

St. Joseph Catholic Church
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Christmass Sunday Year A 12.25.2016

	St. Joseph	St Francis	St. Anne
Sunday	\$1108.00	\$00	\$0.00
Fuel Bill	\$855.00	\$1697.00	



Christmas is a time for giving;
 It is a time to give forgiveness!
 If you cannot forgive during the Christmass Spirit,
 How do you expect to receive the gift of forgiveness
 for your own sinfulness?
 Jesus came to forgive – not condemn.
 We will only be healed when we forgive from the heart.

No season is so full of abundance as the Christmas season. Admit it, do you ever eat fudge or drink eggnog any other time of the year? Expect a full grown tree to appear in your living room? It's a joyful, exuberant time, full of music, family, parties, food and drink, and friends. But every Christian is to be a steward who knows that a shadowy side to this abundance exists, particularly abject poverty, which challenges our consciences.

To keep a clear perspective on the values of Christmass, we face the real problem of poverty. One in six Americans now lives below the poverty line, and many serious social problems accompany poverty: hunger, homelessness, street crime, domestic violence, unemployment, human trafficking.

Too often the poor among us become invisible; yet, poverty is The Scourge. Poverty is an acid that destroys human dignity, even if you are not poor, but do not share, you cause this acid to destroy not only yourself, but those living it.

Poverty is not merely material. Poverty can come from abundance too. Moral poverty enters advanced cultures relentlessly focused on consuming more of everything. Moral poverty seeks self-satisfaction through pleasures, powers, and possessions. It is a poverty caused by lust, envy, and greed.

We have become culture built on satisfying our self; a culture that runs on ignoring the needs – not wants -- of others. That kind of poverty, as Mother Teresa saw so well, is far worse than material poverty.

For Christians, material and moral poverty are cancers, not mere words that are meant to cast a "bah humbug" spell over the Christmas spirit. Facing poverty brings us back to the true meaning of Christmas: Being a faithful steward of God's gifts of material and moral wealth.

Christian stewards know that the true joy of Christmas is not tied to the expense of presents under the tree, but to the abundance of kindness and generosity that fill our hearts and spill out to others, especially those most in need of our generous spirit.

Today, the Son of God is born, and everything changes.

The Saviour of the world comes to partake of our human nature; no longer are we alone and forsaken. The Virgin offers us her Son as the beginning of a new life. The true light has come to illumine our lives so often beset by the darkness of sin.

Today we once more discover who we are! Tonight we have been shown the way to reach the journey's end. Now must we put away all fear and dread, for the light shows us the path to Bethlehem.

We must not be laggards; we are not permitted to stand idle. We must set out to see our Saviour lying in a manger. This is the reason for our joy and gladness: this Child has been born to us; given to us. The people who wait for a thousand years has traversed all the pathways of the world in order to allow every man and woman to share in this joy is now given the mission of making known "the Prince of peace" and becoming his effective servant in the midst of the nations.

So when we hear tell of the birth of Christ, let us be silent and let the Child speak. Let us take his words to heart in rapt contemplation of his face. If we take him in our arms and let ourselves be embraced by him, he will bring us unending peace of heart.

This Child teaches us what is essential in our lives. He was born poor; no room in the inn for him and his family. He found shelter and support in a stable and was laid in a manger, a trough for animals. Yet, from His nothingness, the light of God's glory shines. He brings us a new of freedom, eternal redemption is open to every man and woman of good will.

This Child, his face radiates the goodness, mercy and love of God the Father. He trains us, his disciples, as Saint Paul says, "to reject godless ways" and the richness of the world, in order to live "temperately, justly and devoutly" (*Tit* 2:12).

In a society so often intoxicated by consumerism and hedonism, wealth and extravagance, appearances and narcissism, this Child calls us to act simply, soberly: a way that is humble, modest, and respectful. Tonight we see and do what is right and just.

In a world which all too often is merciless to the sinner and lenient to the sin, we need to cultivate a strong sense of justice, to discern and to do God's will. Amid a culture of indifference which not infrequently turns ruthless and violent our style of life should instead be *devout*, filled with empathy, compassion and mercy, drawn daily from the wellspring of prayer.

Like the shepherds of Bethlehem, may we too, with eyes full of amazement and wonder, gaze upon the Child Jesus, the Son of God. And in his presence may our hearts burst forth in prayer: "Show us, Lord, your mercy, and grant us your salvation" (*P*s 85:8).

Pope Francis

Announcements

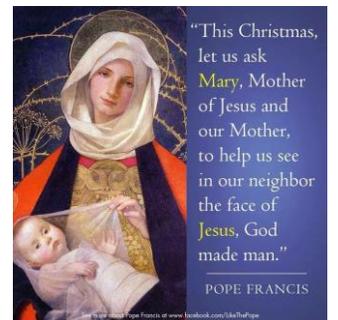
Christmass Schedule:
 5:30 PM Christmass Eve Mass
 11:30 PM Midnight Mass
 10:30 AM Christmass Day Mass

Dec 27 2:00 PM Vince's Funeral at Rec Center

Kotz Church Project:
 We received 6 responses from architect firms.
 Fr. Kuffel will be in Kotz Jan 14 weekend.



"So great is the value of a human life and so inalienable the right to life of an innocent child growing in the mother's womb, that no alleged right to one's own body can justify a decision to terminate that life"

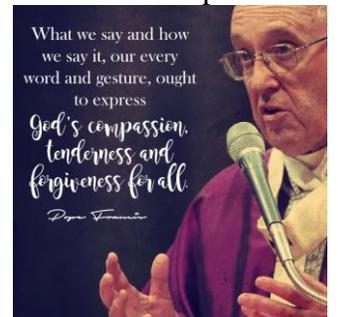


The Church is the Body and Blood of Christ!

The Soul of the Church is the Holy Spirit!

The only way we become part of the Church is to live filled with His Spirit!

The Eucharist fills us with his Spirit!



Jesus became like one of us so we can become like Him.



Weekly Schedule:

Date	MassTime	Place	Feast Day	Lector/Minister	Intention	Activity
Mon Dec 26	5:30 PM	Nome	St. Stephen		Margaret Harre	
Tue Dec 27	5:30 PM	Nome			Margaret Harre	
Wed Dec 28	5:30 PM	Nome	Holy Innocents		Margaret Harre	
Thu Dec 29	5:30 PM	Nome	Thomas Becket		Wayne Pick	
Fri Dec 30	8:00 AM	Nome	Holy Family		Wayne Pick	
Sat Dec 31	5:30 PM	Nome	Theotokos		Wayne Pick	New Years Eve
Sat Jan 1	10:30 AM	Nome	Theotokos		St. Jude	New Years Day

**We are created by God
We are created for God
God, through his Son, Jesus,
Draws you ceaselessly to Himself.
Only in God's Gift of Jesus
Will we find truth, love, joy, and peace!**

**The first step to getting what you want
Is getting rid of what you don't want!**

**One of the hardest lessons in life
Is letting go of what you thought was real!**

Our Sunday Best

Be your best! Perfection is not only desired; it is demanded. No one wants a quitter on his or her team. No one wants to encourage and incorrigible. It drains us; enslaves us. As the adage goes:

"Do not put in more effort than the person is willing to put in themselves."

Yet, most of do put in more effort than another is willing, especially when it comes to our children. We want the best for our children. We want them to succeed and reach far beyond their potential. Love does not limit itself to the potential of the other person; but love willingly sacrifices anything for the beloved.

People are capable of incredible achievements. Look at history. Look at the perfect teams; the perfect play; the perfect dress; the perfect fit. Perfection is possible, but perfection comes with a price and the cost is priceless.

You cannot buy love!

One cannot put a price on perfection because perfection cannot be bought or sold. Perfection comes from the price of love which is priceless.

The power of love seeks the best – not only of oneself but of the other. Yet as we mature and grow we come to realize that the other person is hardened, callous, and even heartless when it comes to our gift of love. I don't know of anything more heart wrenching than when one person rejects the love of another, especially when a spouse rejects his or her spouse; when a child rejects a parent; when a parent rejects a child. How callous!

Doing your best takes heart. It leaves behind the comforts and consolations that we all wishfully believe life to be. Life is not a fairy tale fantasy of Christmass Lore. Love demands self-sacrifice. It demands discipline. It demands your life. And the only sure reward of love knows that I did my best. I did not just try; but I gave everything – even my life, my death.

This lifestyle has been lost today in our culture. We no longer demand our Sunday Best! We no longer expect perfection from ourselves. Easily we live a mediocre life and find comfort zones in foods, drinks, and entertainments. We distract ourselves with games and toys. We fail to have a mission and think multitasking and being a change agent brings us fulfillment.

But no one wants a second rate player; a second rate spouse; a second rate education. That is why our purpose and mission of life is to become the best version of ourselves. Virtue, building up your personal strengths, brings out the best version of you. It creates the self-discipline and self-control that directs your life to be your best. Being the best version of yourself is your mission – your sole focus.

Being your best is possible!

To become my best self takes heart. But a heart that is filled with love because love alone easily conquers all the obstacles, set-backs, and mistakes, for a heart filled with love forgives, forgets, and learns from the mistakes. It embraces failures as opportunities for learning, growing, and maturing. Mistakes and missteps are not the problem; the greatest mistake and misstep is not learning from my error.

Jesus teaches us: Be perfect as your heavenly Father is Perfect! This is possible. This is achievable but we have to want perfection; in fact, we were made for perfection. But how do we become perfect: Want Power! We have to want Jesus in our lives for He makes it possible for with Him all things are Possible!

Perfection can only be achieved in and through Jesus Christ!

You cannot become perfect; that is to become the best version of yourself,

Except through Jesus.

Christmas is God's gift! He gives his most precious gift to you, His Son! His Son, Jesus, embraces you, forgives you, and inspires you to become your best yourself. Realizing you are loved unconditionally moves you to live a perfect life.

That perfect life is everyone's dream. This Christmas dream of your perfect life! That is God, the Father's, gift to you. It is his gift every day for you. He wants you to be perfect and gives you his Son to empower your perfection.

Christmas is delightful for children and we delight in their joy, Adults need Christmass too. Amid the unrest of the future, the world problems, the politics, the fear mongering, the civil unrest, wars, terrorist, and the host of social and moral problems, adults need to celebrate the joy that Christmass creates.

More real, adults are afflicted with an inner darkness of spirit, heart, and soul. Adults face helpless situations, broken relationships, hardships, addictions, business and bureaucracy, along with all sorts of doubts, skepticism, and even denial concerning God, his Church, and the meaning Christianity.

Adults know they need to attend Holy Mass. They know they need to pray, confess, and change some habits. They know in their heart, for their conscience speaks, what they should do but feel trapped and enslaved. Life almost becomes meaningless. Empty and discouraged, adults need Christmass just as much and if not more than children.

The great joyful news of Christmas is that God has given us light, His Light, in which we can see reality as He sees it. His light renews our faith, hope, and love not only of ourselves and others, but hope for the hopelessness that confronts us. That stupendous light is so powerful that it cuts through all of the darkness looming over us. We are here to celebrate that light, the light of the coming of God to dwell not just in our land, but a God whose names is Emmanuel, a name meaning God is with us – in our hearts.

We need to hear the carols, sing the jingle, watch movies, but most importantly, we need to hear hymn of the Angels: Glory to God in the Highest; Peace to his people on earth.

We need to sit down with our children, our relatives at Christmas listening to stories feeling the love and closeness of family ties. Equally the heavenly light of Bethlehem's star is a light from heaven bidding us to see and then receive the Gift that our Father in heaven is offering to each of us. His Child, Jesus, lying in a manger surrounded by shepherds and Magi reveals the miraculous love God for us.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. What came to be through him was life, the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:1)

We swim in ocean of dark words, coming to us through TV, cell phones, i-pads, computers. All of those things bid us to give them our attention. But God has a Word for you; He has something He wants to say to you. You and I need to listen to it and hear what God is saying – not so much in words, but the Light of His Son: Jesus Christ! His Living Word of love!