

# Parish News...

**Starting this Saturday, anyone attending any Mass regardless of vaccination status will be required to wear a face mask in the Church.**

**Many people have already taken down their Christmas trees and taken down their Christmas decorations. Do you know that the Christmas Season is synonymous with Christmastide which runs from December 25 (Christmas Day) to January 5<sup>th</sup> (Twelfth Nights or Epiphany Eve which in our Church is until the Baptism of the Lord, which this year is on January 9<sup>th</sup>. Let us continue to celebrate the Birth of our Lord and Savior until January 9<sup>th</sup>**

**This Sunday is the Epiphany: The Epiphany Doorpost Blessing is a rich tradition which is still observed. The head of the family makes the following marking over the main door of the house.**

**20+C+M+B+22**

**The initials designate the names of the Three Wise men Casper, Melchior and Balthazar. The number represents the years. As the inscription is being the made, the following prayer is said**

***"May all who come to our house this year rejoice to find Christ living among us and may we seek and serve in everyone we meet Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever Amen"***

**The chalk and incense will be blessed and you are free to take it home and write the sign on your homes.**



## Faith Formation

With the winter weather upon us, I need to inform families of the winter school protocol for the school. Should it be necessary to cancel classes due to the weather, I will have it announced on the local weather channels as well as send out a mass email advising that classes are canceled no later than 8am. Should a family feel the weather is too bad for the family to come to faith formation, I leave up to the family's decision to decide if they should come. Safety for your family should always be first.

Classes Resume January 16<sup>th</sup>

Parents, please remember that all people entering the building are required to wear a face mask. NO exceptions. There will be extra if needed for the children if required

I will be on vacation the weekend of January 16 and 23<sup>rd</sup>. Mrs. P Doggett and Mr. M. Wolkowicz will be attending the school in my absence.

**CONFIRMATION STUDENTS** 10<sup>th</sup> Grade: It is important that all students attend classes in order to make Confirmation in May. The attendance has been reviewed and a number of students have missed a number of classes. Effective January 16<sup>th</sup>, students will be allowed 2 absences from class unless due to illness. If more than 2 more are missed, the student may not be able to make Confirmation in May. If you have any questions, please contact me @ 315 527 8399.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation: Saturday @ 3:15pm prior to Mass and the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month after the 12:10 Mass**

## Mass Schedule



### January 1<sup>st</sup>

**Friday: December 31<sup>st</sup> Vigil Mass 6pm**

**Saturday January 1<sup>st</sup>: Solemnity of Mary Mass 10AM**

**Sunday January 2<sup>nd</sup>-Epiphany-Mass 4pm**

**Usual Masses on Sunday**

**Saturday 4pm**

**Sunday 7:30 AM, 8:30AM, 10AM Polish Mass and 11am**

Let's remember that as Catholics, it is important to attend Sunday Mass. At Mass we are able to stand mystically at the foot of the cross and witness for ourselves the same self-sacrifice of Jesus, in an unbloody manner. Mass is a celebration of this sacrifice. It is the active participation of all that come together in the place of worship. While Faith Formation before the 11AM Mass, all families are welcome to this Mass. If unable to attend this Mass, please attend the Church Masses. Faith Formation Classes alone do not teach your children about their faith. It is important they see their faith in the Mass.

**While I have found these wonderful reflections on the Gospel readings, it is not meant to take the place of the Sunday Mass. Remember to attend Mass to hear Fr. Arthur or Deacon Kirk's a much better spiritual teaching of the Gospel reading**

**January 1<sup>st</sup>-Octave Day of Christmas-Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God**

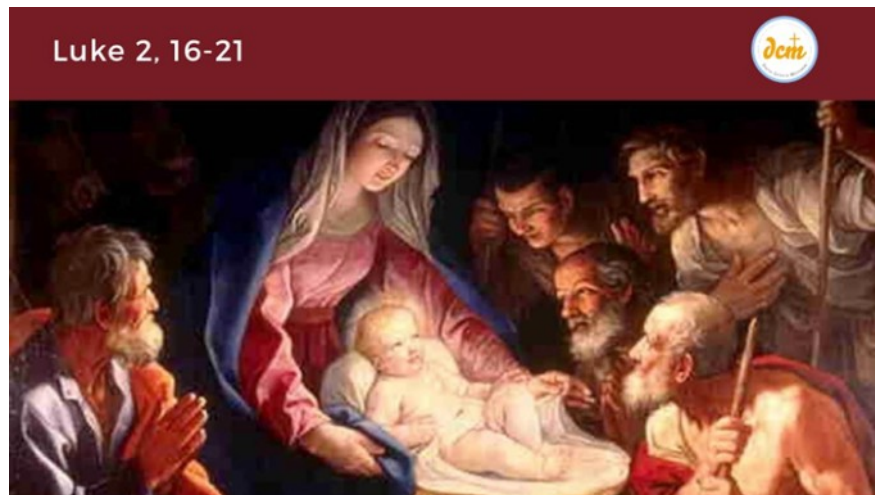
**(Holy Day of Obligation)**

**First Reading: Mn 6:22-27**

**Responsorial PS: 67: 2-3, 5.6,8**

**Second Reading: Gal4:4-7**

**Gospel: LK 2:16-21**



**Reflection on Luke 2:16-21** The good news about the birth of the savior was first announced to shepherds, not to educated people or those with authorities. They were very ordinary people yet they were privileged to hear the voice of angels proclaiming the coming of the Messiah. God has a soft heart for people who are looked down upon. David was of course a shepherd but God made him the greatest king of Israel. Later, Jesus Himself will be called by John the Baptist as the lamb who will take away the sins of the world. Moreover, Jesus Himself will become the Good Shepherd who takes care of all of us.

The King of kings was found lying in a manger because there were no vacant rooms available. It was a filthy, smelly place and perhaps noisy. How symbolic the scene is. The savior has come to a world full of sin and it knew Him not. May we make a room for Him in our heart full of sins. Let us allow Jesus to remove any filthiness and foul odor in our spiritual life so that He will have a comfortable indwelling in us.

Like Mary, let us continue to keep the Word of God in our heart and to contemplate on them day in and day out. Like the shepherd, may we always glorify and give praise to God for all His amazing works and teachings. Additionally, let us go out and tell others the good news of our salvation.

## **January 2<sup>nd</sup>, The Epiphany of the Lord**

**First Reading Is 60:1-6**

**Responsorial PS 72:1-2, 7-8 10-11, 12-13**

**Second Reading Eph 3:2-3, 5-6**

**Gospel: Mt 2:1-12**



## Reflection: Epiphany

The first verse of our gospel reading speaks of magi from the east. "Magi" is the plural form of magus which refers to a sorcerer or a member of the priestly class in Persia which is the modern-day country of Iran. Other versions of the bible mention wise men from the orient. The bible does not mention their number but people probably got the idea of three wise men from the fact that these visitors brought with them three gifts. However, since King Herod became upset or nervous about their purpose, we can assume that their number is much more than three.

The visitors are described as wise because they knew how to interpret astronomical phenomena such as the rising of a star. When they saw the "Star of Bethlehem", they associated it with the birth of a great king. That is why the gospel reading is called the epiphany because the birth of Jesus was manifested to the non-Jewish people or the gentiles.

Here is King Herod who tried his best to trick or deceive the magi into an agreement so he could know personally where to find the child Jesus. Yet God the Almighty guided the visitors and King Herod got the disappointment of his life. God knows better than any wise man or skillful king!

The visitors brought with them three gifts which consisted of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. This must be the idea why gift giving during Christmas became a tradition. Yet it must be emphasized again and again especially to children that receiving gifts during Christmas is not the central idea why we have Christmas although everyone can be encouraged to give gifts to the needy.

Gold is considered the king of metals and it is also the metal of kings. The gift of gold to Jesus is an acknowledgement that He is the coming King. On the other hand, frankincense is a kind of oil used as incense and to some ancient people, it was a symbol of deity. Lastly, myrrh was used as an embalming oil and therefore it is a symbol of death. Obviously, Matthew wanted his readers to have an idea of who Jesus is – the King who is the Son of God and who would die for our salvation.

The magi prostrated themselves and paid homage to Jesus. As Christmas season is about to end, may we pay homage to Jesus as the King of kings and Lord of lords not just during Christmas but every day of our life. What better gift to give Him than our very own selves as His wise men and women in a world who do not accept Him as King.



## Theme

Either gradually or all at once, we can know for certain that Jesus is Lord.

A light bulb moment is a moment of sudden inspiration, revelation, or recognition. We may have seen a cartoon image of a light bulb lighting up above a character's head when he or she has an idea. Has this ever happened to you? When? (solicit responses from the children)

Share with the children that sometimes an epiphany in life comes to us as a light bulb moment, much like the kind you may see on a cartoon when the cartoon character is turned on by a particular idea or new way of thinking.

Sometimes it takes a series of tiny sparks to shed some light on an issue not previously deemed relevant. And then there are the 'hit you over the head' zingers that blind you like a flood light. Take for instance the wise men as they journeyed to Bethlehem. The wise men reached Bethlehem about two years after the birth of Jesus. Jesus, Mary and Joseph were now in a house, not the stable. They were aware of the promised Messiah from their former leader, Daniel. Under Daniel's leadership and influence, many of them had turned from their paganism to the worship of the true God. Their intention was to seek the Messiah, in order to worship Him. In worshiping the Messiah, the wise men made a prophecy of their own in their choice of gifts.

Gold: A gift for a king.

Frankincense: This is obviously an incense, the burning of which represents prayer. It is used by priests, and indicates the priestly nature of the Messiah.

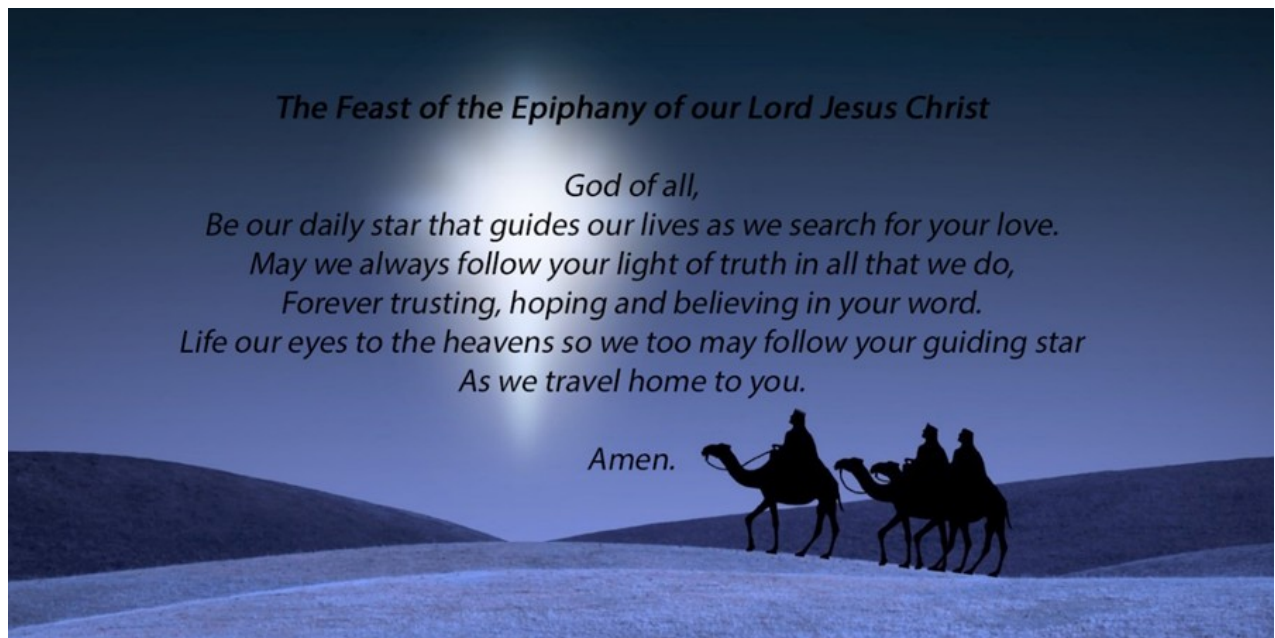
Myrrh: A fragrant perfume, used in embalming bodies. The inclusion of this gift can be seen as prophetic of the death of the Messiah.

Our response should therefore be that of the wise men themselves: to worship the Messiah, Jesus Christ — our Prophet, Priest and King.

Closing: There is comfort in spending time well; comfort in accepting the fact that, for most of us, getting older means getting better (and hopefully, walking even closer to our Lord, Jesus Christ. Even if it does take us a little longer to reach our goals, we succeed when we practice patience, wisdom and stamina. And that's a light bulb moment that shines bright for those who believe.

Prayer: Father, help us to realize that you truly are God and help us to worship you with the kind of devotion that you deserve, not only on Sundays but all week long. Amen.

**This week's prayer focuses on the Feast of the Epiphany and Our Lord Jesus.**





### **COVID Update:**

**New York State has instituted a mask mandate in all public places effective December 13 to January 15. It is being done as a safety precaution and out of the utmost concern for one's neighbor. Bishop Lucia expects that all parishes in the Diocese of Syracuse will cooperate with this important public health matter and comply with the mask mandate.**

Attached are fliers included from the Diocese for all included a Letter from Bishop Lucia and recipe for Christmas cookies

### **From the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry:**

Registration is now open for the Syracuse Diocese Pilgrimage for Life youth trip to Washington, D.C.!

On this powerful 3-day experience, participants will travel to Washington D.C., attend Mass with Bishop Lucia, enjoy a guided walking tour of the monuments, see the Smithsonian Museums, join an evening [Youth Rally](#) with Sr. Josephine Garret, CSFN and music by Dave Moore, and of course, participate in the **National March for Life**. This is open to youth in grades 7-12. \$199 per person includes: travel, lodging, and most meals; tickets to Life Is Very Good Youth Rally; and a tour of the National Monuments.

Click [HERE](#) for more information and to register.

Office of Family/Respect Life

#### **1. *March for Life - January 20-21, 2022***

Join this one-day pilgrimage to Washington, DC for adults and families! This trip includes Mass with Bishop Lucia at the National Basilica, participation in the March for Life with the diocesan group, transportation, meals and a diocesan scarf. The bus will pick up passengers in four locations, Utica, Syracuse, Cortland and Binghamton. Cost: Adults \$50. Young Adults (18-25) \$25. Maximum Family Rate: \$125. For more information, contact Jen Brown at 315-472-6754 Ext. 7 or email [familyrepsectlife@syrdio.org](mailto:familyrepsectlife@syrdio.org). To register online go to [march4lifesyracuse2022.eventbrite.com](http://march4lifesyracuse2022.eventbrite.com).

## ***World Marriage Day***

**The Diocese of Syracuse will celebrate *World Marriage Day* on Sunday, February 13, 2022** by hosting a special Mass with Bishop Lucia at the Cathedral at 2:00pm. Couples married 20, 25, and 50+ years in 2022 will be recognized by receiving a certificate during Mass. A mailing will arrive next week with flyers, posters and a letter with information from Bishop Lucia. See attached flier for posting

Continuing Christmas Blessing on your Families

Lynn M. Springer

Director of Faith Formation

Sacred Heart/St Mary's

[Lspringer@Syrdio.org](mailto:Lspringer@Syrdio.org)

315 527 8399