

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD
January 7, 2018



“They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother.” (Matt. 2:10-11)

Mass Intentions

SATURDAY, January 6

8:30am Beatrice Szele Family

5:30pm Alfonso Basile †

SUNDAY, January 7

8:00am Pro Populo

10:00am Hermanda O'Connor †

12:00pm Marilyn Natoli †

MONDAY, January 8

8:30am Greg Zimmerman

TUESDAY, January 9

8:30am Jeff Hill †

WEDNESDAY, January 10

8:30am Stanley Plummer †

THURSDAY, January 11

8:30am Paul Michael †

FRIDAY, January 12

8:30am Vic Cordone †

SATURDAY, January 13

8:30am Ellen Moriarty †

5:30pm Alfonso Basile †

SUNDAY, January 14

8:00am Pro Populo

10:00am Kathryn Broghan †

12:00pm Maria Leah Abrigo †

PLEASE PRAY FOR: David Morant†, Andrew Gentry†, Connor Moriarity † (nephew of parishioner), Rev. Gerry Creedon†, Dan Specat†, Charles Marcolini†, Elisa Barbaro, Dominic Riccit†, Connie Holtz†, Marilyn Natoli†, Blanche Gorlinsky, Walter Zolkiwsky†, Arleen Michelitch†, Angela Bubbosht†, Bernadette Magurski, Madeline Danielst†, Dominick Carduccit†, Dora Berrarat†, Ann Haraburdat†, Patricia Guntle, Mary E. Brindley†, Joseph Squarzini Jr.†, Kathleen Fishert†, Joseph Dunnet†, Walter von Frickent†, Mary Wood, Alfonso Basilet†, Maryann Murphy†, Joshua Basile, T. Peter Wood, Collette Briggs, Vickie Miller. FOR PARISHIONERS SERVING OUR COUNTRY OVERSEAS: Jonathan Choo, Justin Smallwood

PASTOR'S COMMENTARY

Expecting Perfection -- It's a charming thought to consider that Jesus, like any son, carried the physical characteristics of His mother as well as some of her – and Joseph's -- mannerisms. The Incarnation is so wonderfully human, encouraging us to approach Him without fear. As we consider the beauty of the Nativity scene, it is profitable to ponder the meaning of the Incarnation for us and our families.

The Incarnation defines -- all of human history. Jesus, born of Mary, reconciles God and Man in His Person and He takes all of humanity to Himself. When we are baptized into His body, we are given the status of “sons in the Son.” We are in Christ and Christ is within us. Hence, from heaven, Mary gazes on us with the same love with which she gazed upon her Child in the manger. The Incarnation is the reconciliation of God and man and is the cause of our Christmas joy.

But if we are not careful -- the Incarnation is easily misunderstood and misrepresented. We may be secretly tempted to expect perfection in ourselves and others when we think of the Incarnation, the union of God and man. When a man and woman fall in love and marry, and do “everything right” as Catholics, they may feel entitled to a perfect marriage with perfect love. Even the children might be expected to be perfect, obedient, never needing discipline, but only in need of kindly direction. Similarly, our priests are expected to be perfect, with the implication that the Incarnation -- God walking with us -- should protect us from bad homilies and impatient and rude clergymen.

Reality, of course, quickly -- dashes these naïve expectations. We need not look beyond our immediate experiences. A marriage “made in heaven” is an illusion. Children can be aggressive in their misbehavior even at a very early age. And even little children know enough to criticize the homilies of priests on the drive home. So the pendulum swings in the direction of disappointment and discouragement.

As a consequence, in a season -- like Christmas with all its beauty and splendor, we might find ourselves forlorn at the lack of perfection in our society, in our families, in the Church – in us. When we gaze at the tender Nativity scene with all its humility and innocence, we may be

embarrassed to feel a touch of melancholy, even bitterness. But such melancholy along with our impatient demand for perfection is misplaced and unreasonable. Expecting perfection this side of eternity because God walks with us -- not to put too fine a point on it -- is merely sentimental rubbish.

The holiness of Jesus, -- Mary and Joseph did not free them from the trials in life. Driven by fear for their lives from the murderous Herod, they escaped to Egypt. Mary and Joseph knew the anxiety of missing a child when Jesus was lost in the Temple. Jesus wept when He received the news that His friend Lazarus had died. Jesus was justly angry with the intransigence of the Pharisees and the abuse of the Temple. The ultimate horror was Calvary, where a sword of sorrow pierced the heart of Our Lady. Holiness does not mean one is immune from persecution, suffering, and negative emotions. But in suffering we begin to see the real reason for the Incarnation.

There would be no need -- for a Savior if the world were perfect. Despite the best efforts of our modern social engineers -- from the tyranny of socialism to the illusory salvation by the free market alone -- we and our society will never be perfect. And so we continue to suffer in flawed marriages, from eccentric and annoying (and sometimes truly evil) clergymen, with bad neighbors and our own profound if secret personal failures. If we were without sin, there would be no need for the Incarnation.

But expecting perfection -- in this life can easily result in another deformity: a malicious refusal to see imperfection and evil. Hence, it becomes easy to presume that Jesus is ready to reconfigure His life to our sinful ways, to accept us for "who we are." Evelyn Waugh wrote nearly a century ago: "It is better to be narrow-minded -- than to have no mind, to hold limited and rigid principles than none at all. That is the danger which faces so many people today -- to have no considered opinions on any subject, to put up with what is wasteful and harmful with the excuse that there is 'good in everything' -- which, in most cases, means, the inability to distinguish between good and bad" (From Evelyn Waugh: The Early Years 1903-1939, Norton).

Expecting Jesus to change -- His sacred design for virtuous living because we refuse to see evil in how we live is not only disrespectful, it is blasphemous. Jesus came into the world to show us the way to eternal life and to give us confidence

in pursuing His way. He has given us an overall template, or game plan, for a life of virtue and happiness with His grace, with heaven as our final destiny. He challenges us to be perfect as His father in heaven is perfect (Mt 5:48). But He knows it will take a lifetime and into eternity for us to attain perfection. The fact of the Incarnation ultimately challenges us to struggle -- with His grace -- to reconfigure our lives to His Way.

And so Jesus, the Word -- made flesh, accompanies us throughout life with His sacraments, with His sacred "game plan." We are born into and reconfigured in His grace by Baptism. Despite our repeated failures, He repairs and restores us time and again in the Sacrament of Penance. He feeds us and heals us in Holy Communion. He strengthens and enlightens us with the graces of Confirmation. He helps us govern our families and our Church in Holy Matrimony and Holy Orders. Finally, He prepares us for our final encounter with suffering and death with the Anointing of the Sick, Extreme Unction. All of this involves a magnificent and dramatic interplay between His tender graces and our (often resistant) free will.

At the moment, in this life -- we are the problem. But we are not without hope because the Word made flesh will be forever the solution. If we courageously walk with Him with faith, true holiness and perfection will be ours for eternity. [*End of Pastor's Commentary*]

Flannery O'Connor responding -- in 1958 to a friend who was disappointed in what he saw going on in the Catholic Church: "To have the Church be what you want it to be would require the continuous miraculous meddling of God in human affairs, whereas it is our dignity that we are allowed more or less to get on with those graces that come through faith and the sacraments and which work through our human nature. God has chosen to operate in this manner. We can't understand this but we can't reject it without rejecting life."

"You don't serve God by saying -- the Church is ineffective, I'll have none of it. Your pain at its lack of effectiveness is a sign of your nearness to God. We help overcome this lack of effectiveness simply by suffering on account of it." (Flannery O'Connor)

"To expect too much -- is to have a sentimental view of life and this is a softness that ends in bitterness. Charity is hard and endures. That is done by study but more by prayer. What you want, you have to be not above asking for." (Flannery O'Connor)



Notice how the church was decorated for Christmas? Beautiful, and a true labor of love.

Thanks to the coordinators Cris Tallent and Hilda Pungelo and their elves, Margie Bylund, Justine & Gordon Harris, Rita McGeady, and Ashland, Murphy & Kathy Collins -- and all the helpers who are keeping the plants watered. A job well done!

A BRIEF NOTE ABOUT PARKING LOT USE



As a courtesy -- please let the rectory office know when leaving your car overnight in the church parking lot. We generally are amenable to the request. We don't want the parking lot to be a repository of stolen vehicles (hey, don't laugh; it happens) or car bombs (just kidding, Homeland Security – but then again, maybe a legitimate fear). The parking lot should be clear during snow emergencies. Parishioners have been very polite in this regard so **it's a good guess that violators are not parishioners. So we're prepared to tow unauthorized vehicles.**

This note was placed on a car – last week: "This car will be towed in the upcoming hours. Parishioners know that they need permission from the Pastor to use Church property as a parking lot for overnight parking. So it's a good guess that you are not a parishioner. Please call me on this phone: 703.638.8451. Be advised, Church property is not public property."

On the first day of our marriage -- retreat, the instructor talked about the importance of knowing what matters to each other. "For example," he began, pointing to my husband, David, "Do you know your wife's favorite flower?" David answered, "Pillsbury All Purpose."

2) There are women whose thoughtful husbands buy them flowers for no reason. And then there's me. One day I couldn't stand it any longer. "Why don't you ever bring me flowers?" I asked. "What's the point?" my husband said. "They die after about a week." "So could you," I shot back, "but I still like having you around."

3) Q: Who invented copper wire? A: Two tax attorneys fighting over a penny.

4) Tax day -- April 15 -- was looming when an elderly woman showed up at my desk at the IRS. She said she required a thick stack of tax forms. "Why so many?" I asked. "My son is stationed overseas," she said. "He asked me to pick up forms for the soldiers on the base." "You shouldn't have to do this," I told her. "It's the base commander's job to make sure that his troops have access to the forms they need." "I know," said the woman. "I'm the base commander's mother."

5) My father was the presiding judge in a case involving a man charged with tax evasion. As the defendant stood before him alone, Dad asked if he had counsel. Looking toward the ceiling, the man replied, "Jesus Christ is my counselor and defender." My father nodded slowly while framing his next question, which was, "Do you have local counsel?"

- Collection totals for the weekend of Dec 23rd and 24th -

Regular: \$19,323, Christmas Collection: \$24,610, Poor Box: \$800.

- Collection totals for the weekend of December 30th and 31st -

Regular: \$16,703, Mary, Mother of God: \$700, Poor Box: \$300.

Thank you for your generosity.

Next week's 2nd collection is for the Parish Maintenance Fund.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

CCD CALENDAR
Grades 1 through high school
Monday Evenings
5:00 to 6:15 and 6:30 to 7:45
No classes January 15
Classes resume January 8

The FIRST HOLY COMMUNION Parents Meeting was held on December 7. Attendance was required for all parents of children in sacrament preparation in the CCD program, or for those parents who are homeschooling. Please contact the Office of Religious Education to schedule a make-up session.

If your child will receive First Holy Communion this spring, please make sure you've turned in the Data Form and your child's Baptismal certificate (if not baptized at St. Catherine of Siena). Forms are available outside the Office of Religious Education.

Also, parents of all children receiving sacraments this spring, **please mark your calendars now** with these important dates:

- **First Penance, Saturday, February 24 (begins with 8:30 am Mass)**
- **Rehearsal for First Holy Communion Thursday, May 3, 6:00-7:00 pm**
- **First Holy Communion celebrated at noon Mass on May 6.**

Attention All High Schoolers: It's never too late for you to join the Monday evening 6:30 CCD class! On January 22, we will begin an 8-part Bible study focused on salvation history. This is a great opportunity to continue learning about our beautiful Faith and discuss a variety of topics with your Catholic friends. The class runs from 6:30 to 7:45. **NOTE: No 6:30 high school CCD class on January 8. Class will resume on January 22.**

And...**we have a great group of teens helping with the 5:00 pm classes** as assistants, and **could always use more help during either CCD session.** This is an opportunity to help your Church, share the Faith, AND earn service hours. Contact Mrs. Livaudais for more details. stcatherinesreoffice@gmail.com

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Mass to Celebrate World Marriage Sunday

All married couples are invited to attend the World Marriage Sunday Mass offered at Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Alexandria on Sunday, February 11 at 12pm. Fr. Thomas Ferguson, Vicar General & Moderator for the Curia, will be celebrating the Mass and offer words of reflection for married couples. A reception will be offered after Mass thanks to the generosity of Families in Christ Jesus.

Please register at
www.arlingtondiocese.org/wms18

High School Application Deadline

The application deadline for Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Arlington is January 12, 2018. Register by January 4 to take the High School Placement Test. Please visit the website for the high school you wish to attend to learn more about their application process and to register for the placement test.

Upcoming 2018 Conferences! Saint Joseph's Church in Herndon, VA

Men's Conference: March 3 - 8:50AM

Marked Men: Made for Greatness

Featuring Fr. Mike Schmitz, Bishop Burbidge, Billy Atwell. Registration opens January 3 at 9am. \$55 thru Feb 1; \$65 after. www.arlingtondiocese.org/men

Women's Conference: March 10- 8:45am From Darkness into Light

Featuring Diane Foley, mother of slain journalist, James Foley, and Sr. Grace Dominic. Mass celebrated by Bishop Burbidge. Reg. \$55 by Feb. 1; \$65 after. www.arlingtondiocese.org/women

Register ASAP as slots fill quickly!

- - PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS - -

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION



WEDNESDAYS: and FIRST FRIDAYS

24 hour Eucharistic Adoration begins after the 8:30 am Mass and ends at 8:55 am the following morning.

We need volunteers for the noon to 1:00pm hour on Wednesdays.

To volunteer, please contact Diane Cieslak at: 703-678-3919 or polskagirl65@gmail.com.

CATHOLIC INQUIRY

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is the process by which adults (and children who have reached the age of reason) are instructed in the Doctrine of the Church and are prepared to receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist. If you or someone you know would like to inquire about becoming a Catholic, please call Father Pokorsky on his direct line – 703-638-8451.

OVER 50 CLUB

New members welcome! No charge for the 1st meeting. Dues \$20. For information, call Judy Mahanes at (703) 759-3997.

THIRD ORDER DOMINICANS The Dominicans TOR invite all parishioners to share in their apostolic mission by study, prayer, and preaching in keeping with our state as members of the laity. Meetings are usually held every 1st Saturday at 10:00 am in Padre Pio Hall following Mass and Rosary. Contact Paul Bernier at bernierp@verizon.net or 571-340-0940.

JP2 YOUTH APOSTOLATE is a new group formed under the patronage of St. John Paul the Great. Our mission is to provide a social outlet for school-aged youth of the area in the spirit of faith, adventure, and service to others. Unlike other youth organizations, JP2 Youth is parent-led, parent-organized, and parent supported. Contact: novajp2youth@gmail.com.

OPUS DEI

EVENING OF RECOLLECTION:

A priest of the Opus Dei prelature presents an "Evening of Recollection" for women on the **3rd Monday of each month from 7:30 pm to 9:15 pm** in the Church.

CONFESSIONS: A priest of the Opus Dei prelature offers Confessions on Monday mornings after the 8:30 am Mass until 11 am.

RECOLLECTION FOR HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS: A monthly Recollection, with quiet prayer and reflection, open to all high school girls on the **3rd Saturday of each month from 12:15 to 3:00 pm**. Please contact: Alyssa Hernandez at: stonecrestaolactivities@gmail.com for more information.

FORMED.ORG – *Formed* is a dynamic on-line web-based digital platform from the Augustine Institute available 24/7. This series is designed to help you grow in your faith at all levels – how you think, pray and live. Better yet, access is FREE to all Saint Catherine of Siena parishioners and families anywhere, anytime, on computers, tablets or phones. So even though you have a busy schedule, you can still learn and grow in your faith. Go to <https://formed.org> and set up your username and password, then enter our parish code – **F6KWXM**. Each registered family has access. Take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about our faith from the best Catholic authors and presenters.