

SAINTS TO REMEMBER

December 25 Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ
 26 St. Stephen
 27 St. John the Apostle
 28 Holy Innocents
 29 St. Thomas Becket
 30 Blessed Eugenia Ravasco
 31 St. Sylvester

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, December 24
2:30 PM Children and Youth of our Parish
5 PM Rody Schoener-Zarutskie (Jill Paitsel)
7 PM Members of and Visitors to our Parish
 Sunday, December 25
8:30 AM Members of and Visitors to our Parish
11:00 AM Members of and Visitors to our Parish
1:30 PM Members of and Visitors to our Parish
 Saturday, December 31
2:30 PM Members of and Visitors to our Parish
5 PM Members of and Visitors to our Parish
 Sunday, January 1
8:30 AM Members of and Visitors to our Parish
11:00 AM Members of and Visitors to our Parish

NEXT WEEKEND'S READINGS

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

First Reading

Numbers 6:22-27

God gives a blessing for the Israelites.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8

All the people sing praises to God.

Second Reading

Galatians 4:4-7

God sent his Son to make us children of God.

Gospel Reading

Luke 2:16-21

The shepherds find Jesus in a manger in Bethlehem.

FROM THE OFFICE

Just as we are preparing to announce our new Offertory Envelope provider (see next column), we realize that Cathedral Corporation also sent the usual packet! As a result, you will now have a duplicate supply. Either envelope may be used. We apologize for the inconvenience.

Please accept our thanks for your support throughout the year. May your Christmas be joyful, peaceful and bright, and filled with the love of that very first night.

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

SATURDAY (12/24) VIGIL OF CHRISTMAS

2:30 PM Children's MASS

5 PM MASS with Choir

7 PM Vigil MASS

SUNDAY (12/25) THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)

(Altar Flowers Provided by Members of the Parish)

7-7:45 AM: Reconciliation (*Chapel*)

8:30 AM: MASS

11:00 AM: MASS

1:30 PM: Latin MASS

MONDAY (12/26) CHURCH OFFICES CLOSED TODAY

NOON: MASS

TUESDAY (12/27) CHURCH OFFICES CLOSED TODAY

10 AM-NOON: Food Pantry

NOON: MASS

WEDNESDAY (12/28)

10 AM-NOON: Food Pantry

NOON: MASS

NOON: AA Meeting (*Lower Level*)

6:15 PM Medjugorje Rosary Prayer Group (*Chapel*)

THURSDAY (12/29)

NOON: MASS

NOON: Soup Kitchen

FRIDAY (12/30)

8 AM: MASS

10 AM-NOON: Food Pantry

NOON: AA Meeting (*Lower Level*)

SATURDAY (12/31) VIGIL OF CHRISTMAS

8 AM: MASS

2:30 PM Children's MASS

5 PM Vigil MASS

SUNDAY (1/1) SOLEMNITY OF MARY, HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

(Altar Flowers Provided by Members of the Parish)

7-7:45 AM: Reconciliation (*Chapel*)

8:30 AM: MASS

11:00 AM: MASS

OFFERTORY ENVELOPES

You will notice something different in next month's packet of offertory envelopes. We have made a switch to *Our Sunday Visitor*, the nation's only Catholic not-for-profit offering envelope supplier. Our parish will realize a significant cost savings and we hope you will find them more colorful and appreciative of your sacrifice.

As a reminder, we offer electronic giving, as well. All the current envelope collections are available there.

Please visit www.holycomforterparish.org and click the **Online Giving** link to get started or to access your existing account.

GIFTS FROM GOD

Offertory December 17-18, 2016 (Plate)	\$3,349
Offertory (Online)	5,635
Offertory (Other)	5,000
Uganda (solar panels)	3,000
Outreach	1,330
Justice and Peace	250
Christmas Flowers	185
Archdiocese for Military Services	125
Weekly Offertory Budget	\$7,173
Offertory Received	<u>13,984</u>
Surplus	\$6,811

PARISH NEWS

CHRISTMAS SNAPSHOT FROM FATHER JOSEPH MARY

The Blessed Mother is captured in silent reflection about the Baby Jesus. Imagine Mary and all she has experienced. From the announcement of her being chosen by God as the mother of the Savior, through the hurried pilgrimage to Bethlehem, to the birth of her Son with strangers coming to visit him and with angels on site. Mary takes a deep breath and drinks it all in — not missing a single moment of the beauty of her Son's birth.

This Christmas, we should all take that breath like Mary. To pause and think and pray. To reflect on what the story of the birth of Jesus truly means to us and for us; to reflect on how we can and must live our lives differently because of Jesus as "God with us;" to make sure that we truly take this story to heart, as Mary did in that little town of Bethlehem.

THE GREAT NEWS

HOLY COMFORTER HAS BECOME A MOTHER AGAIN

Holy Comforter Catholic parish has always been proud of being a mother of the two Catholic parishes in Charlottesville: **St. Thomas Aquinas and Church of the Incarnation**. On December 15, 2016, a decree from our Bishop Francis X DiLorenzo has made the Crozet Catholic Community ***"a Mission Parish to be administered and nurtured by Holy Comforter Catholic Church."*** It is a blessing to be a mother once again, as it is a clear sign of our faith-filled community. A spirit of Evangelization is found among the Parishioners of Holy Comforter. Long live Holy Comforter and may we continue to grow.

SACRISTANS NEEDED

Sacristans Needed: Help is needed to maintain our sacred space. Time commitments from as little as one hour per week for one month out of the year. Training provided. Please contact the office or Suzanne Bailey (slank@ntelos.net; 296-5033) for details.

PLEASE KEEP THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS

Please call the parish office at 295-7185, to arrange to receive Holy Communion or a visit by Fr. Joseph Mary.

THE ILL & HOME BOUND:

Parishioners: Mike Charlie, Frances Charlie, Clyde Pax, Jack Andrews, Shawn Simpson-Smith, Mary Fusco, Eileen Foster, Jack Valloric, Tam Nguyen, Rachel Witt, Jack Andrews, Joe Murray, Helen Edwards, Betty Jane Prufer, Fran Cannon Slayton, Ron Lavis, Sue Newman, Michael Ludgate, Frank Pologruto, Al Bracuti, Norman Bednarczyk, Nicholas Sisman, Mary Ann Williams, Rose Bowker, Hermann Ortmann, Katherine Russo, Charley and Kitty Moore.

Friends and Relatives: Ron Lavis, James Worley, Carolyn Ann Davis, Blandine Attey, Andy Gillespie, Michael James McNeil, JoAnn Fox Klein, George Lilly, The Campbell Family, Fred Crane, Bill Eddy, Susan Steeby, Lisa Marshall, John Lank, Susan Straub Martin, George William Polhill, II, Claudia Hartland, Betsy Boyce, Michael Norton, Jane Sargent, Josephine Nampijja, Grace Dawn Wicke, Melyssa Dove, Nicole Carpenter, Beth Mauk, Evan Dotas, Dave Halley, Cullen McQuhae, Bill & Marie Jones, Christine Bentéjac, David Rumpf, Mrs. Jessica Viglietta, Pam D. Goines, Charlie Previtali, Nicole Shaw, Jean Clayton, Rich Hawkins, Kimberly Hasenfus Hulick, Kristin Fagan, June Atherton, Natalie Potter, Harper Grace, J. Sloan, Paul Hillard, Dale Evans, Marie Johnston, Suzanne Lank, Diane Schmidt, Earl Scheetz, Shirley O'Rourke, Xavier Van Bastelaer, Mary Griffin, Makala Thomas, Sibylle Llewellyn, Duncan Nixon, John Patrick Dennison, Christine Russo Carpenter, Elaine Roberti, Benedict Pax, Jerry Colgate, Timothy Lee Smith, Ned Foss & Jennifer Rinehart, Janet Dunham, Fr. Michael Hann, Fr. Joseph Torretto, Mike Charlie, Joel Rivera, Pam Heron, Elizabeth Scott, Kwasi Johnson, Marianne Rossner, Angie Lee, Residents of Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women, Residents of Albemarle County Regional Jail, Residents of Blue Ridge Juvenile Detention, In memory of James Brazell.

Members of the Military: Tom Logan, William Murray, Trey Linebrink, Jeff Woodside, David Alvey, Brian Fagan, Jamie Torbet, Mike Eiermann, Charles G. Ellison, Eric Emmott, and Matthew Mickiewicz.

LIGHTHOUSE CATHOLIC MEDIA (IN THE COMMONS)

God Made Man

In this Christmas themed presentation, Fr. Shannon Collins sheds new light on the biblical narratives of the birth of Jesus Christ, as well as the beautiful Christmas traditions of the Church.

MEDJUGORJE ROSARY PRAYER GROUP

Merry Christmas to everyone, as we celebrate the most holy birth of Jesus Christ, come join us in praying a weekly rosary in the Chapel at 6:15 every Wednesday evening. We will have our next gathering on Dec. 28th. We also pray for our Parishioners intentions and prayer requests. Please add your intention to our intention book which is outside of the Chapel. All are welcomed to come pray with us. We look forward to meeting you and having you join our prayer group family.

HAITI

Thank you to all who have contributed by prayer, work and generosity to the ongoing progress at St. Michel, Saltadere, Haiti. Father Petina thanks all from our twinning parishes on behalf of his parish community. Merry Christmas—Joyeux Noel!

Bi-Parish Haiti Committee: The next meeting will be on January 22, 2017. **All are welcome.**

Contact: e-mail Anne Knasel at anne@stagebridge.net or Ginny Zeller at ginnyannzeller@gmail.com. Website: www.saltadere.org.

VOCATIONS

"He gave power to become children of God." If you think you may be called to share the Father's love as a priest, call Father Michael G. Boehling, Vicar for Vocations, at (804) 359-5661 or email mboehling@richmonddiocese.org.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

CHRISTMAS FORMATION CLASSES K-8

CF class will resume on Sunday, January 8 at 9:45 with a small Epiphany Celebration. We wish you a very Merry Christmas and blessings in the New Year!

FIRST SACRAMENTS

The first class for First Penance preparation will be held on **Sunday, January 8 at 9:45 am**. Children will meet downstairs, while parents will meet with Sue Dougherty in the chapel. Parents who were not able to attend the orientation meeting will also receive that information. If you have not already done so, please bring registration forms and, if your child was not baptized at Holy Comforter, a copy of their Baptismal Certificate.

HIGH SCHOOL FORMATION

Our next Youth Ministry meeting will be held on Sunday, January 8, at 4:00 PM in the Bernard Moore Room. We will take a look at Divine Revelation: How do we know that God is real? It's a very important question that you'll want to be able to answer!

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY NEWS

CHARLOTTESVILLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

The faculty and staff at Charlottesville Catholic School wish you and your family a very merry Christmas and blessed New Year!

PRAYERS FOR THE VICTIMS & WOUNDED IN THE COPTIC CATHEDRAL BOMBING

We invite you to join us as we stand in unity and prayer with our fellow Christians following the Dec. 11th bombing in Cairo. While gathered at the St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral, an explosion claimed the lives of dozens of worshippers and injured many more. In his statement, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, President of the U.S Conference of Catholic Bishops, reminds us during the Advent season - "even the shadow of violence and terrorism cannot obscure the light of our coming Savior." We pray for His light to shine on our Coptic brothers and sisters and to bring them peace during this time of sorrow. We ask for God's protection for our fellow Christians in Egypt and for all who have been affected by this act of violence.

COMMONWEALTH CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Serving those in need throughout the Diocese of Richmond.

Your Second Collection offering will feed, clothe, and provide hope to our neighbors in need this Christmas Season.

"Jesus did not turn away from those in need, and neither can we. Whatever the need is, be it a family asking for food and shelter, a refugee seeking safety and opportunity, or a child yearning for a stable home life, Catholic Charities is there."

Most Rev. Francis X. DiLorenzo

CCC serves our communities in four areas:

Children's Services - *We believe each child is unique and deserves to grow-up in a healthy, nurturing home.*

Housing Services - *We believe that individuals and families can achieve and maintain stable housing and meet their financial goals.*

Resettlement Services - *We believe in meeting the basic needs of refugees so that they can live free from oppression and fear.*

Counseling Services - *We believe in guiding people through difficult situations toward productive, happy lives.*

Donating to CCC is available electronically through our church's website.

FROM THE PASTOR
THE GIFT OF LOVE; THE CHILD IS BORN FOR US



"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (Jn.3:16)

It is hard to believe that God's love would come in the birth of a baby in such an obscure way. Surely, one would think that if God came, he would do so in a more spectacular fashion? If I may ask; **If you were the Son of God, how would you have entered the world?** The expected answer could be: we would have made sure we were born to highly influential, brilliant parents whose faces would have graced the covers of Time magazine for their great accomplishment. If not somewhere impressive, then we would have at least been born at some dignified place. And if we really wanted to do the most good, we would have been sure to attend the best schools, receive the highest academic honors, and generally put ourselves in a position to reap the most possible support for our cause. To this question one college student told me that: **"maybe while attending prestigious school, I might invent a website that billions and billions of people would join, where I could influence my friends and followers with the click of a button."**

However this gift from God was a complete surprise. It was not expected, and as you examine it more carefully, you realize how great a gift it actually is. *God's gift came to us in the humblest of wrappings.* What would you think if you saw a gift under your Christmas tree that was wrapped in newspaper and tied up with a string? At first, you would probably assume that a guy wrapped it. But think about God's gift to us. Jesus was not born in a palace of gold; He was born in a stable. He was clothed with rags. He was laid in a feeding trough. God's gift to humanity, the ultimate gift of eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ, came in the simplest and humblest of wrappings.

At Christmas we celebrate the little gift of the birth of a baby. A baby: weak, vulnerable, yet powerful in capturing the affections of the human heart. There is nothing like the birth of a baby to melt cold hearts and turn indifference into tenderness. God comes to us, communicates with us, and reaches out to us, through the birth of this baby. At Christmas, we give gifts to those whom we care about, who have been kind to us over the past year, or who have given us a gift first. We don't give gifts to the person who has been slandering our name or to the angry neighbor who never has a kind word to say. Yet God gave us His gift when we were His enemies. He didn't give this gift to us because we deserved it. In fact, it was just the opposite. ***"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* (Romans 5:8)**

So Christmas isn't about those gifts that you have under your tree right now. All of those things will be gone one day. All that will be left after this life is the human soul, and that will live forever. We will put so much stock in what we have, but this is all going to pass away. Let this special gift of Love from the Father capture your heart, internalize that gift, appreciate that gift because it is the gift of eternal life with God.

Take the baby Jesus, and all that he brings, God's grace and truth, into your arms this Christmas. Take Jesus into your hearts, and minds, and wills. Enfold him with faith. Let him capture you, convert you, transform you into his willing slave, his servant. For **"whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."** (Mark 10:43-45)

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL.