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My dear parishioners:

Our season of Advent is rapidly drawing to a close. On Monday evening we will begin our celebration of the Nativity of the Lord. For eight days (octave) we will joyfully proclaim that in God's abundant love for us he sent his Son down from heaven and became man. Christmas is a time of great spiritual joy; a time of celebrating God's goodness to us and our need to recognize his goodness through our love of one another.

It was sometime in the early fourth century that the Church in Rome began to specifically celebrate the birth of Jesus with a dedicated Mass. It was in the year 274 that the Roman emperor Aurelius introduced the pagan feast *Natalis sol invictus* (the birth of the invincible sun), which was celebrated on December 25. From mid-June until the winter solstice in later December, the sun wanes. From the winter solstice until the summer solstice the sun shines a bit longer each day. The pagan feast of the *sol invictus* marked the conquering of darkness by the light, as now the light of each day would become increasingly longer. It seemed appropriate for the pope to take this pagan feast and bring a Christian meaning to it. Many of the early Roman Christians had been pagans and so to substitute the pagan gods for the true incarnate God was easily accepted by the Christian community. Additionally, the scriptures supported this concept of Christ as light for the prophet Malachi had written that one day the "Sun of justice" (Mal. 3:20) would arise. The prologue of the Gospel of John speaks eloquently of the "light" who came into the world and Jesus called himself the "Light of the world" (John 8:12). Hence, the true sun and true light is the One who vanquishes the darkness of sin and death and brings the light of God's truth and salvation. The true light is Jesus the Christ. After the Peace of Constantine in 313, the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord supplanted altogether the pagan feast of the rising sun and December 25 became solely a celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Seen from this historical perspective, we understand that the celebration of Christmas is an important part of the celebration of our redemption, which comes through the death and resurrection of Christ. It is by his death and resurrection that Christ conquers sin and death and opens for us the gift of eternal life. On Christmas day, therefore, we begin the celebration of our redemption for Christ was born into the world so that he would enlighten our way to the Father. And not only this, but also the Lord who once lived among us continues his presence among us in his Church. It is truly the Lord himself who we receive in Word and Sacrament. It is the Lord himself who directs the course of our lives, if we are attentive. This is the truly profound gift that God has given us; the gift of his Son, once in time, now and forever.

Christmas is a wonderful time to thank God for the gift of his presence and grace in our lives. It is a time to allow Christ to enter more deeply into our hearts. Christ was and continues to be our light. Let us strive to see more clearly the many and varied ways in which the Lord is present in our lives and enlightening our way through this life into eternal life. If you will be joining us for Christmas Mass, I very much look forward to celebrating the Birth of the Lord with you and your family. If you will be visiting family or friends and will be attending Christmas Mass elsewhere, please be assured of our prayers for you and your family. You will be with us in spirit as we celebrate Christmas Mass here at Our Lady of the

December 22 - December 30, 2018
Readings and Mass Intentions

Saturday, December 22 4:30pm—Mass
 6:30pm—Spanish Mass
 1 Sm 1:24-28/1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd [cf. 1a]/Lk 1:46-56
Sunday, December 23 9:00am—Mass
 Mi 5:1-4a/Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-18 [4]/Heb 10:5-10/Lk 1:39-45
Mass intention for the People of the Parish
Monday, December 24, Christmas Eve 4:30pm—Mass
 10:00pm—Mass
 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29 [2]/
 Lk 1:67-79
 Vigil: Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29 [2a]/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25
 /Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25
 Night: Is 9:1-6/Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13 [Lk 2:11]/Ti 2:11-14/
 Lk 2:1-14
Tuesday, December 25, Christmas Day 9:00am—Mass
 Dawn: Is 62:11-12/Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20
 Day: Is 52:7-10/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6 [3c]/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or
 Jn 1:1-5, 9-14
Wednesday, December 26 4:30pm—Mass
 Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17 [6]/
 Mt 10:17-22
Thursday, December 27 8:30am—Mass
 1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 [12]/Jn 20:1a, 2-8
Friday, December 28 9:30am—Communion Service
 1 Jn 1:5-2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7cd-8 [7]/Mt 2:13-18
Saturday, December 29 4:30pm—Mass
 6:30pm—Spanish Mass
 1 Jn 2:3-11/Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6 [11a]/Lk 2:22-35
Sunday, December 30 9:00am—Mass
 1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28/Ps 84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10 [cf. 5a]/1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-
 24/Lk 2:41-52
Mass intention for the People of the Parish

Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved. (Ps 80)

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for: Nelda Leathem, Don Watt, Bennie Mahaffey, Bobbie Broussard, Lois Cuccia; Carmen Reedy, Norton Leger, Susie Gaudet, Linda Dispuccio, Jessie Day, Zane Duckworth, Ila Hayes, Page Rayburn, Debbie Gerac, Penny Foxworth, Dianne Necessary;

Repose of the soul: Ed Sanderson, David Wells, Lynn Garner; Jerry Smith, Buzz Whiting

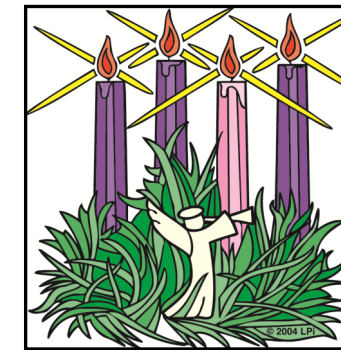
Names will remain on the prayer list for two weeks. You may list names in the Prayer book in the vestibule of the Church and your intention will be offered at daily Mass.

(continued from previous column)
 Pines Church. May the Lord grant to you and those you love a most joy-filled Christmas and may the New Year 2019 be filled with countless blessings of health, happiness and holiness. Merry Christmas!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Frank H. Rossi
 Pastor

Sun. Dec 23 <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i> 9:00am—Mass	Mon. Dec 24 <i>Christmas Eve</i> 4:30 pm—Vigil Mass 10:00pm—Mass During the Night	Tues. Dec 25 <i>Christmas Day</i> 9:00am—Mass 12:00pm—Spanish Mass, St. Michael's, Jasper, TX	Wed. Dec 26 4:00pm—Rosary 4:30pm—Communion Service	Thurs. Dec 27 8:30am—Communion Service 9:00am—Divine Mercy Chaplet	Fri. Dec 28 9:30am—Communion Service	Sat. Dec 29 3:45-4:15pm: Confessions 4:30pm—Mass 6:30pm—Spanish Mass
Sun. Dec 30 <i>The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph</i> 9:00am—Mass	Mon. Dec 31 <i>New Year's Eve</i> 4:30 pm—Vigil Mass, Mary Mother of God Holy Day of Obligation	Tues. Jan 1 <i>Holy Day of Obligation Mary Mother of God</i> 9:00am—Mass 12:00pm—Spanish Mass, St. Michael's, Jasper, TX <i>New Year's Day</i>	Wed. Jan 2 4:00pm—Rosary 4:30pm—Mass	Thurs. Jan 3 8:30am—Mass 9:00am—Divine Mercy Chaplet	Fri. Jan 4 9:30am—Communion Service	Sat. Jan 5 3:45-4:15pm: Confessions 4:30pm—Mass 6:30pm—Spanish Mass



Texas Department of Criminal Justice is hiring for Correctional Officer at the Gib Lewis Facility in Woodville.
 Pre-testing will be on Jan 3, 2019.
 See the flyer on the bulletin board in the vestibule.

Hundredfold Workshop For Parish Vocation Ministries

January 12, 2019, 9am-3pm
St. Jude Thaddeus Parish
6825 Gladys Avenue, Beaumont, TX

The workshop's purpose is to equip Catholic laity to form vibrant Vocation Ministries that promote vocations to marriage, priesthood, and consecrated life in their parishes.

For more information or to register, please visit <https://bit.ly/2pzMsP4>

Upcoming Events

December 25: Christmas Day
 January 1: Mary, The Holy Mother of God, **Holy Day of Obligation**, New Year's Day
 January 12: Hundredfold Workshop, St. Jude, Beaumont, TX
 January 13: Pot Luck Dinner after Sunday Mass

Weekly Stewardship

December 15 & 16 Weekly Offering \$ 2,722.00
 Average Weekly Cost \$ 3,152.00
 Excess/Deficit \$ - 570.00
Thank you for your generosity.

MASS SCHEDULE FOR CHRISTMAS SEASON



Monday, December 24, Christmas Eve
 4:30pm—Mass
 Special emphasis on children
 10:00pm—Mass During the Night

Tuesday, December 25, Christmas Day:
 9:00am—Mass

Monday, December 31, New Year's Eve:
 4:30pm—Vigil Mass

Tuesday, January 1, New Year's Day:
 9:00am—Mass

2019 Envelopes

There has been an issue with the printing of the 2019 Donation Envelopes. The envelopes will not be here in time for the first and second weekends of January.

So that correct records may be kept, if donating by check, put your envelope number on the memo line. If donating by cash place your donation in a plain envelope with your envelope number on the front.

If the donation is for the Maintenance Fund please write Maintenance Fund along with your envelope number.

Thank you.
 We hope the issue will be resolved quickly.