



ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL BASILICA

*We are a Eucharistic faith community, inspired by the Gospel,
committed to engaging each person in the joy of living in the service of Christ.*

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT;
CHRISTMAS EVE/CHRISTMAS DAY;
FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY;
SOLEMNITY OF MARY,
MOTHER OF GOD**

Christmas Season Schedule

The Nativity of the Lord

(Christmas Eve/Christmas Day):

Tuesday, December 24

5:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m., 9:00 p.m., 12:00 a.m.

Wednesday, December 25

10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m.

Friday, December 27:

7:30 p.m. *(Feast of the Holy Innocents)*

Feast of the Holy Family:

Saturday, December 28 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 29

8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m.

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God:

Tuesday, December 31 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, January 1

10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m.

Thursday, January 2

7:30 a.m. *(Memorial of St. Basil & St. Gregory)*

Friday, January 3

12:05 p.m.

Epiphany of the Lord:

Saturday, January 4 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 5

8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m.

Week of January 6-10:

Mon/Wed/Fri: 12:05 p.m.;

Tues/Thurs: 7:30 a.m.

Baptism of the Lord:

Saturday, January 11 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 12

8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m.

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The Celebration of the Christmas Season, 2019 Merry Christmas!

Welcome to St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica. I am very happy that you are able to join us at this wonderful time. You may be a parishioner, a visitor from within the city, someone who has travelled far to be here, or you may be someone from another faith tradition. Your presence among us is a gift, and we are all grateful for each other being in this sacred space for such a wonderful event.

To celebrate Christmas is to express gratitude for the birth of Jesus and to grow in thanksgiving that our God, the creator of all, chose to come among us. We appreciate the gift of life, and the ability to use our talents to make a difference in the lives of others. Our hearts seem to grow softer at this time of year. We are more tolerant than usual. We give from our hearts more readily. Through our prayer, thoughts and activity, we are wonderful signs of the compassion, joy and hope that Jesus wishes everyone to experience.

As well, we always celebrate this time of peace and promise, trying our best to carry the spirit of Christmas beyond Boxing Day. The people in need we discover at this time of year to assist also need our help and presence the other eleven months of the year. Those who benefit from our sharing and compassion need to experience our healing touch every day. The people who benefit from our suspended judgement about them need to experience this wonderful gesture each time we encounter them. The spirit of Christmas is the spirit of Jesus. Each Sunday we encounter him in the Gospel and in the Eucharist, calling us to be his presence in all the areas we influence. It is a privilege to receive this gift. It is also a privileged responsibility to make that gift a living reality in all our encounters. In other words, those who experience us in all our relationships should experience the presence of Jesus. To work at this is the definitive way to make the hope we experience at this time of year a daily blessing for us and those placed on our path by God.

As always, many people will pass through the doors of the Cathedral at this time of year. We all come as we are - in joy or sorrow, filled with confidence or searching. We come here so God can find us and bring us the peace and direction for which we long.

My wish is that our celebrations of Christmas and the Eucharist will lead us through the next year as people of prayer. Along with Bishop Fabbro and our parish staff, I wish all of you a Blessed Christmas.

Thank you for being here.

Fr. Jim Mockler

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AN INVITATION INSIDE OF CHRISTMAS

“We fight too much about Christmas, arguing about its meaning. For some, Christmas is for the children, a feast where we let their delight and freshness challenge our cynicism, where the very sentiments we often disdain as adults are meant to soften our hearts, Scrooge converted by the innocence of children.

For others, it’s the opposite: We insist rather that Christmas is an adult feast, something kids don’t ultimately understand, something that celebrates the greatest intellectual mystery of all time, God taking on flesh to bring justice to the earth.

And so some of us send Christmas greetings urging delight, celebration, gifts, lights, and joyous song, while some of us send more stark greetings that say: “May the peace of Christ disturb you!” What is Christmas? Hardened shepherds and power-prone kings finally bending knees and hearts before a helpless baby or a harsh, non-negotiable challenge to clean up our pampered self-centered lives and build some justice in this world?

Christmas is about all of these things, and more. Like a diamond turning in the sun, it gives off many sparkles. Christmas is about the monumental challenge to reform our lives, our adult lives, and become women and men of justice; but it is also about a baby being born, innocent and powerless in the straw, whose vulnerability is God’s invitation and judgement. It is too, as Karl Rahner once said, God giving us permission to be happy. Thus, Christmas is a both something to be delighted in and a peace that should disturb us, something for children and for adults.

What Christmas invites us all to, children and adults alike, is have our hearts softened and tempered by the crib, to let the vulnerability manifested in the way Jesus was born bring us back to a time before hardness of heart, to a place beyond pseudo-sophistication, cynicism, bitterness, wound, selfishness, and greed. Christmas is meant not just to renew our faith and hope, but also to renew our innocence.

The Christmas crib invites us back to our innocence, though not to the pre-sophisticated naiveté of a child, but to the post-sophisticated and post-cynical joy and innocence of a truly mature adult, to a second-naiveté, a post-liberal, post-bitter, post-wounded, and post-hard-hearted place.

As virtually all of our iconography around Christmas makes clear, God is born, not as some superstar whose earthly power, beauty, and muscle dwarf us. No. God is born as helpless, vulnerable, thoroughly under-whelming baby who looks out at us quietly even as we look back at him and he judges us in that way that vulnerability forever judges false strength, transparency judges lies, generosity judges selfishness, innocence judges over-sophistication, and a baby, gently and helplessly and disarmingly, calls forth what’s best in us.

Christmas is meant to bring us back to the crib so that our hearts can feel that freshness that wants to make us start living over again.”

*An excerpt from “An Invitation Inside of Christmas”, Fr. Ronald Rolheiser, Dec. 16. 2007;
www.ronrolheiser.com/an-invitation-inside-of-christmas*





Christmas Flower Donations - Thank you!

Thank you to all who made donations towards the purchase of our Christmas Flowers. Your generosity is so much appreciated.

We remember those who have died:

All the Deceased Who Now Share in the Resurrection of Our Lord; Ann; Tony Augustine; Dr. John Ayerst; Jacob Barandowski; Anthony Belter; Boleslaw Belter; Bokor & Stewart Families; Linda Brett; Mary Anne & David Brett; Kathleen Brunton; Nelson Cabral; Fr. Henry Cassano; Gordon & Dorothy Cochrane; Deceased Members of the Cox, Walczak & Atkinson Families; Olga Diaz; David Dittrich; Steve Dittrich; Giovanna & Gildo Di Cola; Steve Dodson; Gabriella; Fred & Patty Gingras; Charles & Beatrice Glaab; Deceased Members of the Gray & McLeod Family; Howard & Zula Hall; James & Kathleen Ingrey; Deceased Members of the the Jardine & Henneburg Families; Julianna; Mary Catherine King; Slavco Krasna; Tatjana Krasna; Frank Lally; Pete & Alberta Laraway; Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Leugner; Wanda Lewis; Frank Licari; John Macht Family; Mama Rosa; Marta; Deceased Members of Connie Marques; Pauline & Beatrice Martinelli; Steven Medeiros; Vinko & Verona Miser; Rodney Ness; Benson O'Connell; Robert O'Dowda; Patrick O'Reilly; Wendel & Dorothea Pflanzner; Patrick & Leonard Polisak; Charmaine Price; Valerie Pumputis; Gabriel & Emma Raba; Dragutin & Barbara Sever; Steve Sever; Teo Simoes; Stephen; Deceased Members of the Tacak & Poluchowicz Families; Monique Van Marwyk; Winifred Wojtak.

We remember and pray for the intentions of those living:

All God's People; D. Harris Family; Intentions of Shari Houghton; Vinko & Ann Misser; Peace in the World; Isabel Rovinelli-Jackson; Living Family Members of the Tacak & Poluchowicz Families; K. Takken; Dave Whitney Family.



THE CHRISTMAS CRÈCHE

“The enchanting image of the Christmas crèche, so dear to the Christian people, never ceases to arouse amazement and wonder. The depiction of Jesus’ birth is itself a simple and joyful proclamation of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. The nativity scene is like a living Gospel rising up from the pages of sacred Scripture. As we contemplate the Christmas story, we are invited to set out on a spiritual journey, drawn by the humility of the God who became man in order to encounter every man and woman. We come to realize that so great is his love for us that he became one of us, so that we in turn might become one with him.

Why does the Christmas crèche arouse such wonder and move us so deeply? First, because it shows God’s tender love: the Creator of the universe lowered himself to take up our littleness. The gift of life, in all its mystery, becomes all the more wondrous as we realize that the Son of Mary is the source and sustenance of all life. In Jesus, the Father has given us a brother who comes to seek us out whenever we are confused or lost, a loyal friend ever at our side. He gave us his Son who forgives us and frees us from our sins.

Setting up the Christmas crèche in our homes helps us to relive the history of what took place in Bethlehem. It touches our hearts and makes us enter into salvation history as contemporaries of an event that is living and real in a broad gamut of historical and cultural contexts. In a particular way, from the time of its Franciscan origins, the nativity scene has invited us to “feel” and “touch” the poverty that God’s Son took upon himself in the Incarnation. Implicitly, it summons us to follow him along the path of humility, poverty and self-denial that leads from the manger of Bethlehem to the cross. It asks us to meet him and serve him by showing mercy to those of our brothers and sisters in greatest need (cf. Mt 25:31-46).”

*Excerpt from the Apostolic Letter: Admirabile Signum-On the Meaning and Significance of the Nativity Scene;
Pope Francis, Dec. 1, 2019.*

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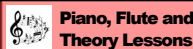


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