

# St Bernadette Parish St Mary Parish

1343 Wheeling Road NE (740) 654 • 1893  
LANCASTER, OH 43130-8701

602 Marietta Street (740) 569 • 7929  
BREMEN, OH 43107

[stbernadetteparish . net](http://stbernadetteparish.net)



## Joseph's Dream

**“She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.”**

The *Annunciation* to Joseph as presented in today's holy gospel reading and painted (1790) in oil on canvas by Gaetano Gandolfi (1734-1802)

in a private collection

**the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent**

DECEMBER 18, 2016

### at both parishes

<b>Fr Thomas Kessler</b>	pastor	(614) 634-0499	<i>wnthomaskessler @ icloud . com</i>
<b>Kathy Kehnast</b>	pastoral coordinator	(740) 654-1893	<i>stbernparrish @ yahoo . com</i>
<b>Angie &amp; Kent Kerns</b>	religious education	(740) 654-2588	<i>kwkerns @ gmail . com</i>
<b>Julie &amp; Chase Stalford</b>	youth ministry	(740) 808-7294	<i>maristellaspirt @ gmail . com</i>
<b>Nikki Schmelzer</b>	bookkeeper	(740) 654-1893	<i>businessmstbparish @ yahoo . com</i>

### at bremen st mary parish

<b>Ben Factor</b>	liturgical music		<i>b_factor @ lancaster . k12 . oh . us</i>
<b>Jim Schmelzer</b>	maintenance chair	(740) 215-3894	
<b>Tyna Fox-Schmelzer</b>	religious education	(614) 371-7702	<i>schmelifox @ earthlink . net</i>
<b>Bremen St Vincent de Paul</b>		(740) 569-3710	
The St Mary Parish office is at the church vestibule. Hours are 9-11 AM, Tu 602 Marietta St, Bremen, OH 43107 (740) 569-7929			
<b>Deacon Mark Scarpitti</b>		(740) 438-3970	<i>dcn . mark @ frontier . com</i>
<b>Deacon Jeff Carpenter</b>		(740) 681-9918	<i>carpenter.277 @ osu . edu</i>
<b>Ann Essman</b>	pastoral minister	(740) 653-9347	<i>aessman001 @ att . net</i>
<b>Steve Huber</b>	facilities coordinator	(740) 654-3137	<i>shuber57 @ yahoo . com</i>
<b>Liz Latorre</b>	liturgical music	(740) 243-1872	<i>lizlatorre @ gmail . com</i>

The St Bernadette Parish office is in the Mary Good Center, across the back parking lot from the school.  
Hours are: 9 AM-1 PM, M W Th F; 11 AM-1 PM, Tu 1343 Wheeling Rd NE, Lancaster, OH 43130

### at bremen st bernadette school

<b>Pam Eltringham</b>	principal	(740) 654-3137	<i>peltring @ cdeducation . org</i>
<b>Barb Huber</b>	secretary	(740) 654-3137	<i>bhuber @ cdeducation . org</i>

Saint Bernadette School is at 1325 Wheeling Rd, Lancaster, OH 43130-8701  
*stbernlan @ cdeducation . org* [www . stbernadetteschool . com](http://www.stbernadetteschool.com)

## the sacramental life

### baptism

To have a child baptized, you must register and attend a class as a couple (unless attendance just isn't possible, in which case some discussion with Kathy Kehnast will be necessary). Sessions are held quarterly for both parishes. The next session will be Wednesday, Feb 22. Take the class before your child is born. If you are expecting, call Kathy to register for the class. Please don't ask if you "have to go." This is an opportunity to meet with parents of children about the same age as your little one; they are in the same wonderful boat as you are. At least one parent must be a practicing Catholic. **Both godparents need to be practicing Christians, at least one a practicing Catholic.** If you don't attend Sunday Mass regularly, there is something you can do about it: Start coming to Sunday Mass. If you can't come (health, severe weather, employment requirements, etc.), speak to your confessor. He will help you.

### penance

The priest is available for Penance

- at St Bernadette Saturdays at 3 and Thursdays at 5:30 PM, and
- at St Mary Bremen on Sunday at 8 AM.

In addition to Advent and Lenten Penance Services, every Catholic priest is available whenever there is a need. There are

## let us pray together

### with the church this week

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Penance opportunities for parochial school children four times during the year so that they will learn the beauty of frequent confession. The Church's law requires us to receive the sacrament of Penance **at least once a year.**

### anointing of the sick

The Sick receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick **when dangerously ill, facing major surgery, or suffering from the ravages of old age.** We celebrate the sacrament communally at a Sunday Mass before Advent and during the Easter season so that we can all pray with you for "health of mind and body." And, we are happy to bring Penance, Anointing, and Holy Communion to the homes or hospitals of the sick or shut in. It is very helpful to **call the parish office to let us know before a hospitalization or when it has been too long** since the sacraments were last available.

### holy matrimony

Couples wishing to marry sacramentally should contact the parish office six months before they wish to celebrate the sacrament. Why so long? Because **this sacrament, not just the ceremony, requires serious preparation.** And the Church needs to be involved in that preparation. She tries to support couples through the years of their married life. For this reason our diocese offers programs to enhance married life. To learn how, watch the weekly bulletin.

### with the holy father during december

His universal intention is the **end to child-soldiers:**  
That the scandal of child-soldiers may be eliminated the world over.

His evangelization intention is **Europe:**  
That the peoples of Europe may rediscover the beauty, goodness, and truth of the Gospel which gives joy and hope to life.

# Mass times and intentions

at St Bernadette				at St Mary	
4 PM	<i>for the people of the parish</i>	Saturday,	Dec 17		
		Sunday,	Dec 18	8:30 AM	<i>for the people of the parish</i>
11 AM	<i>for the people of the parish</i>	Sunday,	Dec 18		
8:20 AM	<i>Thomas Grabowski</i>	Monday,	Dec 19		
		Tuesday,	Dec 20	8:20 AM	<i>Sharon Ely</i>
8:20 AM	<i>deceased members of Sevigny family</i>	Wednesday,	Dec 21		
6 PM	<i>Chuck Beiter</i>	Thursday,	Dec 22		
8:20 AM	<i>Anniversary Robert &amp; Donna Waits</i>	Friday,	Dec 23		
6 PM	<i>for the people of the parish</i>	Christmas Eve	Dec 24		
		Christmas Eve	Dec 24	9 PM	<i>Helen Kunkler</i>
MIDNIGHT	<i>for the people of the parish</i>	Christmas,	Dec 25		
		Christmas,	Dec 25	8:30 AM	<i>for the people of the parish</i>
11 AM	<i>for the people of the parish</i>	Christmas,	Dec 25		

## in our parishes

### christian initiation

Please pray for our **catechumens**. They are **officially welcomed** members (albeit not yet full members) of the household of faith. These include Ralph Mohler and his son Bryant of Bremen St Mary, and Jennifer Palmer of St Bernadette. They have all publicly ratified their desire to become baptized members of the Catholic Church and are preparing for the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

### st bernadette midnight Mass

Midnight Mass is a beautiful tradition of welcoming our Lord's birth in the "wee hours" of the morning. St Bernadette is the only parish in Lancaster to maintain the tradition of a Mass at Midnight. The Choir, joined by a brass ensemble, will begin with a vigil at 11:30 featuring a variety of Christmas carols. Consider starting a new tradition in your family by welcoming Jesus with us at Midnight Mass.

### youth choir

The **Saint Cecilia Society** (St Bernadette's parish youth choir) meets on Sundays at 6 PM in the church. All parish students in grades 2-8 (public, parochial, or home school) are invited. SCS members in grades 4-8 are also invited to be members of the Handbell Ensemble, which meets on Sunday evenings at 7 PM, right after the full SCS gathering. **Mrs Latorre can answer questions** and provide registration materials after Mass, or you may call or text her at (740) 243-1872.

### adult choir

St Augustine once said, "**He who sings, prays twice.**" The St Bernadette adult choir has resumed practicing on Wednesdays at 7 PM in the church. Our adult choir is both a vocal ensemble devoted to **making beautiful music for the Lord** and a small faith family within our parish. We love to welcome new members into this family. Membership in the choir is an opportunity to be involved in the parish and grow in your faith. Contact Liz Latorre at (740) 243-1872 if you have questions.

### psr (aka parish school of religion)

PSR has begun but it is not too late to enroll students. Remember: Catholic parents have a **solemn moral duty** to see that their children are **properly and completely instructed in the Catholic Faith**. And they have a duty to see that their children attend every week (barring health or weather deterrents). And children will find **getting to know Jesus and his Church is an irreplaceable and joy-filled part of their upbringing**.

### christmas catholic charities collection

The annual Catholic Charities Christmas Collection allows our diocese to meet a variety of basic needs directly and through diocesan agencies and organizations including JOIN (Joint Organization for Inner-City Needs), St Stephen's Community House, Catholic Social Services, St Francis Center, St Lawrence Haven, St Vincent Family Center, and the Society of St Vincent de Paul. **You can help share in this important work** by generously supporting the Catholic Charities collection next Sunday. It will make Christmas celebrations in many central Ohio homes merrier.

### celebrate the merriness of the season in bremen

Please join us for the Bremen St Mary **Epiphany Gathering** on Saturday, Jan 7, at 6 PM in the Parish Hall. This is an event for all the adults and children who worship at our parish—especially the new ones! Dinner will be served, but we will only know how many to prepare for when you sign up on the bulletin board in the vestibule telling how many will attend. Call Jodie Schmelzer with any questions at (740) 569-9343.

### decorating st mary church in bremen for christmas

All parishioners are welcome to help decorate the church for Christmas on Friday, Dec 23, at 6 PM. **A pot luck will follow** (with meat provided by the parish).

### sacristan / ushers

These are the people who make things flow smoothly during our Sunday (including Saturday evening) Masses. They get things ready, make sure all the other ministers are ready, and help late arrivals find a seat with a minimum of disruption. Would you like

to help? Contact Kathy Kehnst or one of the folks you see doing the job.

### parish contributions

Last Sunday **St Bernadette parishioners** gave \$6,100 to the parish and \$55 to the parish educational support fund. And **St Mary Bremen** parishioners gave \$4,672 to the parish and \$410 to the St Vincent de Paul collection.

### seasonal giving and seasonal getting

Packets of offering **envelopes for 2017** are available on the table in the parish hall. If you do not find a packet with your name, take one of the packets without a name on it but with the lowest serial number. Write your name and the number of the packet on the paper for new envelopes. Just after Christmas we will mail out the remaining packets at a cost of over \$3-4 apiece. Please save your parish that expense by picking up your packet today.

When you have taken your envelopes, please also take a **2017 Catholic calendar**, given to our parishes courtesy of **Morgan Funeral Home** in Bremen and **Sheridan Funeral Home** in Lancaster and **Frank E. Smith Funeral Home** in Lancaster. It wouldn't hurt to thank these businesses for their generosity.

You could also pick up a copy of the book *The Lamb's Supper – The Mass as Heaven on Earth* by Scott Hahn. This book is a **Christmas gift for parishioners**. Its title comes from Saint John Paul II's description of the Mass as "Heaven on Earth" because what "we celebrate on Earth is a mysterious participation in the heavenly liturgy." Dr Hahn draws on **the Book of Revelation** (as did the early Christians) **as the key to understanding the mysteries of the Mass**. His book will help you pray the liturgy with a renewed heart and enter into the Mass more fully, enthusiastically, intelligently, and powerfully than ever before. We have 120 copies which will be **available at the main Church doors at Christmas** on a first come, first served basis.

### so says the IRS

Remember: Donations must be received by the parish on or before Dec 31 for them to be credited to 2016. So says the IRS.

### christmas flowers for your parish church

Donations to help defray the cost of Christmas flowers can be given to the Lord in memory of a loved one. Just put your gift in an envelope with the name of the loved one on the front and dropped in the collection basket in either parish.

### st bernadette blood drive

Thanks to all who supported the blood drive on Dec 3. We collected 34 units of blood which can help save up to 102 lives. Please continue to donate if you are able this winter. There is always a need when holidays and weather challenges are happening. The next drive happens in May. Thanks again to our St Bernadette blood donors and volunteers.

### retirement fund for religious

Aging religious need your help. Senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests have offered their lives in service to others – educating the young, comforting the sick, seeking justice for the oppressed. Today, many are frail, elderly, and in need of assistance. Your gift to the Retirement Fund for Religious helps to furnish medications, nursing care, and other necessities. Thank you for your generosity in last Sunday's collection.

### advent drive for st vincent de paul

The Lancaster St Vincent de Paul Society tells us that their biggest need these days is for non-perishable foods, paper products (kleenex, paper towels, toilet paper), personal hygiene products (deodorant, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes), and laundry products

including detergent. So that's what they ask us to provide. Don't worry about too much of any of these items. There won't be too much, for the Society will share surplus items with the St Francis Center in McArthur. This drive will last **through the four Sundays of Advent**. Our drop off point will be in the vestibule between the school entrance and the church.

### where everybody knows your name

If you aren't already registered in our parish or if there has been some change in your household (as to who actually lives there or address, phone number, etc), please contact Kathy Kehnst at the parish office any morning.

## in the diocese of columbus

### catholic youth summer camp

Catholic Youth Summer Camp is Ohio's one week-long, residential high adventure camp for students entering grades 6-12. Activities typically include jet skis, water tubing, paintball, blobbing, high ropes, archery tag, zip lining, rock climbing, giant swing, and mountain boarding. CYSC offers a **truly Catholic and safe environment with daily catechesis that awakens faith and builds missionary disciples**. A week at camp includes daily Mass, adoration, reconciliation, small group conversations, worship, service and authentic community. This is especially valuable for young people who are not now receiving other catechesis as well as to reinforce catechesis for those who are. Go to [www.cysc.com](http://www.cysc.com) for information and to register for 2017 dates: high school sessions run the weeks of June 11, 18, 25, and July 2; middle school sessions run the weeks of July 9, 16, 23, and 30. Registration is open now.

### happily ever after ... despite the rough spots

Come to a Marriage Encounter weekend and learn ways to use your marriage's ups and downs to deepen your love for each other and for God. Why not **try a Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend**? The next weekend in central Ohio is Feb 17-19. For information or to register, contact Paul or Marilou Clouse at (614) 834-6880 or visit [www.wmcecolumbus.org](http://www.wmcecolumbus.org).

### late christmas day Mass

If you are seeking a late Sunday Mass on Christmas Day because of work or other obligations, Saint Joseph Cathedral, 212 East Broad Street, Columbus, will be offering a Mass at 5:15 PM as part of the regular Sunday Mass schedule. They will also offer a late Sunday Mass on January 1, the Solemnity of Holy Mary, Mother of God (New Year's Day). For information call (614) 224-1295 or visit [www.saintjosephcathedral.org](http://www.saintjosephcathedral.org)

### vehicle donations to the josephinum

The Pontifical College Josephinum is a Catholic Seminary in Columbus. Seminarians there are studying for the priesthood and need transportation from time to time for a variety of local needs. The Josephinum has a fleet of vehicles but could use additional vans. If you have a **used van that you could donate** to the Josephinum and obtain an income tax deduction for 2016, contact their business office at (614) 985-2230 so delivery arrangements can be made before Dec 31. The Josephinum is a non-profit charitable organization and will provide you with the appropriate documentation for the donation of a vehicle.

### the gift of a retreat

Are you looking for a gift that is one size fits all? Why not give the gift of a stay at the Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center? Their gift certificates are perfect for holiday gifts, thank you presents, anniversary presents or employee appreciation. Choose either a

flat dollar amount or pick specific rooms, meals, and number of nights for a gift as tailored as you like. Gift certificates available by email at [info@stspeterandpaulretreatcenter.org](mailto:info@stspeterandpaulretreatcenter.org) or by calling (740) 928-4246.

### sts peter & paul retreat center needs help

Have you or a member of your family ever participated in a group or personal retreat at the Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center? If you have, the experience was spiritually uplifting and rejuvenating for your soul. They ask for our prayerful consideration and our continued support of the Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center. They need assistance through our tax deductible donations that will help **update and improve their facility**. They will continue to operate the Retreat Center in a frugal manner so that more retreatants will be able to enjoy the peace, tranquility and spirituality that Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center offers. The needed updates and required improvements to enhance current and future retreatant experiences include:

- energy efficient boiler system (replacing the unit from 1955)
- wifi accessibility
- refrigerated storage unit (compressors and condensers)
- air conditioning the chapel and north hall.

Mail your tax deductible donation to: Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center, 2734 Seminary Road, Newark, OH 43056.

### catholic record society

The Catholic Record Society, founded in 1974, is dedicated to preserving the history and bringing into better light **the heroism of those who laid the foundation of today's Diocese of Columbus**. The accomplishments of those early pioneers, despite tremendous hardships, is an inspiring and encouraging story for today's Catholic. The Society also supports the Diocesan Archives, which preserves the official records of the Diocese. Meetings are held quarterly. Society members receive a calendar year subscription to the monthly *Bulletin*, the "*Barquilla de la Santa Maria*", which contains records, accounts and illuminations of the people and events of the historic Diocese. The Society maintains a wide variety of materials and records and responds to individuals seeking genealogical information or historical information on the parishes, institutions, religious orders, and clergy of the Diocese of Columbus. Basic **membership** is \$12 with digital Bulletin, \$25 with paper Bulletin, and an institutional subscription is \$35. Send check or money order before December 31 to the Catholic Record Society, 197 E Gay Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215. For information contact Chairman Mike Finn at [fcoolavin@aol.com](mailto:fcoolavin@aol.com) or (614) 268-4166.

### in the deanery

#### advent and penance

It is the season to ... what? Shop? Decorate? Send cards? Give gifts? Go to parties? Do we do these things in honor of Jesus? Well, actually it is **the season to prepare the way of the Lord**. Those other activities may help us prepare the way of the Lord. Or they may not. They are not the main preparation. Turning our hearts to him is. Going to Confession is **how Catholics do that**.

We have Confession every Thursday at 5:30 at St Bernadette and every Saturday at 3 at St Bernadette and at 8 AM on Sunday at St Mary. That's all year round because it is an all-year-round sacrament. To teach this lesson, we are trying to increase the frequency of Penance Services at St Bernadette School.

And during Advent, we have been having **communal Penance services** with individual confessions (and extra priests to help make that work!) at each of the parishes and schools in our deanery.

The Sacrament of Penance is very much a part of Catholic life. But it is the easiest part to drift away from. The Church reminds us that we need to confess our sins, at the very least, once a year. We need it, even if we haven't any very serious sins. Saint John reminds us bluntly that

"If we say, '**We are without sin**,' we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing."  
*1 John 1:8-9*

If you have been away for a while, it is time to come back. So you can prepare the way of the Lord!

The last Advent Penance Service in at least three counties is at Bremen St Mary today, Sunday, Dec 18 at 3 PM. Now is your chance!

### get in the christmas spirit

The **Fisher Catholic Band and Choir** will present a **Christmas Concert** on Monday, Dec 19, at 7 PM in the Fisher Catholic Alumni Commons. Take a moment to enjoy the Christmas melodies and tunes of this most blessed season—and the musical accomplishments of our young! Their concerts are free and open to the public. They would be very merry if you could join them.

### in the media

#### christmas in the vatican

Enrich your faith this **Advent and Christmas with special programming throughout the season** on EWTN. Attend Mass in Vatican City with Pope Francis, enjoy concerts from Europe and travel to the sacred sites of the Holy Land.

#### pilgrimage to fatima and lourdes

Fr Stash Dailey, pastor of Holy Family Parish in Columbus, invites you to join him from June 19-30 on a pilgrimage to Fatima and Lourdes, celebrating **the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima**. For details, contact Liz Grinder at the Lourdes Pilgrimage Office at (877) 276-7279 or [lourdespilgrimageoffice@comcast.net](mailto:lourdespilgrimageoffice@comcast.net) or go to [www.lourdes-pilgrimage.com](http://www.lourdes-pilgrimage.com). Reservation deadline is March 15.

#### catholic conversations: the lessons of st faustina

Come to the Upper Room at Sports on Tap, at 4030 Main St, Hilliard, on Sunday, Jan 15 at 6 PM to hear a talk by Michele Faehnle & Emily Jaminet. Catholic Conversations is hosted by St Margaret of Cortona and St Brendan parishes and is an outreach ministry open to all adults **to bring our Catholic faith into the every day**. The event is free of charge. They ask only that you pay for your own food and drink of choice. They encourage registration, to ensure seating. Go to Eventbrite and search for Catholic Conversations. Contact Julie Naporano at [julienaporano1@gmail.com](mailto:julienaporano1@gmail.com).

#### celebrate the birth

"Once a **year** the Church universal celebrates a solemn remembrance of the coming of great majesty, great humility, great godly love—and indeed a great glorification of ourselves. If only this might be celebrated always as it is done this once! After the coming of so great a King, what madness it is for people to desire, or to dare, to occupy themselves with any other business. Should they not leave everything else aside and free themselves entirely for worshiping him, and in his presence be mindful of nothing else? ... Before Christ became a brother of human beings he became the child of a human being; he became a human being!"

—Bernard of Clairvaux,  
*First Sermon for Christmas Eve*

## ministers at Mass at st bernadette

			lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion		
Saturday, Dec 17	4 PM	Jennifer Spiegel	Kendall Cox, Gus & Olivia Spiegel	Susan Garrett Joyce Guenther	Denise McGuire Teresa Scarpitti	Mickey Steyaert Kathy Wagner	
Sunday, Dec 18	11 AM	Terry Carpenter	Avee & Drew Solt, Jack Tencza	Pat Dreyer Ben Peters Sandy Landefeld	Mary Jane Vajen Jean Robertson	Becky Wickham	
Monday, Dec 19	8:20 AM	Mary J Vajen	Becca Fuller, Jack Gentile	Pat Dreyer	Kathy Kehnast		
Wednesday, Dec 21	8:20 AM	Bob Christy	Brianna Hilyard, Joey Mannella	Mary Guinan	Mary Jane Vajen		
Thursday, Dec 22	6 PM	Kathy Kehnast	Carley Matson, Mitchell Ortiz	Rosalie DeFillippo	Marguerite Grimm		
Friday, Dec 23	8:20 AM	Jim Merk	Gunner Robertson, Lexi Utz	Jim & Rita Merk			
Christmas Eve Dec 24	6 PM	Becky Kuhn	Mallory, Mason, McKenzie & Mitchell Ortiz	Tara Craaybeek Rosalie DeFillippo	Jim Kuhn Teresa Scarpitti Ben Peters Shelia Taylor		
Christmas Dec 25	MIDNIGHT	Marguerite Grimm	Logan & Tori Loy, Dominic & Emeline Neighbor	Terry Carpenter Joyce Guenther	Brad Rider David Shonk		
Christmas Dec 25	11 AM	Dennis Forquer	Eve Darfus, Caroline Messerly, Anna Hartig, Daniel Turner	Nancy Griffith John Hartig	Teresa Hartig Jim Merk	Rita Merk Anna Sevigny	

## ministers at Mass at bremen st mary

		lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion	gifts	sacristan / usher
Sunday, Dec 18	8:30 AM	Joe Young	Reagan & Spencer Conrad	Dismas Schmelzer, Joe & Cathy Young	Joe Young family	Joe Young
Christmas Eve Dec 24	9 PM	Pete Kunkler	Reagan & Spencer Conrad	Neil Boch, Irene Kunkler, Pam Redding	Nick Schmelzer family	Jim Schmelzer
Christmas Dec 25	8:30 AM	Jeanne Schmelzer	Abby Skinner	Leo Kunkler Sr, Jim Schmelzer, Angi Skinner	Maurice Schmelzer family	Jim Schmelzer

## the Church's plan for reading God's word this week

Saturday Sunday	Dec 17 Dec 18	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent	Isaiah	7:10-14	Romans	1:1-7	Psalms	24	Matthew	1:18-24
Monday	Dec 19	Late Advent Weekday	Judges	13:2-25			Psalms	71	Luke	1:5-25
Tuesday	Dec 20	Late Advent Weekday	Isaiah	7:10-14			Psalms	24	Luke	1:26-38
Wednesday	Dec 21	St Peter Canisius	Song of Songs	2:8-14			Psalms	33	Luke	1:39-45
Thursday	Dec 22	Late Advent Weekday	1 Samuel	1:24-28			1 Samuel	2	Luke	1:46-56
Friday	Dec 23	St John of Kanty	Malachi	3:124			Psalms	25	Luke	1:57-66
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Dec 24</b>	<b>The Vigil of the Nativity</b>	<b>Isaiah</b>	<b>62:1-5</b>	<b>Acts</b>	<b>13:16-25</b>	<b>Psalms</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>1:1-25</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Dec 25</b>	<b>The Nativity of the Lord</b>	<b>Isaiah</b>	<b>9:1-6</b>	<b>Titus</b>	<b>2:11-14</b>	<b>Psalms</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>2:1-14</b>
			<b>Isaiah</b>	<b>52:7-10</b>	<b>Hebrews</b>	<b>1:1-6</b>	<b>Psalms</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>John</b>	<b>1:1-18</b>

## confessions & weekday Mass nearby These times sometimes change, though, so be sure to call ahead!

<i>Bremen St Mary</i>	<b>8 AM Sunday</b>		<b>8:20 AM</b>				
<i>Lancaster St Bernadette</i>	<b>5:30 PM Thurs, 3 PM Sat; 8:30 AM on 1<sup>st</sup> Sat</b>	<b>8:20 AM</b>		<b>8:20 AM</b>	<b>6 PM</b>	<b>8:20 AM</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Sat @ 9 AM</b>
<i>parish</i>	<i>confessions</i>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
<i>Lancaster St Mary</i>	4 PM Saturday	7 AM	9 AM	7 AM	9 AM		
<i>Lancaster St Mark</i>	5:30 PM Saturday	8 AM	8 AM	6 PM	8 AM	8 AM	
<i>Sugar Grove St Joseph</i>	½ hour before Mass	8 AM	NOON	8 AM	NOON	8 AM	
<i>Circleville St Joseph</i>	4 PM Saturday	9 AM	7 PM	9 AM		9 AM	10 AM
<i>Logan St John</i>	4 PM Saturday	8 AM	8 AM	9 AM		8 AM	9 AM



# And the Word Became Flesh!

That's what happened at Christmas!

The first chapter of the Gospel of Saint John tells the story without much in the way of storytelling. It is the Gospel for Christmas Morning, and it used to be the "Last Gospel" read (until the mid 1960s) quietly at the very end of almost every Mass. Most of us don't have the opportunity to hear it proclaimed very often any more. But it is a very powerful statement of the amazing message of the Incarnation.

Without benefit of angels or shepherds or mangers or even the mention of the names of Mary and Joseph, John tells us that the Word of God, the Word that was with God from all eternity, the Word which was himself God, the Word through which the Father spoke and brought all creation into being—that very Word—has become flesh. And he dwelt among us. Even more, He **dwells** among us.

Generally, I like a story that has people and places and dates and times. (I was a history major. Couldn't figure out my calculus textbook because there were no names or places.) The first two chapters of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke are more my style; they are wonderful in their telling of the things that happened on or around the first Christmas. But there is something about **John's unadorned statement that the Word became flesh**, that, when I really listen to it, makes me sit up and take notice. It isn't charming or heart-warming in the same way those other two gospels are when they tell their fascinating story. But it is **riveting and wonderful**. This is **the Incarnation**. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us!

Sometimes we act as though words don't make a difference. We ask, "What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." We respond to hostile name-callers by saying that "names will never hurt me." We even say, "It's just a matter of words," as though the choice of words were something we could take or leave. But the words we speak really do matter. God gave Adam and Eve authority over the rest of creation when he gave them the task of giving names to the other creatures. The moment of naming a baby and giving the baby a distinctly Christian name is a wonderful thing. God even gives us a commandment that our speech have integrity, that we not bear false witness. And that we not speak his name insultingly or frivolously.

God's Word is not something. **It is someone**. Or rather, **He is someone**. And we have not merely **heard** that Word; we have **met** him. He **dwells among us**. This is what God has done "for us men and for our salvation." But there is more to it than that: **This Word has become our food**. He enters into our lives to nourish us and to join every fiber of our being; **he is our Communion with God**. Amazing!

The Word matters. And words matter. No one knows that better than Holy Mother the Church. She knows that the privileged encounter with God which is at the heart of God's revelation to his people is first encountered, and constantly encountered, in the Word he has spoken through the prophets. We read the word of God in our bibles. And it comes alive, is made present to us again, when that word is spoken to us in the holy liturgy. The Church has the responsibility not only of making the word available to us, but also of seeing to it **that the Word is correctly and completely presented** to us. She knows that accuracy is no substitute for hearing, treasuring and pondering the words we have heard in our hearts as Mary did. She kept the Word and the words that were spoken to her. But it is important that it be the actual word. Stray from it and you will have a very different word.

And this goes for the holy liturgy. The Church has a responsibility to pass on this fundamental aspect of her holy tradition completely intact. She insists that we use a particular set of words in the Mass. They can be translated, sometimes even paraphrased, but they must be spoken with care. We must be united with the whole Church in our worship—the whole Church, throughout the ages and throughout the world. There is a template for the words that are to be spoken in our celebrating the holy Mass. It is a book that is called the **Missale Romanum**, translated as the **Roman Missal**. That translation has been done with the utmost care.

Translation is a funny business. The Italians have a proverb about the treachery of translating: "*traduttore, traditore*" (literally, "translator, traitor." It means that the act of translating from one language into another runs the risk of committing a treason against the meaning, which can never be captured completely. Well, that may exaggerate the point, but the adage is on to something. And the Church wants to make sure that the translations are not only not incorrect but also that they are able to communicate as well as possible the meaning of the things that God is communicating to us in the words that are spoken at Mass.

An important illustration of this care on the part of Holy Mother Church is the most noticeable of the new translations introduced to the Church in the English-speaking world a few years ago. The priest says "The Lord be with you" to which the people used to respond "And also with you." The newly revised translation of the response is "**And with your spirit**." Both are attempts to capture the meaning of the Latin words "*Et cum spiritu tuo*." Neither translation is mistaken; neither is perfect. The Church cares about two things here: fidelity to what is being said in the Latin text (which is the template for our Mass translations) and that the meaning of the original can be found in the translation. "And with your spirit" is more accurate, as you can probably see even if you don't know Latin. And there is more to this new translation. It isn't just a polite return of a compliment that might amount to saying "Same to you." "And with your spirit" is **a precise way of telling the priest or deacon (to whom this phrase is spoken) that the responding laity are praying that the Lord will be with the spirit of the minister (given him at his ordination) as he goes about the holy task that he is engaged in** — at the beginning of the Mass, just before he reads the Gospel, at the beginning of the Eucharistic prayer, as he is about to impart a blessing on the departing congregation. That is something else again. That may not mean much to us at first hearing. But hear it every Sunday and it may sink in.

The **word makes a difference**. And our words in the Holy Scriptures and at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass make a difference, too.

Thanks be to God for the Word of the Lord. He dwells among us!

— Father Kessler

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