



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2016

SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS) Look for the love on Christmas

Christmas Day is here! After weeks of preparation, are you filled with excitement? Exhausted? Perhaps a bit of both? On this holy morning, imagine sitting and talking with Mary, mother of the newborn. She carried the child in her womb for nine months; she labored and gave birth. Perhaps she was exhausted that morning, perhaps she was filled with hope and joy—perhaps, like you, a bit of both! The essence of this day is the birth of that child, who came to bring love to us all. Look for that love today in the smile of a child, the story of a parent, a meal at your table, or a word of gratitude.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 9:1-6; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14 (14).*
"You have nothing to fear! I come to proclaim good news to you."

MONDAY, DECEMBER 26 FEAST OF STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR Deacons on the front line

Stephen was a deacon in the early church. Evidence suggests that both women and men served as deacons in the early church, and Pope Francis recently established an official commission to study the question of the diaconate of women. The word "radical" means going back to "the root," so if radical change is ahead for the diaconate, it will be deeply rooted in Christian history and tradition. Pray for wise discernment by all those involved in the commission.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Matthew 10:17-22 (696).*
"You are my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake you will lead and guide me."

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27 FEAST OF JOHN, APOSTLE, EVANGELIST Tell him I AM sent you

Each gospel has an emphasis, and John's is the divinity of Christ revealed in signs of service: feeding multitudes, raising Lazarus, forgiving the adulterous woman, turning water into wine, and washing feet like a slave. In John, Jesus often uses the divine name, I AM: in the poetry of vine and branches, the good shepherd, the bread from heaven. Because you are baptized, divinity lives in you as well. As the hustle of the holidays continues, feed, not thousands, but one hungry person; wash someone's feet by volunteering somewhere; be a good shepherd, a mentor to a young person; be a forgiving, divine vessel of joy. Show that love does not die as Christmas Day passes by.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 1:1-4; John 20:1a, 2-8 (697).* *"What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes."*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28 FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS Martyrs of today

Our Christmas joy is interrupted today. We remember the children who were slaughtered in Bethlehem by King Herod. Such tragedies continue today—pray for all who die daily from violence and neglect. Pope Francis has reminded us many times that these are the martyrs of today. On this Christmas weekday we must stop and reflect on the fact that even though there may be darkness and a rejection of life, the light of love, the light of Christmas, shines much brighter and scatters hatred and brings about a new world.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 1:5-2:2; Matthew 2:13-18 (698).* *"A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29

MEMORIAL OF THOMAS BECKET, BISHOP, MARTYR Fight for what's right

We teach kids to stand up to bullies, but how often do we adults do the same? How many times do we ignore hurtful, inappropriate comments to others in person and online? How often do we fail to advocate for those in our city, country, and world who aren't being treated fairly? It's not easy to risk the repercussions of doing the right thing, but we are called to do so nonetheless. Find courage in the example of Saint Thomas Becket, who gave his life for standing up to someone—his friend, boss, and king—who was in the wrong.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 2:3-11; Luke 2:22-35 (202).* *"Lord, now let your servant go in peace; your word has been fulfilled."*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH All you need is love

"Jesus himself was born into a modest family." So writes Pope Francis in his letter, "The Joy of Love." We tend to think of that small family as perfect, but we presume, too, that they worked, prayed, and traveled together as many families do today. Although we don't know their daily rituals and routines, we do know that the child of the family became a man of justice and compassion who showed us how to love. To celebrate this Feast of the Holy Family, put love on your lips and in your heart and do something today that imitates the Lord's unconditional love.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 or Colossians 3:12-21; Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23 (17).* *"Over all these virtues, put on love which binds the rest together and makes them perfect."*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31 MEMORIAL OF SYLVESTER I, POPE Keep the Christmas spirit alive

Don't you wish the wonder of Christmas lasted longer than one day? Well, it actually does! The Nativity of the Lord is celebrated on the liturgical calendar as an Octave—that is, eight days long—in this case, from December 25 to January 1. Easter is also celebrated as an Octave, because the importance of these two events demands a full week of attention. Because today is also the feast day of Sylvester I, who was pope during the Council of Nicea, which affirmed that Jesus was both human and divine, take time to contemplate this part of the mystery of Christ's birth.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 2:18-21; John 1:1-18 (204).* *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory."*



Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

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Hi Everyone,
The December 2016 statistics for the Fr. Hilbert Ozanam Center are as follows:

Food Pantry

Total number of people served was 808
Total number of households served was 267
Total number of children served was 293
Total number of seniors served was 79

Clothing Bank

Total number of families served was 202
Articles of clothing given away: 2061
Winter coats given away: 97

Furniture Bank

Total number of clients served was 16
Couches given away: 8
Armchairs given away: 3
Mattresses/box springs: 10
Dressers given away: 3
Misc. given away: 24

Because of Christmas and New Years we were only open three Saturdays this month, but we were busy each Saturday. The recently installed PantryTrak system for our food giveaway has been going well. We do need extra large men's and women's coats, as well as children's coats, so if you could ask your parish to have a coat drive, it would help us in the coming months. But as always, thank you for the great work that you do.

Jim & Cathie Perusek

Retrouvaille Weekend

The Retrouvaille program can help put troubled marriages back on track. Program supported by the Catholic diocese of Cleveland. Open to couples of all faiths. The next Cleveland Retrouvaille weekend will be held 1/20-22/17. Cost is \$150. For more info or to register, call Marce or Liz Gliha in complete confidence at 440-357-6580, or 1-800-470-2230 or visit www.helpourmarriage.org.

Caregivers Support Group Meeting

Adult Day Services is a community-based intervention designed to care for the aging population experiencing cognitive or functional limitations, as well as to address the needs of those at risk of social isolation. Caregivers receive encouragement and guidance to bolster their own mental health and well-being which increases the likelihood for successful care for their loved one at home. Held January 25 at 10am at Catholic Charities (812 Biruta Street, Akron 44307). For more information, please call 330-762-2000. Free care is available for the older adult while caregivers attend the group meeting.

Extraordinary Mission Men's Conference

A conference for men featuring author John Wood and musical guest Cassandra Acree will be held Saturday, January 28 at St. Matthew Parish (2580 Berne St., Akron). The Conference begins at 8:30am with breakfast and concludes at 5pm with dinner for all men and their families. The day will include inspiring talks, powerful music, fellowship, Eucharistic Adoration, and an opportunity for confession. Open to men 18+. Registration is \$10 and can be made by calling the Parish Office at 330-733-9944.

2017 MASS FOR LIFE

Join Bishop Richard Lennon to observe a Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children, remembering the anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision. Held Sunday, January 22, 2017 at 10:30am at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Cleveland OH. Individuals, schools and parish groups are encouraged to join us for Mass and a Rosary for Life afterwards. Spread the word using #Mass4LifeCLE on facebook, twitter, and instagram! Please call 216-334-2965 for more info and to register your group!

44 Years of Roe vs Wade

Holy Family "Culture of Life Ministry" presents their Annual Pro-life Vigil on January 20-21, 2017. There will be Mass at 6:30pm, a presentation by Students for Life, Akron University followed by "Evening of Prayer Through Song" featuring David Parkes, International Recording Artist from Dublin, Ireland. You will enjoy hearing David's beautiful pro-life story, including his rise to fame as a professional soccer player and musician...to his "incurable" illness...to his miraculous healing in Medjugorje. David's life is now devoted to traveling the world spreading his pro-life message and sharing his amazing vocal talent. A free will offering will be accepted. A reception will follow in the Lower Church Hall, to meet David and purchase his signed CDs. At the same time a continuous 24 Hour Rosary will begin in the Daily Mass Chapel until the regular 5pm Saturday Night Liturgy.

Opportunity for Service

Response 2017, the most comprehensive guide of faith-based service opportunities, is now available. Volunteers serve full-time for periods of one week to one year or more across the United States and in more than 100 countries worldwide. Summer and school break opportunities are also available. Our volunteers are from all walks of life. Contact Catholic Volunteer Network to receive your free copy/copies of Response 2017 at 800-543-5046 or info@catholicvolunteernetwork.org. You can also visit www.catholicvolunteernetwork.org.

Please check the vestibule for more information on upcoming events, registration forms, prayer cards, and notices.