants to redeem creation, not destroy it.

Unfortunately what many celebrate today as Christmas does not even have pagan roots. C.S. Lewis wrote an interesting article called "A Christmas Sermon for Pagans," in which he distinguishes between the true pagans or Heathens of old and modern people in Britain who have ceased to be Christians.

To confuse these categories, Lewis says, is "like thinking... a street where the houses have been knocked down is the same as a field where no house has yet been built." Real pagans differ from post-Christians firstly in that they were actually religious. "To [the Pagan] the earth was holy, the woods and waters were alive."

Secondly, they "believed in what we now call an 'Objective' Right or Wrong," that is, that "the distinction between pious and impious acts was something which existed independently of human opinions." Finally, pagans, unlike "post-Christian man," had "deep sadness" because of their knowledge that they did not obey the moral code perfectly. To compensate for this shortcoming, the pagan developed a wealth of ceremonies to "take away guilt."

The post-Christian world views nature as a "kind of machine for us to exploit." The world is no longer enchanted and so the old rituals and traditions lose their magic. Lewis provides an interesting solution: "... we shall have to set about becoming true Pagans if only as a preliminary to becoming Christians... For (in a sense) all that Christianity adds to Paganism is the cure. It confirms the old belief that in this universe we are up against Living Power: that there is a real Right and that we have failed to obey it: that existence is beautiful and terrifying. It adds a wonder of which Paganism had not distinctly heard—that the Mighty One has come down to help us, to remove our guilt, to reconcile us."

Weekly Collection

Collection results are unavailable due to the Christmas print deadline.

Thank You For Your Generous Support!



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The OLM Parish Office closes on Christmas, Eve, Thursday, December 24th at Noon and reopens on Monday, December 28th at 8:00AM.

The OLM Parish Staff wish all OLM parishioners a Merry Christmas and Blessings for the New Year in 2021. Thank you for your support this year!



Outreach Update

“Mankind is a great, an immense family. This is proved by what we feel in our hearts at Christmas.” — Pope Saint John XXIII

Dear OLM Parish Family,
Thank you for continuing to open your hearts with generosity and charity for the least among us. I wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Gratefully,
Doug Green
OLM Outreach Director



Religious Education NEWS

“Jesus Christ said of Himself: ‘I am the Living Bread descended from Heaven.’ Therefore, Bethlehem, the place where our Lord was born, has been called the House of Bread; for He who fed our hearts to satiety appeared there in the substance of flesh.” — Pope. St. Gregory I

We wish all our OLM RE students, teachers and families a Happy and Holy Christmas and Blessings of the New Year! May Our Lord Jesus Christ in the crib of Bethlehem be with you and yours this Christmas and in 2021!

Merry Christmas!
Mickey St. Jean & Doug Green
Coordinators of OLM Religious Education



“Open wide your door to the one who comes. Open your soul, throw open the depths of your heart to see the riches of simplicity, the treasures of peace, the sweetness of grace. Open your heart and run to meet the Sun of eternal light that illuminates all men.”—St. Ambrose of Milan

I wish all our OLM School faculty, staff, students, families, PTG and School board members, friends and benefactors, a truly Blessed Christmas and New Year! Enjoy the Christmas break, it is well deserved!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
Patrick H. McNabb
School Principal

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CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR'S SCHEDULE

<p>MONDAY, DECEMBER 21 Confessions from 6:00PM - 8:00PM with three priests</p> <p><i>The Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord</i> CHRISTMAS EVE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24 Vigil Masses at 3:00PM & 5:00PM</p> <p>CHRISTMAS NIGHT FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25 Christmas Night Mass at Midnight (livestream)</p>	<p>CHRISTMAS DAY FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25 Christmas Day Masses at 7:30AM, 9:00AM & 10:30AM</p> <p><i>Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God</i> NEW YEAR'S EVE, DECEMBER 31, 2020 Vigil Mass at 4:00PM</p> <p>NEW YEAR'S DAY, JANUARY 1, 2021 Holyday Masses at 7:30AM & 10:30AM</p>
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Happy and Holy Christmas!

THE VERY REVEREND BERNARD A. HEALEY, PASTOR, THE CLERGY,
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He became small because you were small –
 understand how great He is
 and you will become great along with Him.
 This is how houses are built,
 how the solid walls of a building are raised.
 The stones brought to construct
 the building increase,
 you, too, increase, understanding how great Christ is
 and how He who appeared to be small is great,
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