

December 24-25, 2017

**Come, Lord Jesus! Come, be my Joy!**

Since the beginning of Advent the response to our Prayers of the Faithful has been **Come Lord Jesus!** This is what Advent is all about; a time of expectation, a time of awaiting the coming of Jesus in a manger in Bethlehem! The time has now come to celebrate this coming—**Christmas** has arrived! The **Joy of Christmas** has come upon us! As the prophet Isaiah reminds us (beginning of chapter 9): “The people who walked in darkness have seen a **great light**... **You** have brought them **abundant joy and great rejoicing!** ...**For a child is born to us, a son is given us...Prince of Peace!**”

This year is quite different celebrating Christmas on a Monday and **Christmas Eve on a Sunday!** In my 8 years of priesthood, I do not recall Christmas Eve falling on a Sunday. This means that as we gather this weekend (December 23-24) ...and as you read this weekly bulletin...we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Advent (in the morning) on the same day as Christmas Eve (beginning with 5:00 pm. Christmas Mass for children). Our Advent Season this year is the shortest ever: three weeks and one Sunday morning.

This short Advent Season does not mean that the **Joy of Christmas** will be diminished...on the contrary, I have found this year to be more joyous than ever! Many of you attended the first Mass of the nine Masses of Christmas (our annual Novena which we began four years ago) on Thursday, December 14. Over 250 of you came to anticipate the Joy of Christmas on that first evening of our Fifth Annual Novena. The music was spectacular in our renovated church! We could feel the presence of the Lord! Yes, **He is coming!** After the mass, most people stayed for fellowship in the narthex enjoying delicious soup and desert...and sharing the anticipated Joy of Christmas! We could already hear in our hearts the angel proclaiming to the shepherds: “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you **Good News of Great Joy** that will be **for all people!** For **today** in the City of David a **Savior has been born** for you who is **Christ and Lord.**” (Luke 2:10)...and suddenly there was a **multitude of the heavenly host** with the Angel saying, “**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace** to those on whom His favor rests.” (Luke 2:14) **Peace and Joy, Joy and Peace**—This is what **Christmas** is all about!

In his book, “**Joy to the World,**” Scott Hahn emphasizes that Christmas makes us different. Christmas sets us apart. Christmas calls us to share in **divine love**...and then to **share** that love with an unbelieving world. Not only does Christmas set us apart from other religions, **Christ’s coming changed everything and still does!** That changing of everything comes directly from the **immense love** God has for each one of us: “**God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life.**” (John 3:16) When Jesus came to the world born in Bethlehem, the world was transformed! Never before seen, God became man and that union of God with mankind transformed the world: **Everything changed**...The Mystery of the **Incarnation**, God becoming man leads to the **Paschal Mystery**: Jesus dying on the cross and taking away all our sins, followed by His Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven...giving us all the Hope that one day we too, will be reunited with God in Heaven! The Joy of Christmas leads to the Joy of Easter! Without Christmas there is no Easter. Without Easter there is no Christmas. **The Joy of Christmas and the Joy of Easter are ONE!**

Shortly after he was elected pope, **Pope Francis** published a beautiful exhortation letter: “**The Joy of the Gospel!**” (November 2013). In this letter, Pope Francis highlights the importance of **Joy** to evangelize those who never followed Christ or those whom no longer follow Him. He writes, “**The Joy of the Gospel** fills the hearts and lives of **all who encounter Jesus**. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. **With Christ, Joy is constantly born anew!**” Our Christian lives are all about encountering Christ! Our encounter with Christ begins at Christmas! I asked children recently who was Jesus for them. They gave many good answers: Jesus is my Savior, Jesus is my Best Friend, Jesus is my Teacher, Jesus is my King. One child gave me an unusual answer: “**Jesus is my Joy!**” I invite everyone at Christmas to reflect on these insightful words: **Jesus is my Joy!**

We all know that life is challenging. We all face many difficulties in our daily lives. But as Christians, we know that all these sufferings are nothing compared to the **Joy of Encountering Christ!** As a parish community, we have many reasons to be **grateful to God!** In my seven years as your pastor, I have found **much JOY** and that **JOY** comes from each one of **YOU**—The Joy of being a **family of families!** The Joy of being united in our Lord Jesus Christ! The Joy of seeing Christ in each of you! As we gather with our friends and families in celebrating Christmas, let us rejoice and praise the Lord for all the blessings He is pouring on each one of us every day of our lives!

Let us pray that the **Joy of Christmas will fill our hearts!** Let us say with **Pope Francis** that **with Christ, Joy is constantly born anew!** Let us pray that as we kneel down to **adore Jesus, the newborn King,** we can **rejoice** in our hearts **with the shepherds and angels: Come, Lord Jesus! Come, be my Joy! Come, Lord Jesus! Come, fill my heart with your divine love! Come, Lord Jesus, help me to share my JOY with all around me!**

On behalf of Fr. Santiago, Deacon Rich, Deacon Bill, and all our staff here in OLHOC, we wish you and all your families the best possible Christmas ever!

*One in Christ,  
Fr. Alain*



# Fourth Sunday of Advent & Christmas

## CCD Class Schedule

Our Lady Help of Christians 2017-2018 CCD Registration is open online: [www.olhoc.org](http://www.olhoc.org).

No CCD classes – Dec. 24/25 & Dec. 31/Jan. 1

Classes begin Jan. 7/8 in the New Year

Contact Therese Thiedeman at 301-645-7112 or [dre@olhoc.org](mailto:dre@olhoc.org)

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## Parish Youth Night !

Life Teen: high school youth ministry

(Sun., 5-6:30 pm- check website)

Edge: middle school youth ministry (meets monthly)

FIAT: elementary school Faith in Action Team (meets monthly)

## Attention Families!!

The next All-Youth Night (FIAT, Edge and Life Teen) will be on Jan. 28, 2018 and will begin with 4:00 PM Mass followed by fun! Bring your friends ! See the website at: [olhoc.org/ym](http://olhoc.org/ym).

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## Mass Intention

Saturday, Dec. 23, 9:00 AM: Abigail Strawberry

Saturday, Dec. 23, 5:00 PM: OLHOC Parishioners

Sunday, Dec. 24, 5:00 PM: Delia Lagman(+)

Sunday, Dec. 24, 8:00 PM: Peter Nikolai(+)

Monday, Dec. 25, 10:00 AM: José & Annamarie Gonzales (+)

and family

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## Mass Readings for December 31, 2017

*The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph*

First Reading- Genesis 15:1-6, 21:1-3

Second Reading- Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19

Gospel-Hebrews 1:1-2

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## Prayer Requests

We are asked to pray for: Chantelle Angelini, Sonia Knapp, Lynn & Ronald Henrion, Liz Marcus, Ebony Jenkins, Tina Gallagher-Detwiler, Judy Studds, Vincent Argiro, Sr., Pearl Green, Ghran Waldon, Linda Kelly, Barbara Tice, James Thompson, Doris Chesley, Joseph Albrittain, Ester Baraquio, Chris Goldhammer, Audrey Proctor, Fr. Robert Pittman, Denise Zois, Dolores Settler, Yolanda Brenoes, Elsie & Rodalin Canare, Brenda Dodson, Sarah Parker, Elaine Townley, Juliann Leginze, Randy Howells, Connie Miller, Josephine Manalo, Aaron Morgan, Pat Gray, Paulette Savoy, Kelvin Young, Annie Rope, Jim Ritchie, Bonnie Castro, Andy Green, Judee Parkinson, Tanya A. Viola, Dolores Proctor, April Sheffield, Dr. Suresh Verghese, Marisa Costas Pena, Marino Gadea, Monica Myers, Mike Connolly, Samuel Lopez, Julieta Bool, Wilbur Etbauer, Susan Walker, Doris Conover, Elijah Larson, Sunni Park, Mireille Obas, Joan Etbauer, Joseph Cheseldine, Sr., Consuela Velasquez, Wilhelmina Franck, Tabitha Barton, Isabel Smith, Elinore Fortney, and all our military and civilians serving in harm's way.

## OUR LADY'S LITTLE CHRISTIANS

<http://www.olhoc.org/preschool.html>

- Please call 301-645-7112 or email : [preschool@olhoc.org](mailto:preschool@olhoc.org) for information.

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## English/French Mass in the New Year!

Our monthly French Mass has taken root and will now be scheduled every week beginning Sunday, January 7, at 1:00 PM in bilingual setting.

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## Community Outreach

The next **Shepherds' Table Dinner** will be held on **Thursday, January 18, 2018 at Good Shepherd church**. The next Outreach Committee Meeting will be held on January 3 at 7 pm in our social hall. **New members and ideas are welcome!**

**Volunteers go to: [www.olhoc.org](http://www.olhoc.org) and click on the Community Outreach link.**

## Thank You

## Sharing Sunday

Is the first Sunday of the month. Items may be left in the Social Hall in boxes marked 'Food Donations'.

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## Upcoming Youth Events

We still have spots available for the March for Life , Mount 2000 in Emmittsburg, Steubenville Youth Conference and many more events! For more info, visit [www.olhoc.com/ym](http://www.olhoc.com/ym) or contact Marlen at : [marlen@olhoc.org](mailto:marlen@olhoc.org).

## RCIA Invitation

We meet on Wednesdays from 7:00-9:00 PM. Come and join us! If interested call the office (301-645-7112) or email [deacon@olhoc.org](mailto:deacon@olhoc.org). Classes in Spanish are on Sundays at 5:00 PM- Domingo a las cinco de la tarde. Salon #105.

## Upcoming Child Protection Classes

Upcoming sessions of "Protecting God's Children for Adults" are for those who need to become Virtus Compliant (Adults wishing to volunteer in any capacity while children are present).

Go to [VIRTUS.org](http://VIRTUS.org) to register. Call Nieda or Therese with questions at 301-645-7112.



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