



*"Do not be
afraid, Mary,
for you have
found favor
with God."*

LUKE 1:30



Church of Saint Philip

Pennsburg, PA

December 24, 2023

Rev. Anthony Hangholt, Pastor

Msgr. Charles Vance, Weekend Assistant

Deacon Michael J. Franks

Deacon Matthew A. Horvath

John Duffner, Business Manager

Shirley Misiak, Office Manager

Catherine E. Faust, Director of Music

Marlene Leidy, Parish Outreach Coordinator

Wendy Benner, Coordinator of PREP/Religious ED

Barbara Jaruszewski, Safe Environment Coordinator

Parish Phone Numbers:

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Rectory | 215.679.9275 |
| Religious Education/PREP | 215.679.7839 |
| Youth Ministry/Safe Env. | 215.679.9275 |
| Parish Hall | 215.679.8116 |
| Deacon Mike Franks | 215.679.9275 X107 |

Parish Staff Email addresses:

busmgr@spnparish.org
ofcmgr@spnparish.org
deaconmike@spnparish.org
deaconmatt@spnparish.org
musicdirector@spnparish.org
parishoutreach@spnparish.org
prep@spnparish.org
safeenvironment@spnparish.org

Fax Numbers:

Rectory **215.679.0386**

Church & Rectory Address:

1325 Kliner Rd; Pennsburg 18073

Hours: **9:30 AM – 4:30 PM**

Email Address: **ofcmgr@spnparish.org**

Website Address:

www.spnparish.org

Religious Education Office Hours:

1325 Kliner Rd.; Pennsburg

Monday & Friday: **Offices are closed**

Tuesday & Thursday: **8:00 AM – 4:00PM**

Wednesday: **12:00 PM – 8:00PM**

ROSARY: Prayed in the Saint Anne Chapel

Monday's at 1:00 PM

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION in St. Anne Chapel

Monday – Friday:

9:00 AM - 7:00 PM

Saturday's:

10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

FIRST FRIDAY MASS

9:00 AM: in Church

Adoration: 10AM – 7:00PM in Chapel.

FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS

For a floral arrangement to be placed at the altar, please call the rectory.

SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday – Vigil Mass – 4:00 PM

Sunday – 7:30 AM; 10:00 AM

Holy Day Masses as announced

WEEKDAY MASS SCHEDULE

Daily Masses are celebrated in the Saint Anne Chapel.

Monday; Tuesday; Wednesday; Thursday; Friday – 8AM

CONFESSIONS

Saturdays: 3:00 – 3:45 PM

OR at the Rectory BY APPOINTMENT.

PRE-JORDAN BAPTISMAL CLASSES

Call the rectory office to register for classes between 10AM & 4PM.

BAPTISMS

Call the rectory office to register your child for baptism between 10AM & 4PM.

SPONSORS

Sponsors for Baptism and Confirmation need to be at least 16 years of age, be baptized and received the Sacraments of Communion and Confirmation, attend Mass weekly; and if married, be in a valid Marriage.

MARRIAGES

Arrangements should be made at least SIX MONTHS before the date of the wedding.

NEW PARISHIONERS

Stop by or call the rectory between 9:30AM-4:30 PM. Also, children who turn 26 years of age or complete higher education and continue to reside within our area should become individually registered parishioners.

SHUT-INS

Call (215 679 9275) OR email the Parish Outreach Office: parishoutreach@spnparish.org.

SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Call or email the Rectory Office.

OUR PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

We are the Catholic Parish Community of St. Philip Neri, answering Christ's call to discipleship through Word, Sacrament and Service. We proclaim God's hope and love to all.

Mass Intentions

Sunday: December 23/24, 2023

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

4:00 PM – Eugene/Catherine Cressman

7:30 AM – Living/Deceased Parishioners

10:00 AM – Living/Deceased Parishioners

Sunday: December 24, Christmas Eve

4:00 PM – No Intentions

7:00 PM – No Intentions

Midnight: No Intentions

CHRISTMAS DAY Monday: December 25, 2023

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

7:30 AM – NO INTENTIONS

10:00 AM – NO INTENTIONS

9:00 AM – 7:00 PM – NO Adoration in the Chapel

1:00 PM – NO Holy Rosary Hour

Tuesday: December 26, 2023

SAINT STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR

7:20 AM – Holy Rosary

8:00 AM – Special Intention, Honoring Rosemary

Porretti & Kenneth Hudanich on their October 7th Wedding

9:00 AM – 7:00 PM: Adoration in the Chapel

Wednesday: December 27 2023

SAINT JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

7:20 AM – Holy Rosary

8:00 AM – Gisele Smith,

(Dean, Michelle Kresge and Family)

9:00 AM – 7:00 PM: Adoration in the Chapel

Thursday: December 28, 2023

THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS

7:20 AM – Holy Rosary

8:00 AM – John Laino, Sr.,

(Robert & Vanessa Jerez)

9:00 AM – 7:00 PM: Adoration in the Chapel

Friday: December 29, 2023

**FIRST DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE
NATIVITY OF THE LORD.**

7:20 AM – Holy Rosary

8:00 AM – Ernest & Kathrine Gaugler, (Jeanette Miller)

9:00 AM – 7:00 PM: Adoration in the Chapel

Saturday: December 30, 2023

**SIXTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE
NATIVITY OF THE LORD**

10:00 AM – 3:00 PM – Adoration in the Chapel

4:00 PM – Gisele Smith, (Dean, Michelle Kresge and family)

Sunday: December 31, 2023

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH

7:30 AM – Arnold Hobson, (Martin & Lori Brozena)

10:00 AM – Living/Deceased Parishioners.



WE INVITE YOUR PRAYERS

For the sick, those in hospitals, nursing homes, also for their caregivers; and all those we hold close in our hearts.

Please pray in particular for:

Christine Abate; Amanda Azure; Brian Basta; Walter Belsky; Bonnie Boro; Paul Bowen; Grace Brenner; Dorothy “Dottie” Busfield; Allison Brick; Mila Burnett; Adam Canigiani, Jr.; Christian Vincent Caparra; Carol Clunk; Angela Desmond; Dolores Duffy; Lou Fahs; Gene Falasco; Liz Fronheiser; Frances Gibbs-Kail; Helen Gibbs; Kerry Goodwin; Robert Hale; Charlene Hamilton; Al Hammer; Bill Hanney; Estelle Haney; Catherine Hangholt; Kitty Heebner; Timothy Kail; Christine Kemp; Little Leo Kushnir; Hadley Ludwig; Caroline Marks; Mary Ann Moneghan; Maura Murphy; Francis M. Robinson; Marine Corporal Eugene Ruduski; Denise Shaw; Dick Stemp; Moira Stephens; Patty Sweeney; Christopher Szymkiewicz; Ray Szymkiewicz; Eunice Wagner; Nancy Walker; William Walker; and Frani Zappala.

For those who have died, grant them eternal rest and peace.

LITURGICAL MINISTERS SCHEDULE

Fourth Quarter 2023 – December 30/31

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

4:00 PM:

Servers: CALL/EMAIL DEACON MIKE

Lectors: CALL/EMAIL DEACON MIKE

Eucharistic Ministers: CALL/EMAIL DEACON MIKE

7:30 AM Mass

Servers: CALL/EMAIL DEACON MIKE

Lectors: CALL/EMAIL DEACON MIKE

Eucharistic Ministers: CALL/EMAIL DEACON MIKE

10:00 AM Mass

Servers: CALL/EMAIL DEACON MIKE

Lectors: CALL/EMAIL DEACON MIKE

Eucharistic Ministers: CALL/EMAIL DEACON MIKE

**NATIVITY OF THE LORD CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES:
SERVERS; LECTORS AND EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS**

4:00 PM – CALL/EMAIL DEACON MIKE

7:00 PM – CALL/EMAIL DEACON MIKE

MIDNIGHT – CALL/EMAIL DEACON MIKE

**PLEASE NOTE: NO LITURGIAL SCHEDULES
WERE SUBMITTED TO THE RECTORY OFFICE
FOR CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY.**

ADULT FAITH FORMATION:

If you have questions about any of our Faith Formation activities, please **Contact: Eileen Koch-adultfaithformation @spnparish.org OR 215-696-2089.**

BIBLE STUDIES – Beginning the second week of January, we will be offering the following Bible Studies. Please choose the topic, day or time that works best for you and join us! If you are not able to sign up on December 16th and 17th, or you need a different day or time, please contact Eileen at 215-696-2089.

ASCENSION PRESS SESSIONS:

TUESDAY 10AM – Topic: How to Pray Like Mary – six (6) sessions for Women and Men; Facilitator Frank Bauer; begins January 9th.

TUESDAY 7PM – Topic: No Greater Love: A Biblical walk through Christ's Passion – five (5) sessions for Women and Men; Facilitator Barb Jaruszewski; begins January 9th.

THURSDAY 6:30PM – continuation of Study of the Gospel of Matthew – Men's group; Facilitator Pete Frank; begins January 11th.

LITTLE ROCK SESSIONS:

The following three (3) groups will be studying The Gospel of John – Eleven (11) Sessions

TUESDAY: 10AM – Women's group; Facilitator Wendy Benner; begin January 9th

WEDNESDAY: 7PM – Women and Men; Facilitator Beverly Plosa-Bowser; begins January 10th

THURSDAY: 10AM – Women and Men; Facilitator Regina Bernstein; begins January 11th

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Pope Francis has said, "In Spiritual Direction, I must examine what is happening in my heart, where the Spirit is moving, if I feel desolation or consolation... these are things to talk about with my spiritual director." Spiritual Directors are honored to journey with you in your efforts to deepen your relationship with God. Please consider contacting one of these Spiritual Directors:

Peg Choiniski, CSD: 610.850.1869;
pchoinskisd@yahoo.com

Heather Makowicz, CSD, LSW, MSW: 484.919.9808;
allowinggodtocomeclose@gmail.com

LECTIO DIVINA: Reflection on Gospel and Readings for the coming Sunday. Meets every Thursday at 10:30AM. All are welcome! Facilitators Lino and Nancy Viola. For additional information, please contact Eileen Koch per above.

SPN Parish Council Holy Moment Thought...

"Above Everything, Pray for the Holy Spirit"

Jesus gives one of His most profound and beautiful teachings on the Prayer of Petition.

#1. Prayer works more than most people believe.

#2. One of the greatest and most consequential falsehoods of Satan is that God does not answer prayers. So why bother praying.

#3. Ask the Lord to open your mind and heart and show you how many of your prayers have been answered. Many times, there seems to be a lag between the time of your petition and the answer. Remember, God's timing is always perfect and complete even though we may not be patient enough to wait for it.

#4. God's commitment to answer prayers is ironclad. This is the unanimous teaching of the Sacred Magisterium, all the Church fathers and doctors and all the saints...and above all, Sacred Scripture. You will be amazed by God's mighty, merciful and mysterious providence when it comes to prayers. God regards it an injustice to promise answers to our prayers and then fail to do so. (Ref Luke 18: 1 - 8).

So...what is the best and highest thing to pray for...THE HOLY SPIRIT...THE HOLY SPIRIT...THE HOLY SPIRIT!!!

Prayer is the Activator of Power. Power is the dominant attribute of the Holy Spirit. Prayer and the Holy Spirit are like inseparable twins. Therefore, taste and see that the Lord is good. If you do not pray habitually, you will never be able to taste much less attest to the truth that God is good. Do not be unbelieving. Believe and experience the joy of answered prayer. It is sweet and it is good!

Please consider saying the following prayer..."Lord, because you have made me, I owe you the whole of my love; because you have redeemed me, I owe you the whole of myself; because you have promised so much, I owe you all my being. Moreover, I owe you as much more love than myself as you are greater than I, for whom you gave yourself and to whom you promised yourself. I pray you, Lord, make me taste by love what I taste by knowledge; let me know by love what I know by understanding. I owe you more than my whole self, but I have no more, and by myself I cannot render the whole of it to you. Draw me to you, Lord, in the fullness of love. I am wholly yours by creation; make me all yours, too, in love. (Prayer of Anselm, 1033-1109 AD) "



SAINT PHILIP NERI CATHOLIC CHURCH

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
December 23rd – 4:00 PM
December 24 – 7:30 AM & 10:00 AM

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE 2023
THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD CHRISTMAS EVE
4:00 PM
7:00 PM &
MIDNIGHT

CHRISTMAS DAY
7:30 AM & 10:00 AM

HOLY FAMILY SUNDAY
December 30th – 4:00 PM
December 31st – 7:30 AM & 10:00 AM

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD
December 31st - 4:00 PM
January 1st – 9:00 AM

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION-A GIFT OF LOVE!



Eucharistic Adoration-A Gift of Love!

Have you ever wanted to help someone but weren't sure what to do? Or perhaps you wanted to give a gift to someone but didn't know what to get? Consider sending a Eucharistic Adoration-A Gift of Love card to that person. Spend an hour of your time in front of the Blessed Sacrament and dedicate your hour of Eucharistic Adoration for a special person and his/her intentions. When finished, pick up a Eucharistic Adoration-A Gift of Love card to send to that person letting them know of your gift of prayer. A Gift of Love card is available at St. Anne's Chapel.

PREP RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Children's Liturgy of the Word. On the second and fourth Sunday of the month during the 10:00AM Mass, Children's Liturgy of the Word will take place. Children ages 4 through 7, are encouraged to participate. CLOW is designed to share the WORD with our children in a way that they can relate to the message. We look forward to serving the children of SPN. Call or email Wendy Benner if you have questions.

MOTHER OF MERCY HOUSE



"The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor"

Proverbs 22:9

Thank you for all you donate to the Mother of Mercy House. As you know it has been very a trying time for the people of Kensington and they do appreciate all that St. Philip Parish does for The Mother of Mercy House.

The Mother of Mercy House wishes to extend a Very Blessed and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all who have contributed in any way to help with their Program. It is very much appreciated. God Bless all of you!

Listed below are the non-perishable donation requests for delivery to the Mother of Mercy House on Wednesday, January 17, 2024.

Instant and regular oatmeal, dry cereal reg size boxes, canned meats and tuna, Fruits and vegetables. Canned soups and beans, spaghetti, dry pasta and jarred or canned sauces.

Diapers: size 3 to 5

Please drop off your donations in one of the totes at each side door of the church or on the wooden box in the narthex. All donations need to be received by Sunday, January 14th.

As always, thank you for your generosity.

PARISH OUTREACH - FRIENDLY VISITORS:

The Friendly Visitor Ministers of St. Philip Neri will bring Holy Communion while providing companionship and someone to talk to on a regular basis to homebound members of our parish.

If you or someone you know can benefit from this ministry, please contact Mary Souder, Ministry Leader at 215.518.1341 or email Parish Outreach at parishoutreach@spnparish.org.

SHARE A RIDE TO CHURCH

There are St. Philip Neri Parishioners who may not be able to drive to church but truly desire to attend Mass in person. We are looking for people to offer a fellow parishioner a ride to church. This would be someone in your neighborhood that would attend the same Mass time as you regularly attend. If you would like to offer someone a ride, please contact Marlene Leidy, Parish Outreach Coordinator, at 215-679-7333 or email at parishoutreach@spnparish.org. Thank You!

WEEKLY FINANCIAL REPORT

Collection for December 10, 2023

Week 25

Sunday Collection

Sunday Collection for

Weekend of December 10th. \$9,788

Christmas Flowers \$1,502

Diocesan & Extra-Diocesan Collections

Immaculate Conception \$2,199

Parish Fiscal Year Goal
information will be published at
a later date.

SUNDAY COLLECTIONS:

Because of the early Bulletin Transmittal schedules, the collections for December 17th will be published on December 31st.

CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS:

Any parishioner who would like to receive a copy of their Contribution Statement for 2023, please email Shirley at the rectory office (ofcmgr@spnparish.org) or call; if no answer, leave a detailed message. Statements are mailed out upon request only.

PARISH HALL:

- Thanks to the generosity of a number of Parishioners, we have been able to replace three 100 cup coffee urns, two waffle makers, and 4 sets of stainless-steel pots and lids. We also presently are holding donations to cover 7 of the 25 needed tables.

Donations are still be accepted for the following: Tables @ \$190.00 each; Pots @ \$80.00 per set; Coffee urns @ \$200.00 per unit; Water Pitchers @ ~ \$10.00 per

Volunteers Needed

- **Bingo:** We are always open to additional floor workers and kitchen help. Join a team, and volunteer 3 Sundays per year. Our main kitchen team will be retiring in June 2024. Looking for individuals, couples, families, interested in taking on this role
-
- **Breakfast:** Always looking for new volunteers to make monthly breakfasts buffet successful. Openings for Thursday morning potato duty Saturday morning prep and set up
- Sunday morning cooks, servers, and clean up. Shifts are available to share the work.
- Youth are encouraged to volunteer, and this time is good for Community Service Time for school.
-
- **Fish Fry:** Holding three Friday evening Fish Fry again in 2024. Shifts are available - Set up Noon - 3:00 PM, Cooking and food prep 3:00 - 7:00 PM, Clean up from 6-8 PM.
-
- Due to continued delays, it has been decided that our monthly Parish activities will not be scheduled until all repairs/replacements are completed.
- We will inform all, as soon as we have a firm delivery and Installation date.
- Thank you for your patience.

Please contact our Hall Facilitator, Bill Robinson @ hallfacilitator@spnparish.org or 215-896-5949.

AROUND THE ARCHDIOCESE

Date: Sunday, January 14 to Monday, January 22, 2024 (Following 3:00 PM Chaplet of Divine Mercy) Event: Novena to Three American Saints for Life. Saints Elizabeth Ann Seton, Frances Cabrini, and John Neumann are powerful witnesses to the Gospel of Life, each in their own time. This novena suggests three days of prayer to each of the saints for the promotion of life in our country and our Church today. Pray this novena along with us either in person at the National Centre for Padre Pio or via livestream on Facebook or YouTube.

Facebook: [Facebook.com/PadrePioI...](https://www.facebook.com/PadrePioI...)

YouTube: [YouTube.com/@PadrePioI...](https://www.youtube.com/@PadrePioI...)

More Information: [Flyer Attached](#)

January - March 2024

Event: Come and See Weekends for Men Discerning a Call to the Priesthood

Come & See events offer men (high school and post-high school) considering a vocation the opportunity to visit the St. Charles Borromeo Seminary to see what seminary life is like and explore a possible call to the priesthood.

Location: St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Wynnewood

More info: Visit heedthecall.org/comeandsee

or contact Fr. David Friel, Vocations Director, fr.dfriel@archphila.org

February 16 - 18, 2024

Event: Retrouvaille:

Rediscover the Love in Your Marriage

Some couples feel lonely, frustrated, or angry in their marriage, often feeling shut off from one another. Other couples experience severe conflict and never-ending arguments. Retrouvaille offers hope for all these marriages by teaching couples to communicate in a deeper, more meaningful way, healing hurts and rebuilding trust and intimacy. No relationship is beyond help.

Location: Malvern Retreat House, Malvern, PA

More Information: Visit HelpOurMarriage.org or call 215 766 3944 or 800 470 2230. All inquiries are strictly confidential.

Every Wednesday and Second Saturday, 12-1 PM

Event: Lunch in the Park with Christ in the City

Join Christ in the City missionaries as we serve over 50+ men and women experiencing homelessness, building relationships while enjoying lunch.

- **Every Wednesday, 12-1 PM** on the lawn next to the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul, Philadelphia (required training for new volunteers begins at 11:15 AM)
- **Second Saturdays, 12-1 PM** on Logan Square (required training for new volunteers begins at 10 AM)

More info: Registration is required and all new volunteers must attend a training prior to the event. Full details and registration available at: <https://christinthecity.org/philadelphia-lunch-in-the-park/>

Monday Evenings, 8PM

Event: Virtual World Mission Rosary

Join hundreds of people throughout the Archdiocese who have regularly been praying the ROSARY LIVE! United in this most powerful prayer, we ask for the miraculous intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary to hear our intentions and renew our Catholic faith as we

pray in unity for our brothers and sisters in mission lands world-wide. On Mission Mondays, we pray the World Mission Rosary, created by Venerable Fulton Sheen, in which we offer each decade for one of five Mission areas, including the US.

Location: Use this Zoom link to join each Monday: zoom.us/j/494480541...

More Info: Sponsored by the Pontifical Missions Societies (phillymissions.org)

First Fridays at 7:00PM

Event: Mass and Healing Service @ the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa, Doylestown, PA

Description: Following Mass, there will be Praise & Worship, Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament, and Healing Prayer Service. This is a special opportunity to encounter Jesus and invite the Holy Spirit to touch you deeply and heal those emotional, mental, physical, relational, or spiritual places that are in need of God's healing graces. All are welcome!

Questions: Email rafal@czestochowa.us Call: 215-345-0600 or [Flyer](#)

Monday Evenings, 8PM

Event: Virtual World Mission Rosary

Join hundreds of people throughout the Archdiocese who have regularly been praying the ROSARY LIVE! United in this most powerful prayer, we ask for the miraculous intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary to hear our intentions and renew our Catholic faith as we pray in unity for our brothers and sisters in mission lands world-wide. On Mission Mondays, we pray the World Mission Rosary, created by Venerable Fulton Sheen, in which we offer each decade for one of five Mission areas, including the US.

Location: Use this Zoom link to join each Monday: zoom.us/j/494480541...

More Info: Sponsored by the Pontifical Missions Societies (phillymissions.org)

LOOKING AHEAD...

May 20-29, 2024 - [Marian Shrines Pilgrimage with Fr. Eric Banecker](#), Spain, Portugal, France

May 31-June 2, 2024 - [National Eucharistic Procession passes through Philadelphia](#)

June 8-12, 2024 - [GIVEN Catholic Young Women's Leadership Forum](#), Washington, DC

July 17-21, 2024 - [10th National Eucharistic Congress](#), Indianapolis, IN

ONGOING...

- **Eucharistic Revival:** phillyeucharisticreviv...
- **Young Adult Groups & Events:** phillyyam.org/events
- **Events for Teens:** <https://phillyomy.org/events/>
- **Hope in Christ: Spiritual Support for Addiction** - archphila.org/hope
- **Intercessory Teams for Priests** - phillyevang.org/pray4priests
- **Archdiocesan Missionaries of Mercy** - archphila.org/mercy
- **Institute for Christian Formation** - [Click here for website](#)
- **Pro-Life Pregnancy Care Resources** - [Click here for the free guidebook](#)
- **Be Encouraged: Catholic Support for Mental Health:** archphila.org/support



Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

Sunday, Dec 24, 2023

An embarrassment of riches

Every so many years, we experience this happy collision of observances: the last Sunday of Advent blossoms into Christmas Eve in a single day. Which means next week, the Feast of the Holy Family will roll into the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God by nightfall. It's a mad scramble for presiders, preachers, choirs, and liturgists to keep up with the whole, holy mess of these occasions. Parishioners too will be obliged to untangle the remarkable Mass schedule this landslide of liturgies creates. Consider it a cheerful reminder that liturgy gathers us into mysteries that are not finite but everlasting.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38 (11).
“Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.”

Monday, Dec 25, 2023

The wonder of it all

In the early church, Christmas was actually not a major feast, but over the centuries it grew in importance, and Saint Francis of Assisi catapulted its popularity in 1223 by creating the first nativity scene in a cave with live animals. Christmas Midnight Mass was celebrated there and it was a huge hit with the whole town. The tradition of the Christmas crèche was born. Francis loved Christmas, considering it the “Feast of Feasts,” because God chose to take the humble form of a poor baby. Let the wonder of the Incarnation imbue your day.

SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)

TODAY'S READINGS: Vigil: Isaiah 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Matthew 1:1-25 (13); Night: Isaiah 9:1-6; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14 (14); Dawn: Isaiah 62:11-12; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:15-20 (15); Day: Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18 (16). “For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord.”

Tuesday, Dec 26, 2023

For the love of Saint Stephen

On this second day of Christmas, consider words about true love—and Saint Stephen—from Saint Fulgentius, a North African bishop of the sixth century: “Love was Stephen’s weapon by which he gained every battle, and so won the crown signified by his name. His love of God kept him from yielding to the ferocious mob; his love for his neighbor made him pray for those who were stoning him.” Celebrate the Christmas octave with the same steadfast love the first Christian martyr showed his persecutors.

FEAST OF STEPHEN, FIRST MARTYR
TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Matthew 10:17-22 (696). “They could not withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke.”

Wednesday, Dec 27, 2023

Through thick and thin

Beloved! That's what we know about today's saint—John the apostle is the “disciple whom Jesus loved.” John was the last apostle to leave Jesus at the cross and one of the first to discover his Resurrection on Easter Sunday. He earned the title of evangelist by writing the fourth gospel (likely with help from his followers). His account of Jesus' life has a more spiritual and mysterious air than those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But that doesn't mean he's otherworldly—after all, John is the patron saint of loyalty and friendships. Honor him today by visiting with a friend.

FEAST OF JOHN, APOSTLE, EVANGELIST
TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 1:1-4; John 20:1a, 2-8 (697). “What we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us.”

Thursday, Dec 28, 2023

Mortal consequences

Amid the Christmas festivities, today the church has a somber reminder of the infants in the vicinity of Bethlehem who were slaughtered by King Herod in his fruitless effort to destroy Jesus. They were “collateral damage” that paved the way for Christianity, a faith that confesses to protecting the most vulnerable. In honor of the Holy Innocents, we might consider the many innocents who die prematurely because of lack of healthcare, pollution that results in disease, and isolation that leads to early death. Strive to be a force for life.

FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS
TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 1:5–2:2; Matthew 2:13-18 (698). “God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all.”

Friday, Dec 29, 2023

The Catholic bucket list

Gift-giving at Christmastime is a common custom. Whether it's at home under a lit tree or at the Secret Santa party at work, it is fun to give and receive. “Experience” gifts are becoming

more a part of this custom: tickets to see a ballgame, an art class, a hiking trip. Experience gifts can be given any time, and we can even treat ourselves. Since it's the season of Christmas, let's think of Catholic experiences that we'd enjoy and create a kind of “Catholic bucket list.” See the pope? Run a food pantry? Visit Assisi? Take a scripture class? Spend the rest of the Christmas season creating your own list.

FIFTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE
NATIVITY OF THE LORD
TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:3-11; Luke 2:22-35 (202). “It had been revealed to [Simeon] by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord.”

Saturday, Dec 30, 2023

What is the purpose of life?

This age-old question has as many answers as there are questioners. For Catholics though, there is one simple answer: love. But when is love ever simple? Deep love can be complicated and even gut-wrenchingly hard. It can bring pain, longing, disquiet, questioning, loneliness, and sacrifice. Yet, “The pain that comes from deep love makes your love ever more fruitful,” writes Henri Nouwen. Love is our purpose, and we join with those celebrating Kwanzaa who are reflecting this day on the principle of Nia, that is, purpose.

SIXTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE
NATIVITY OF THE LORD
TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:12-17; Luke 2:36-40 (203). “Whoever does the will of God remains forever.”

THIS WEEK ON **FORMED**

Week of December 24, 2023



The True Meaning of Christmas | Lukas Storyteller

Christmas is coming and our friends Peter, Agnes, Paul and Anna expect to receive many gifts. but when they caught in one of their antics. Lukas and Noah will help them understand the true story of Christmas and how the birth of the Son of God should change our hearts.



Christmas | Sacred Art

Join Dr. Ben Akers and Taylor Kemp as they look at the painting Adoration of the Shepherds by Gerard van Honthorst to celebrate the Nativity of our Lord. This famous painting reveals the Christ Child as the light that has come into the world and also depicts the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, and the shepherds to be models of adoration to our humble Lord who came as a helpless baby.



The 12 Days of Christmas

We are excited to announce our series of FORMED Now! Christmas and New Year special episodes. In these episodes, professors from the Augustine Institute Graduate School will lead us in reflections throughout the season.

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Kathy Clancy

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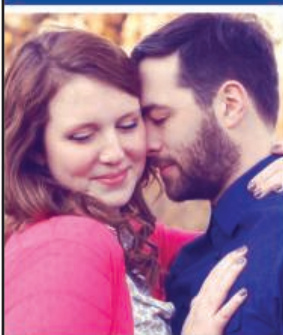
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