



For
unto
you is
born
this day
in the
city of
David a
Savior,
which is
Christ
the
Lord

Luke 2:11

Nativity of the Lord
December 25, 2015

Our Lady of Lourdes

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Msgr. Brian J. McNamara, Pastor
Rev. Andrew Garnett, Associate Pastor



Welcome... to Our Lady of Lourdes!

Christmas is a time for family. We are glad you decided to celebrate with our Parish Family during this Holy Season. We hope you will return often. If you would like to become a registered member of our Parish, please fill in the information below and place this form in the collection basket or send it to the Parish Office.

Family Name _____

First Names: Head of Household _____ Spouse _____

Children (please include ages, grades and sacraments received)

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail Address _____

Below please find a set of 3 chances. It is a 50-50 drawing. Chances are \$50 each or 3 chances for \$100. 1st place winner will win 35% of the money, 2nd place will win 10% of the money and 3rd place will win 5% of the money. You have to be in it to win it! The drawing will take place on **Sunday, January 17 after the 12:30pm Mass**. Hopefully, the Wise Men will bring you a gift of a winning ticket!

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE Name _____ Phone _____ 1 ticket for \$50; 3 tickets for \$100	CHRISTMAS RAFFLE Name _____ Phone _____ 1 ticket for \$50; 3 tickets for \$100	CHRISTMAS RAFFLE Name _____ Phone _____ 1 ticket for \$50; 3 tickets for \$100
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Solemnity of Mary

The Parish Family of Our Lady of Lourdes will gather on **Thursday, December 31 and Friday, January 1** to celebrate the **Solemnity of Mary**

We will celebrate the Solemnity of Mary on ...

Thursday, December 31 at 5:00pm (vigil)

Friday, January 1 at 8:30am, 10:00am and 12:10pm

Please come and pray with us!

NOTE: There will be no 7:30pm Mass

The Origin of the Christmas Tree

Saint Boniface, an English missionary and often called the “Apostle of Germany,” in the year 722, came upon a group of men who were about to cut down a huge oak tree. The purpose of the men cutting down the tree was to create a stake in which a human sacrifice could be offered to a pagan god. As the story goes, Saint Boniface felled the massive tree with one single blow and as the tree split, a beautiful young fir tree springs from the center, its branches pointing upward to Heaven.

Boniface told the people that this tree was indeed a holy tree, the tree of the Christ Child and a symbol of Christ’s promise of eternal life. He then instructed the people to carry the evergreen from the forest into their homes and to surround the tree with gifts that symbolized love and kindness. Boniface, a priest, was martyred at the age of 75 but his gift of the Christmas tree continues today. As the years passed, the fir trees were decorated with apples and small white wafers that represented the Holy Eucharist. These wafers were later replaced by small pieces of pastry that were cut into the shapes of stars, angels, hearts, flowers and bells. Eventually other cookies were introduced bearing the shapes of men, birds and other animals.

During the Middle Ages, around the 11th century, religious theatre was born and one of the most popular plays was the German mystery play that dealt with the fall from grace of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from Paradise. In the play, the tree represented the Garden of Eden and was adorned with apples. The dual nature of the Tree of Life and the Tree of Discernment of Good and Evil were represented as both of them were present in Paradise. The play ended with the prophecy of the coming of Jesus and, for this reason, the play was often enacted during the season of Advent.

The main part of the scenery, the “Paradeisbaum” of the Paradise Tree became a popular object and was often set up in churches and eventually found its way into private homes. It became a symbol of the Savior and since it represented not only Paradise and our fall from grace, but also the promise of eternal salvation, it was hung not only with apples but also with bread or wafers (symbolizing the Holy Eucharist) and sweets (symbolizing the sweetness of redemption). In sections of Bavaria today, fir branches and little trees that are decorated with lights, tinsel and apples are still called “Paradeis.”

VISIT A COLLECTION OF NATIVITY SETS LOCATED IN THE PARISH CENTER!

Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem

In 326 A.D., Roman Emperor Constantine ordered that a church be built on the site where Jesus was believed to have been born in Bethlehem.

Nearly 200 years later, the church and the city walls were destroyed by Samaritan rebels. The Church of the Nativity was rebuilt, and was spared when Persians invaded the city in 614 A.D. – allegedly because the invaders saw artwork depicting the three kings... clad in Persian garments!

A unique feature of the 1700-year-old Church of the nativity is a small entrance that was built to keep invaders from bringing their horses into the church. Because visitors have to bow low in order to use the entrance, the entrance has also become known as the Door of Humility.



Legend of St Joseph's Staff

When Mary was 14, so the legend goes, the high priest gathered the young women of marriageable age and told them that they should prepare for marriage. Mary said that she could not because she had dedicated herself to the Lord.

The high priest did not want to dissolve her vow, but neither did he want to start a new custom that Jewish women should not marry. With other elders, he prayed for a solution. Since, according to the legend, Mary was a descendant of David, they decreed that all men of the line of David of marriageable age should gather and bring their favorite walking stick to the altar. If a flower should spring from one of these, this man would be the one to whom Mary was given.

Joseph was an older man and did not want to participate, so he did not bring a walking stick. One by one, staffs were brought to the altar but nothing happened. So the priest demanded that the “missing walking staff” be brought forward. Joseph went and got his, and when it was brought to the altar, a dove perched on top of it. It was clear that he was to be Mary's husband.

Star of Bethlehem

We are all familiar with the Christmas Star that hung over Bethlehem, guiding Wise Men, or Magi, to the Christ-Child. Interestingly enough, the Star of Bethlehem is mentioned only in the infancy narrative of Matthew.

In 1911, a Dominican biblical scholar named Fr. Marie Joseph Lagrange was living in Jerusalem when a comet appeared moving across the skies. The comet could be seen clearly in the east, but when directly overhead, it faded. Several days later, the bright comet “reappeared” in the west. Perhaps, he thought, the comet was the Christmas star, seen by the Magi.

Another theory is that the brightness of the star was the result of the close alignment of several planets, such as Jupiter and Saturn. This brightness would have lasted long enough for the Magi to follow on their long trip from the east. The word “Magi” is a Persian word (present-day Iran) that referred to priests who were thought to be able to interpret the stars or dreams.



The Legend of the Poinsettia



The brilliant red leaves of the Poinsettia are a common decoration at this time of year. Its association with Christmas began many years ago when the story developed of Pepita, a poor Mexican girl who had no gift for the Christ Child at Christmas. Her cousin Pedro told her that even the most humble gift given in love is a welcomed present. So, Pepita gathered a handful of weeds into a small bouquet. As she laid it at the foot of the crèche, it burst into blooms of red. From that day on, the Poinsettia has also been known as the *Flor de Nochebuena*, or Flower of the Holy Night (Christmas Eve).

Mother Teresa

Christmas held a special meaning for Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, who once said that her work with the poor began on Christmas Day in 1948.

A priest had come to India to spend the holiday with Mother Teresa. While he was visiting, there was a knock at the door. When the sisters opened the door, they found a small basket on the doorstep. Perhaps it is a benefactor donating food for Christmas, one sister exclaimed.

But when Mother Teresa opened the basket, she began to smile. “Jesus has arrived.” In the basket was a sleeping baby boy, left to be cared for by the sisters.

Mother Teresa picked the infant up, “Look, now we can say that our Christmas is complete. Baby Jesus has come to us. We must thank God for this wonderful gift.”



Candy Cane Priest



A Catholic priest from the Diocese of Little Rock, Arkansas, invented the machine that shapes candy canes.

Candy maker Bob McCormack (founder of Bob’s Candies in Albany, Georgia) had begun making candy canes for his children in the 1920’s. The process was tedious. Twisting could only be done by hand and the breakage often ran up to 22 percent of production. Perplexed at to what to do, Bob turned to his wife Anna Louise’s brother, Fr. Gregory Harding Keller, for suggestions.

Fr. Keller had been dubbed the “family genius” because of his fascination for how things worked. As a student, he fixed the organ at the North American College in Rome. During summer vacations, he would travel to Albany and work at the candy factory.

Fr. Keller listened to his brother-in-law’s predicament. Within six months, he had perfected the Keller Machine which twisted soft candy into spiral striping and cut the sticks in precise lengths.

Born May 24, 1895, in Little Rock, Fr. Keller studied for the priesthood in Rome, where he was ordained. He returned to Little Rock and served in parishes there for 36 years. Fr. Keller gained national attention as a contestant on the popular TV show, “What’s My Line” in the 1960’s. He was the inventor priest.

Holy Year of Mercy

On December 8, Pope Francis celebrated the start of a special Holy Year dedicated to “MERCY.”

Pope Francis wrote: “This Holy Year is an opportune moment to change our lives. This is the time to allow our hearts to be touched.” The Pope spoke about the discovery of mercy in his own personal life and Pope Francis has called for a “revolution of tenderness” to encourage more just, tolerant and patient relationships between individuals and nations

Traditionally, the Pope proclaims a holy year every 25 years; the last Holy Year was in 2000. A Holy Year is an opportunity for spiritual growth and features special celebrations, pilgrimages and strong calls for conversion and repentance.

During the Jubilee Year, our Parish family will be suggesting different activities to highlight God’s mercy in our lives. Please see our weekly bulletin or visit our parish website (www.ollchurch.org) to look at all the different events and opportunities that the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish family is offering in the coming year. Let 2016 be a year in which you experience God’s overwhelming mercy in a powerful way.



Roman Martyrology

Throughout the season of Advent, the Church has reflected on God's promises, so often spoken by the prophets, to send a savior to the people of Israel who would be Emmanuel, that is, God with us. In the fullness of time, those promises were fulfilled. With hearts full of joy let us listen to the proclamation of our Savior's birth.

Today, the twenty-fifth day of December, unknown ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth and then formed man and woman in His own image.

Several thousand years after the flood, when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant.

*Twenty-one centuries from the time of Abraham and Sarah;
thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt.
Eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the Judges;
one thousand years from the anointing of David as king;
in the sixty-fifth week according to the prophecy of Daniel.*

In the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad; the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome.

*The forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus;
the whole world being at peace, Jesus Christ,
eternal God and Son of the eternal Father,
desiring to sanctify the world by his most merciful coming,
being conceived by the Holy Spirit, and
nine months having passed since his conception, was born in
Bethlehem of Judea of the Virgin Mary.*

Today is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.

Come let us adore him!

THE NATIVITY SCENE

The Nativity Scene reminds us that CHRIST is the reason for the celebration of Christmas. In an increasingly secular world, let us boldly proclaim that God, the Father, sent us the first and greatest Christmas gift: JESUS CHRIST, Prince of Peace.

This tableau is to be placed in the FRONT WINDOW, or OTHER PROMINENT PLACE in your home, witnessing to WHOM and WHAT we believe in as Christians:

“For God so loved the world that He sent His only Son that all who believe in Him may have eternal life.”

~ John 3:16

We ask that you display this NATIVITY scene until SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 2016, THE FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD. This marks the official end of the Christmas season. Let us do our part to keep Christ in Christmas!

Keep **CHRIST** in **CHRISTMAS**

