A Spiritual Reflection from Msgr. Thomas M. Wells

**Listening to Christmas**

I had a chance to work off a little of the temporal punishment due to sin the other day by going to a mall. Among the experiences that called me to reflect on the foolishness of my sins was being third in line at an information booth. The good lady alternated by serving those standing before her and those calling. What struck me was the number of words she used to greet each of us and tell each of us her name. Of course the holiday that occasioned both her greeting and the mob that surrounded us was not mentioned in all of those words; but she did, in a way that would have surprised her, I am sure, remind me to speak less and listen more. Hers and all of the other mindlessly cheery chatter of the mall highlight the contrast between words and the Word made flesh whose birth we celebrate.

One of the things that is striking about all of the Christmas stories is the atmosphere of quiet in which our imagination has them take place. We see the angel come to Mary while she is alone in prayer in her home in Nazareth; the shepherds watch over their flock at the quietest time of the night; the Magi search for years in the quiet desolation of the desert and Mary “ponders all these things in her heart.” St. John tells of the Mystery of Christmas in the prologue to his Gospel. Those who avoid the crowds who come to Masses of Christmas Eve and actually participate in a Mass of Christmas will hear John’s proclamation, “And the word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Jesus, the Word, who is the Father’s absolute image and self-communication, has become our brother.

One of my CCD students, when asked recently what incident from the Gospels says the most to her, responded that she is moved by the agony of Christ in the Garden because she finds it so hard to imagine His knowing the suffering that awaited Him and His choice to accept it. In other words, my student is beginning to contemplate the Mystery of Christ. And so, we see the major figures of this season from Joseph to the Simeon at the Temple as people of faith who contemplated the Word of God.

The Word became flesh but the Words speaks to the heart. The heart that is accustomed to words spoken just to fill silence will likely miss the Word so often spoken in silence. Be attentive during these days: go apart with Our Lady, with the shepherds, with Joseph and with believers of every age, and contemplate the Good News that our God has become one of us.

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### Masses for the Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Mass Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, December 21</td>
<td>7:00 AM</td>
<td>+ Asuku Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, December 22</td>
<td>7:00 AM</td>
<td>+ Fr. Charles Green</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, December 23</td>
<td>7:00 AM</td>
<td>+ Paul Nugent, Jr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, December 24</td>
<td>7:00 AM</td>
<td>+ George Bridge</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+ Jimmy Carr</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:30 PM</td>
<td>Priest’s Intentions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
<td>Priest’s Intentions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:00 PM</td>
<td>Holy Souls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, December 25</td>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
<td>Priest’s Intentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
<td>People of the Parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 NOON</td>
<td>Priest’s Intentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, December 26</td>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
<td>+ Joseph Can Ngoc Pham</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11:00-11:55 AM</td>
<td>Confessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 NOON</td>
<td>+ Rob Hamers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4:00-4:45 PM</td>
<td>Confessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5:00PM</td>
<td>+ Msgr. James Beattie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, December 27</td>
<td>7:30 AM</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Kakosova</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Int. Jillian Bernadette Walsh</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
<td>Int. Camille Walsh</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 NOON</td>
<td>People of the Parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:30 PM</td>
<td>+ Patricia Bowe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Due to the suspension of the Monday - Friday 8:00am Mass, the intentions scheduled for those Masses will be transferred to Sunday Masses.**

The graces of each Mass are applied to the persons listed in the book regardless of whether they appear in the bulletin or are mentioned during the Mass.
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Christmas Mass Schedule:

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, sign ups will be required for all of the Christmas masses:

- Several Flocknote emails have been sent out with the sign up information
- You can also find the sign up link at: lourdesbethesda.net
- Or you may reserve your spaces by calling the rectory office at: 301-654-1287

Spaces are extremely limited so please be sure to sign up as soon as possible.

* Please note that all those who have already signed up for Christmas Mass must stay with the mass they’ve chosen in order to accommodate all families. Thank you for your understanding.

Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24:

2:30pm Vigil Mass
5:00pm Vigil Mass
7:00pm Vigil Mass (Spanish)
10:00pm Solemn Mass of Christmas

Christmas Day, Friday, December 25:

8:00am
10:00am
12:00 Noon (Spanish)

The rectory office will be closed Thursday, December 24 through January 1. We will reopen Monday, January 4.

Email Sheri Golden at sgolden@ololrcc.org with any urgent matters.

Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God Mass Schedule:

Thursday, December 31:
5:30pm Vigil Mass

Friday, January 1:
8:00am
10:00am
12:00 Noon (Spanish)
Father Rob, Father James and all of the staff at Our Lady of Lourdes wish you and your families a blessed and safe Christmas Season filled with the hope and peace of Christ.

From Left to Right:
Sister Claudia Ruvalcaba, Mrs. Claire Toms, Father Rob Walsh, Father James Morrison, Ms. Sheri Golden, Mrs. Lacy Prebula
**Dorothy Day Place**

Dorothy Day Place is a transitional housing program in Montgomery County, MD. This program offers case management and ongoing support to residents.

Dorothy Day is seeking volunteers to provide dinner for approximately 25 guests. Meals can be dropped off daily between 8:00am - 5:00pm. Dinner is served at 6:00pm. Please note there is not a full kitchen available so meals can only be refrigerated and heated by the staff. There is a freezer available for any foods that are to be served at a later date.

**Not sure what to cook? Here are some ideas:**
- Soup, salad and bread
- Grilled or roasted chicken with rice and a salad or vegetables
- Casseroles
- Stew or chili
- Pulled chicken, rolls, salad
- Pasta and a salad or bread
- Pizza and salad

Dorothy Day Place is located at 5320 Marinelli Road, Rockville, MD 20852.

Questions? Email Kenneth.Swift@cc-dc.org or call 301-907-9597.

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**Study of Saints (SoS):**

Have you ever prayed for the intercession of a Saint? Often times when we do, we are invariably in need of something. Praying for the intercession of a Saint is like sending out an S.O.S. call for help. In this book club, we will read works by or about Saints. Through this Study of Saints (SoS), we will learn about the martyrs and religious who have dedicated their lives to God and learn what they are the Patron Saints of. By knowing our patron Saints, we can understand better whose constant intercession we can rely upon in sending our own SOS.

**Meets on fifth Sundays 3:00-4:00pm.**

Next will be a two part series on Saint Pope John Paul II with a biography in November followed by one of his encyclicals in January.

**January 31, 2021 EVANGELIUM VITAE Encyclical:**


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**Angel Tree 2020:**

Each year, Catholic Charities helps hundreds of families during the holiday season by providing each of their children, ages 16 and younger, with a Christmas gift. This holiday season, Angel Tree will continue to occur with COVID-19 precautions. Due to the pandemic, we are asking for community sponsors to make a monetary donation to purchase gift cards for these families.

Help make a family’s Christmas wishes come true! It is more than giving presents, it is giving a family joyful holiday memory for years to come.

Visit our website at: catholiccharitiesdc.org or email christmas@cc-dc.org for more information.
**Finance & Administration:**

“How shall I make a return to the Lord for all the good He has done for me?” (Psalm 116:12)

Our December Poor Box will be going to the DC Diaper Bank. This program empowers families in need throughout DC, Maryland, and Virginia, by providing a reliable source for basic baby needs and personal hygiene products. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

**Volunteers Needed on Christmas Day:**

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception will provide meals for hundreds of poor, homeless, elderly and needy individuals living in the District of Columbia and surrounding areas on Christmas Day.

This year, all meals will be for delivery and take-out only.

Volunteers are needed to fill many different positions. Those interested in signing up should visit: www.nationalshrine.org/christmasdinner.

**Moving In, Out or Within the Parish?**

Please help us keep our records up-to-date by filling out this form and dropping it in the collection basket or rectory mail slot. Thank you.

| NAME: | _____________________________________________________________________________ |
| ADDRESS: | _____________________________________________________________________________ |
| PHONE: | _____________________________________________________________________________ |
| EMAIL: | _____________________________________________________________________________ |
| _____ I/we am/are new to the parish. Welcome! | |
| _____ Change of address within the parish. Thank you! | |
| _____ I/we am/are moving out of the parish. God be with you! | |

**Stay Connected with Flocknote!**

Sign up to receive text and email updates from Our Lady of Lourdes.

Visit: lourdesbethesda.flocknote, Text FNOLOL to 84576 or Email Claire Toms at ctoms@ololrcc.org.

Please send any bulletin requests by Friday a week before the requested bulletin date to Claire Toms at ctoms@ololrcc.org.

**Our Lady of Lourdes Registration:**

Please either fill out the form below or email Claire Toms at ctoms@ololrcc.org with your information.

You will then be emailed a link to a registration form for you to fill out.

You can also go directly to lourdesbethesda.net to access our parish registration form.

Thank you and we are happy to welcome you to Our Lady of Lourdes.

**Winter Recruitment Campaign: Volunteer for A Good New Year!**

Catholic Charities is recruiting 30 volunteers to take on a weekly, year-long commitment to service. To volunteer: submit an application, have a conversation with program staff about expectations, and commit to at least 75 hours of service including orientation and training. Except for medical professionals, volunteering is done remotely via video chat, phone calls, email, and regular mail.

Visit our website at: catholiccharitiesdc.org/volunteer/ongoing/ to learn more and to apply.

The dispensation issued by Archbishop Gregory from the obligation to attend Mass during this time remains in effect. All persons who are subjects of the Archbishop of Washington no matter where they may be, and all other persons who are actually present in the Archdiocese of Washington who are under the obligation, are dispensed from the obligation until further notice (cann. 87 §1, 91).

For a complete list of Masses and updates during this time, please visit: adw.org/live-streamed-masses-and-prayers/.
¿Es posible una Navidad en tiempos de pandemia?

Otros años en Navidad hemos celebrado la presencia de Dios en y con nosotros como ternura, relación de amor, abrazo de afecto y reconciliación entre todos. Incluso para muchos no creyentes, era una oportunidad para despertar los sentimientos de amor y de amistad.

Este año, por la pandemia, la situación ha cambiado. Apenas podremos tener reuniones e intercambios presenciales con nuestros familiares. Ni siquiera todos los católicos que lo deseen podrán participar en las celebraciones religiosas como en otros años.

Dentro de esta realidad hay algo que todos estamos viviendo en común: nuestra fragilidad. Esta fragilidad que se experimenta en el miedo, la inseguridad, en el dolor ante tanto sufrimiento y en la impotencia para inmunizar al virus.

¿Y no fue precisamente así frágil que Dios se presentó a nosotros en la Navidad? ¿No fue en la oscuridad de un establo, en medio de la noche y en la soledad de un pueblo extranjero que Jesús vino al mundo? Tal vez Dios nos da la oportunidad de sentir su presencia de otra manera. Quizás este año podemos celebrar la Navidad en la experiencia de nuestra propia fragilidad.

En el nacimiento de Jesucristo los cristianos percibimos la presencia de lo divino en lo humano. En estos tiempos de pandemia, debemos discernir la presencia bondadosa de Dios en los anhelos de vida, en los gestos de solidaridad y en la búsqueda de soluciones. Y ofrecer el significado de Navidad: “paz a los todos seres humanos porque Dios los ama”. Dios nos habita, es una Presencia de amor que siempre nos da fuerza para levantarnos de nuestras propias cenizas. Si estamos de pie, es porque Dios se ha encarnado y nos sostiene en medio de nuestra fragilidad.

HORARIOS DE MISAS PARA LA CELEBRACIÓN DE LA NAVIDAD

Con el deseo de que tengan la oportunidad de asistir a Misa con motivo de la celebración de la Navidad, la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes ofrece los siguientes horarios:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diciembre 24</th>
<th>7:00pm</th>
<th>En Español</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diciembre 25</td>
<td>12:00pm</td>
<td>En Español</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No es necesario anotarse porque habrá suficiente lugar para todos los que quieran asistir. Les pedimos elegir un solo horario de misa, para dar posibilidad a otras personas que también deseen asistir.