

The Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

January 1, 2017

Calendar

Saturday, December 31st

4:00pm Vigil Vincent Boudreaux Sr, Vincent Boudreaux Jr, C.O. & Lucy Brocato, Joy Nalty Hodges, the Reverend Father Robert Lamy CM, John C. Puente, Jewel & Joseph Simon, and Clarence "Pete" Wolbrette

Sunday, January 1st

12:00am Mass All parishioners

10:30am Mass Edna Mae Cotoya, Rosina Turney Grace, William Durbridge Grace, Paul Haygood, Lester & Ethel Heidingsfelder, Joy Nalty Hodges, Nilo Lanzas, Sister Augustine McDaniel SSF, Ronald & Pauline Marchessault, Deacon Paul A. Nalty, Miriam Ogden, George Schneider, Sister Patricia Walsh SHSp, the Cassard Family, the Derbes Family, and the Vaughn Family

Monday, January 2nd

SS Basil "the Great" and Gregory Nazianzen, bishops and doctors of the Church

6:30am Mass Jerry Virgadamo

Tuesday, January 3rd

The Most Holy Name of Jesus

[The Infant of Prague (pictured)]

6:30am Mass A Special Intention

4:45pm Eucharistic Adoration

6:00pm Mass A Special Intention

Wednesday, January 4th

St Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious

6:30am Mass Thelma Massarini

6:00pm Rosary (@ Our Lady of Good Counsel)

Thursday, January 5th

St John Neumann, bishop

6:30am Mass William Allen

7:00am Eucharistic Adoration

Friday, January 6th

St André Bessette, Religious

6:30am Mass Intentions of Bridget Himel

Saturday, January 7th

St Raymond of Peñafort, priest

10:00am Rosary (@ Church of St Henry)



The Sanctuary Light in the church will burn this week for the repose of the soul of the Reverend Kermit Trahan.

The Sanctuary Light in the chapel will burn this week for the Intentions of the Pope.



Mass Setting

The Mass setting for the Christmas Season is the *Mass of Renewal*, the Assembly Book of which is found in the pews.



Banns of Matrimony

Lindsey Conlin & Matt Maxwell



Ashley Comeaux & Todd Neelis

Lay-Ministers Schedule for January 8th

4:00 pm

Lector: Dan Jens

Eucharistic Ministers: Deacon Richard Eason, André Mouledoux, and Eleanor Mouledoux

8:00 am

Lector: Liz Rareshide

Eucharistic Ministers: Deacon Richard Eason, Jeff Vinson, and David Wojciechowski

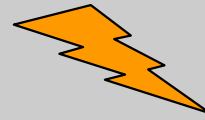
10:30 am

Lectors: Douglas Kariker

Eucharistic Ministers: Deacon Richard Eason, Laura Finnegan, Maxine Fox, Gay Kariker, and Kenneth Moran

Lightning Apologetics

by Phillip Bellini, DRE



The Heart of Christmas

For those of you who think Christmas is over, well, only Advent is over. Now we are in the Christmas season. So let's talk about [it]!

All through the pages of the Old Testament, God had protested on how much He loved man. At Christmas, on almost the first fresh page of the New Testament, He proved it. Only a Christmas crib can tell the story, only going back in spirit to Bethlehem and the Silent Night. But the day had not been silent. On the eve of the big census the little town was bulging with visitors, bustling with activity, buzzing with excitement. In the bazaar (the nearest thing to our department stores or supermarkets), merchants and customers were haggling over prices like chattering birds. In the streets peddlers tramped from door to door offering bargains from the goods which they had. The high and mighty on their tall proud horses rode past with amused tolerance. Any nobody noticed—who ever would?—a bearded peasant leading a gray donkey that carried Mary, even as Mary carried the unborn Christ.

Nobody noticed. Nobody cared. For them that first Christmas began with the saddest of all feelings, the loneliness of not being wanted by anyone, not being welcome anywhere. They were despised by the Romans because they were Jews, and despised by the Jews because they were poor. For them, there was not only no room in the inn; there wasn't any room in the whole town! So out of the town they trudged, seeking any kind of shelter at all. Does it bother us to admit that today this wandering pair might be lined up at some relief agency?

At last they came in desperation to that stable-cave which G.K. Chesterton poignantly called "the place where only God was homeless, but all men are at home." And there, while Joseph's lantern flickered from a beam, and the ox moved restlessly in his stall, and the donkey blinked, and the pale, heavy-laden Virgin sank wearily to the floor, it happened. The Child was born. One moment He was not there, and the next He was in her arms, born without pain, the blessed fruit of her womb, Jesus.

Yet this was not the wonder of Christmas, not the intact and instant virgin birth. Not even that a Virgin should become a Mother. Not that a village carpenter should find himself the guardian of the Savior of the world. Not that a star should stream like a spotlight above a stable. Not that an angel choir should shimmer in the sky and set the night resounding with brilliant music. Not that poor shepherds should kneel shoulder to shoulder with eminent kings. The wonder of Christmas, the glory of Christmas, the incredible miracle of Christmas was that God, not matter how or when or where, should become man, and a little baby at that!

Other miracles would come as the baby in the manger grew older. At His word the modest water at the wedding feast of Cana would turn into wine. At His touch blind men's eyes would see the Light. At His word the wind-blowing sea would level off, smooth as a sheet of glass. At His command the dark mask of death would lighten and dead men would stand up alive. But these would only be gestures of the Almighty's hand. They could never approach the most incredible of all miracles: That God Himself, the Eternal, the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful, the Creator, should become a mere Man, and a little child at that! "Who," asks St Alphonsus, with tears in his eyes, "who would have ever thought of it, if God had not thought of it and done it? King of this earth, King of all the universe, King of Heaven, He becomes a King whose palace is a stable, whose throne is a manger, whose scepter is a stick of straw, whose royal garb is swaddling clothes, whose retinue is dumb animals!"

That is what the angels announced in song, that the star signaled with fire, that the shepherds rushed to see, that our Blessed Mother clasped to her breast, that theologians call the Incarnation; namely, that He who was great became small, and He who was powerful became weak, and He who was rich became poor, and He who was Divine became human. Just stop to meditate on this, just sit down with yourself in a quiet place and in a corner of your mind and realize this tremendous truth: that God so loved the mankind He became one of us Himself so that He could go through the entire human experience and repair for our sins!

Would not your first reaction be one of awe and amazement? Think of how incomprehensible it would be for an aircraft carrier to fit into a bathtub, or the Sears Tower in Chicago fit into our house. Yet this is utterly nothing compared to the God of infinity lowering Himself, lessening Himself to the body of a baby and to a little cattle-crib. So when we kneel by a Christmas nativity scene and look down with thoughtful eyes, we can never be surprised enough.

It's not bells clanging overhead, or carolers singing before candle-lit windows that best express the spirit of Christmas. If we really love the Baby of Bethlehem, let us light candles not only in our windows but in *our minds*, candles that will illumine the truth that all people are our brothers and sisters, and that all men have certain basic human rights, ever since God became a man Himself. Let's not just have holly in our homes but also our hearts by letting Christian kindness (not just for Christmas), which is rooted in our hearts, flower at our lips. Let us deck not just our trees but our lives with shining glory, meaning good deeds for those in trouble. How better can we atone for the time that the unrecognized Christ was turned away at the Bethlehem Inn? In fact, once we get beyond the walls of the Church, how else can we serve God except in our neighbor! I think if we do this, then it must follow that, as bright as Bethlehem's star, as rich as the treasures of the Three Kings, as serene as the peace of the Silent Night, our Christmas will be! God bless and keep you this Christmas!



Sharing Our Faith, Securing Our Future
Restoration of St Stephen Church

Many thanks to all who donated or turned in a pledge card!
We are still processing donations and following up with those who have questions. Remember that it is NEVER too late to make a pledge or donate to the restoration of St Stephen Church.

Here are some things to know:

- * If you are currently donating your maximum to the restoration fund, *please pledge that same amount*. This is very important! Your formal pledge will allow us to go to the Archdiocese for final approval sooner than if you do not turn in a pledge card.
- * You set the schedule and method of payments and adjust your pledge in future if necessary.
- * The first payment on a multi-year pledge is due in 2017, however the sooner we reach Archdiocesan cash requirements to start the project, the sooner we can start the work.
- * The church will remain in use during the restoration work.

Telephone or e-mail the parish Business Manager, Dianne Caverly, at 227-3794 or dcaverly@arch-no.org, if you have any questions or need assistance setting up your pledge.

PLEASE BE GENEROUS SO THAT CATHOLICS WILL SHARE THEIR FAITH FROM ST STEPHEN CHURCH FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

Collection Report	December 18th	July 1st-Dec 18th
Total Collections	\$8,901.00	\$174,860.59
Budget	<u>\$6,684.69</u>	<u>\$167,117.25</u>
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$2,216.31	\$7,743.34
Second Collections/Miscellaneous Donations		
Restoration Fund		\$35,716.00
Clarion Herald		\$1.00
Retirement Fund for Religious		\$155.00

The Monthly Prayer-Request for Priests

January

- 1st The Rev. Benjamin Sanchez, SDC*
- 2nd The Rev. Emile G. "Buddy" Noël*
- 3rd The Rev. John Perino*
- 4th The Rev. Ansgar Pham, SDD
- 5th The Rev. Maruiano Veliz, OP
- 6th The Rev. H.L. Brignac*
- 7th **His Holiness Pope-Emeritus Benedict XVI**
- 8th The Rev. David K. Texada
- 9th The Rev. Anthony A. Anala, SVD
- 10th The Rev. Vincent Phan*
- 11th The Rev. Michael Roberson
- 12th The Rev. Jonathan Wallis, STL
- 13th The Rev. Michael Mitchell
- 14th The Rev. David M. Ducote*
- 15th The Rev. James Nguyen Bach*
- 16th **His Holiness Pope Francis**
- 17th The Very Rev. Walter J. Austin, VF*
- 18th The Right Rev. Patrick Regan, OSB*
- 19th The Rev. Joseph Man Tran
- 20th The Rev. Stephen Dardis*
- 21st The Rev. Alberto Nator Villosillo
- 22nd The Rev. Msgr. John A. Tomasovich*
- 23rd The Rev. Neil McNeill*
- 24th The Rev. Gerard Laporte, CSsR
- 25th The Rev. George Weber, CM
- 26th The Rev. Msgr. T. Gaspard Glasgow*
- 27th The Rev. Msgr. J. Anthony Luminais
- 28th The Most Rev. Fernand J. Cheri III, OFM*
- 29th The Rev. Peter Phong Van Nguyen, SDD
- 30th The Rev. Lawrence Urban, SDB
- 31st The Rev. Thomas Stehlik, CM*

* birthday

† deceased

Courtesy of The APRP Apostolate



Pray for the Sick

Ron Behler, William Brown, Ray & Zetta Burkart, Gary Callahan, Jeanne García, Mary Gremillion, Richard Harper, Joseph Liberto, Leddie Lopez, Louise Martin, Marie Schmitt, Judy Tymes, and William Youngblood.

The Gulf Coast Faith Formation Conference will present "Prayer: Our Faith Prayed and Lived" at the Pontchartrain Center, 4545 Williams Boulevard, in Kenner, from January 12th through 14th. The featured speakers are Sister Lynn McKenzie, OSB; Dr Brant Pitre; and the Most Reverend Fernand J. Cheri III, OFM. For further information, please visit www.go4th.faith.

An invitation from the Willwoods Community: "Would you like to break away with your spouse and spend quality time enriching your marriage? Then join us on our January 14th and 15th Married Couples Retreat at the St Augustine Retreat Center in Bay St Louis, just two blocks from the Bay! Attending a married couples retreat annually is a wonderful way to deepen and renew your love for God and each other! Sign up today for a great start to 2017! To register, or for more information, call Jason Angelette at 830-3716 or visit www.willwoods.org. Suggested donation of \$275 is requested but not required."

The Reverend Patrick E. Collum, former pastor of the Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel, will celebrate the Silver Jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood on Sunday, January 15th, with a Mass at 11:45 am, at St Joan of Arc Church, 525 West Fifth Street, in LaPlace. A reception will follow. Please telephone (985)652-9100 for further information.

Pray for Our Armed-services

Lt Junior Grade, USN, Neil P. Chatelain.



News

The Extraordinary Form of the Mass of the Roman Rite, the "Tridentine" (Latin) Mass, will be offered again at St Stephen Church on Sunday, January 29th (**Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**), at 12:30 pm.

