

December 25, 2016

The Nativity of the Lord

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, December 24

5:00 p.m. **Christmas Mass Remembrance**

Midnight **Christmas Mass Remembrance**

Sunday, December 25

9:00 a.m. **Christmas Mass Remembrance**

11:00 a.m. **Christmas Mass Remembrance**

Monday, December 26

8:45 a.m. **+Ludwik Tomiczek**
By Thomas and Ann Scarince

Tuesday, December 27

8:45 a.m. **Blessings of Health for Keira Hedges**
By Grammy Rupell

Wednesday, December 28

8:45 a.m. **+Ludwik Tomiczek**
By Thomas and Ann Scarince

Thursday, December 29

8:45 a.m. **Parishioners of Saint Theodore Church**

Friday, December 30 NO MASS

Saturday, December 31

5:00 p.m. **+Norman Baines**
By The Kappus Family

Sunday, January 1

9:00 a.m. **Altar Rosary Society**

11:00 a.m. **+Anna and Patrick Kane**
By Susan Reynolds

Evening Prayer I of Christmas) through the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

The primary liturgical color for the Christmas Season is white, which expresses joy and glory. Gold, which expresses honor and praise, is sometimes used in place of white.

The Christmas Season is full of wonderful feasts and rich traditions. The five major feasts of the Christmas Season include the Nativity of the Lord; the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph; Mary, the Holy Mother of God; the Epiphany of the Lord; and, the Baptism of the Lord.

So, as Catholic Christians, we know Christmas is more than a day; it's even more than the Twelve Days; it's an entire season of feasting, song and celebration! Let's keep the Christmas Season it's fullest!

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has a lovely on line Christmas interactive video, "The Christmas Story in Art." Visit their site and choose to hear the story, read the story, and/or send a Christmas E-Card.

Make sure you sing Christmas carols and hymns each day of the Christmas Season. Why not sing a hymn, such as "Angels We Have Heard on High," as part of your Christmas dinner prayer?

On Christmas Day, the Church focuses especially on the newborn Child, God become human, who embodies for us all the hope and peace we seek. We need no other special saint today to lead us to Christ in the manger, although his mother Mary and Joseph, caring for his foster-son, help round out the scene.

Background on the Gospel Reading

Four Masses are celebrated for the feast of Christmas, and each is given its own set of readings to help us contemplate Christ's birth. The Gospel for the vigil Mass on Christmas Eve is taken from the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew. The Mass at midnight proclaims the birth of Jesus using the Gospel of Luke. The Mass at dawn on Christmas morning continues the story of the birth of Jesus as found in Luke's

Come let us
Adore
Him



The Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord

At sundown on December 24, Advent ends and we begin the Christmas Season. Christmas is an entire season, not just one day! And contrary to the shopping mall mentality, the Christmas Season is just beginning Christmas Day - not ending. The word Christmas means the Feast of Christ. The Christmas Season continues from sundown Christmas Eve (technically from

Gospel through the shepherds' visit to the infant Jesus. In each of these Gospel readings, we hear portions of the Infancy Narratives with which we are familiar.

The Gospel for the Christmas Mass during the day is taken from the beginning of John's Gospel, but this Gospel is not an Infancy Narrative like those found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Instead, John's Gospel begins at the beginning, as it were, and presents the Creation story as the framework for announcing the Incarnation. John's opening words, "In the beginning . . .," echo the opening verse of the Book of Genesis. This framework invites us to view Jesus' birth from God's perspective. Each of the Gospels makes clear that Jesus' birth was the result of God's initiative. However, John's Gospel highlights that this was the divine intention from the very beginning, from the moment of Creation.

As we observe in today's reading, the Gospel of John includes highly philosophical and theological language. One example that particularly stands out is John's use of the expression, "Word of God." This expression (*logos* in the Greek) borrows from a concept found in both Jewish and Greek thought. In Jewish thought, this phrase describes God taking action—for example, in the Creation story and in the Wisdom literature. In Greek, or Hellenistic, thought, the *logos* was understood as an intermediary between God and humanity. John and others in the early Church adopted this language to describe God's incarnation in Jesus. As the term was used to express the trinitarian faith of Christians, the word *Logos* came to be equated with the Second Person of the Trinity.

In this prologue to the Gospel of John, the main themes that will be developed in his Gospel are introduced. These themes are presented as dualities: light/darkness, truth/falsehood, life/death, and belief/unbelief. We also hear in this prologue a unique aspect of John's Gospel—the motif of testimony. John the Baptist was sent by God to testify about Jesus, the light. Others in this Gospel will also offer testimony about Jesus. The reader is invited to accept this testimony, which bears witnesses to Jesus, the Son of God. But even more directly, Jesus' action and words

will themselves testify to his identity with God as God's Incarnate Word.

Thinking about Jesus' birth in these theological and cosmological terms seems particularly appropriate as we celebrate the feast of Christmas in the darkness of winter. At this time, nature itself seems to remind us of the darkness of sin. Into this darkness, in the midst of our sinfulness, God comes to dwell among us. John's Gospel reminds us that through the Incarnation, God saves us from the darkness of sin and makes us his children.



Dear Parishioners,
Thank you so much for the wonderful acts of kindness you demonstrated in remembering me at

Christmas. I am very appreciative of your gifts, prayers and good wishes. May the warmth of Jesus' love and the joy of the Christmas Season remain with you throughout the coming year. May God bless you.

—Father Damian



Stephen, Anthony Vitale,
Bridget M., Savannah Paine,
Bobby Gross, Michael Dante,
Keira H., Maryann Vaughan,
Robert Dicheck, Peter, Zachary,
Logan Peter Saksa, Anna Paine,

Maryann Vaughan, Anna Saksa, Lauren Lane,
Jay Mildrum, Philip Kinney, Mary D., Kerry Kraft, Patty Mahoney, Cheyann Miller, Cathy Moncello, Louise C., Peter S., Helen Dicheck, Mary Supple

Church & Rel. Ed Schedule

Bible Study: Every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 26; No Rel Ed

Dec. 26: Parish & Re. Ed. Offices closed

Saint Theodore Church 855 Route 57

P.O. Box 146, Port Murray, NJ 07865

908-689-8318 Father Damian, ext. 4

Parish Office, ext. 1, Rel. Ed., ext. 2

www.sttheodorenj.com

sttheodorenj@gmail.com

sttheodoreled@gmail.com