

Our Lady of the Cross Parish
23 Sycamore St.
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

Friary & Office

(413) 532-5661

Fax Line

(413) 535-1759

E-mail: parish@ourladyofthecross.com

Website: www.ourladyofthecross.com

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday

8:00 am - 1:30 pm

Welcome

We extend a warm welcome to all who are visiting our church! If you attend Our Lady of the Cross regularly and consider this your parish, please take a moment to register by contacting the parish office.

MASS SCHEDULE

Monday - Saturday: 8:30 am

Saturday: 4:00 pm

Sunday: 7:30 am, 9:00 am (Polish), 10:30 am

CONFESSIONS

Weekdays: 8:00 am; Saturday: 3:15 - 3:45 pm

Mater Dolorosa School: Grades K-8

3 & 4 year old pre-school program

Religious Education Program: Those children not attending a parochial school are expected to enroll.

Eucharistic Adoration: Friday 9:00 am - 6:00 pm

Divine Mercy Devotion: 1st Sunday of month
2:00 pm Exposition; 3:00 pm Chaplet

Baptism: Last Sunday of each month at 11:30 am
Please call the parish office to register.

Matrimony: Call office to make arrangements one year in advance of the wedding date.

Sacrament of the Sick: 2nd Saturday of month
after the Vigil Mass. By request at anytime.

Ministry to the Sick & Homebound: Please call the parish office to receive Holy Communion.



December 20, 2015

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

PARISH STAFF

Fr. Albert Scherer,
OFM Conv.

Pastor

Fr. Mietek Wit,
OFM Conv.

Parochial Vicar

Fr. Stanley Sobiech,
OFM Conv.

In Residence

Br. Frank Grimaldi,
OFM Conv.

In Residence

Chaplain, Soldier's Home

Linda Rex

Principal

Mater Dolorosa School

(413) 532-2831

Sr. Victoria Kamungu

Bookkeeper &
Ministry of Care

Linnea Williamson
Secretary

(413) 532-5661

Joann Wauczinski
Director of Religious
Education

(413) 437-3477

Theresa Szumski
Cemetery Manager

(413) 532-7889

Joe DiMarino

Organist &

Music Director

Mike Rodgers

Robert Maziarz
Maintenance

December 20 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

From Bethlehem shall come one who will rule Israel (1). Born of Mary, the servant of the Lord (3), he will protect and save us (Ps), offering himself once and for all in doing the Father's will (2).

December 21 - St. Peter Canisius

Elizabeth hears Mary's greetings (2) and is glad and exults (1b, Ps). With the advent of the Savior, born of Mary (2), the winter is past and new life is upon us (1a).

December 22 - Advent Weekday

Hannah's thanksgiving for her son (1, Ps) is echoed in the great hymn of Mary, the Magnificat (2).

December 23 - St. John of Kanty

As God sent Elijah (1), so, too, is John raised up to herald the Lord's coming (2) which is at hand (Ps).

December 24 - Advent Weekday

God's covenant (Ps) gloriously shines forth (1) in the birth of Jesus (3), son of David (2).

December 25 - Advent Weekday

Out of love for us (2), God became flesh (3), for our Savior has appeared (1). Light dawns for us all (Ps)!

December 26 - Advent Weekday

What mighty deeds (Ps)! As an angel announces the birth of Samson (1), so, too, Gabriel heralds the birth of John (2).



+Judge Ann Gibbons

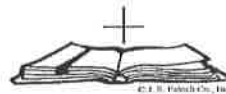


People who are alone this Christmas

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

- Monday: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a; Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21; Lk 1:39-45
- Tuesday: 1 Sm 1:24-28; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-8abcd; Lk 1:46-56
- Wednesday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-34; Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-10, 14; Lk 1:57-66
- Thursday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Lk 1:67-79
- Friday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25] Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14 Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20 Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14] Saturday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22
- Sunday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or 1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28; Ps 128:1-5 or Ps 84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10; Col 3:12-21 [12-17] or 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24; Lk 2:41-52

Mass Intentions



Saturday, December 19

- 4:00 +Clara Neves Morgado & Jorge Neves - Luisa Neves-Jarrett

Sunday, December 20

- 7:30 Christmas Blessings for parishioners of Our Lady of the Cross Parish - Barbara Bernard
- 9:00 +Roman Pater - Zbigniew & Marie Fabin
- 10:30 + Ann Bowler - Family

Monday, December 21

- 8:30 +Gerald Michalski - Wanda Lacroix +Kara Shanahan - The Fox Family

Tuesday, December 22

- 8:30 Souls in Purgatory - Ann +Val Kasprzyński - Paul Szalkucki

Wednesday, December 23

- 8:30 +Daniel McKay - Wife & Daughters +Roman Pater - Mr. & Mrs. Kosciulek

Thursday, December 24

- 8:30 +Helen Sidur - Ann Marie & Julie +Deceased Members of the Sklarski & Olech Families - Peter & Christine
- 4:00 +Secundo & Giovanni Guidi, Donna Taylor & Doreen Corbin - Guidi Family
- 10:00 Friar's Intention

Friday, December 25

- 7:30 Birthday Blessings and Health for Christine - Mom
- 9:00 +Marta Legowski - Daughter, Family & Friends
- 10:30 +Joseph & Anne Bakes - Family

Saturday, December 26

- 8:30 +Sally Stawasz - Stawasz Family
- 4:00 +Roger & Beatrice Lepine - Daughters

Sunday, December 27

- 7:30 +Michael & Nellie Szot - Family
- 9:00 +Marta Legowski - Friends
- 10:30 +Norman & Irene Bacon - Daughter Pauline



The altar candle is burning the week of December 20th for +Mr. & Mrs. Emil Hohol from Family

Mary, the Mother of God January 1 (Holy Day of Obligation)

December 31:

4:00 pm

January 1:

7:30 am

9:00 am Polish

10:30 am





Dear Parishioners,

Advent: Today as we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Advent we are reminded that Christmas is right around the corner. It is hard to believe. It seems as though it was just yesterday when we lit the first candle on the Advent wreath. I hope that the past several weeks have provided you with the opportunity to deepen your relationship with the Lord in preparation for His birth - and also His return at the end of time. If, however, you have

not spent very much time in prayer this Advent, do not be discouraged. You still have time! During this last week of Advent make it a point to pray, to reflect, to prepare your heart. I am sure there are many last minute things that you still need to do before Christmas. I encourage you to place prayer at the top of your list.

Mary's Visit: In today's Gospel we hear about Mary's visit to Elizabeth. We do not know anything about the actual time that these two women spent together. But during those three months I am sure Mary and Elizabeth spent a great deal of time simply talking. Both were pregnant. Both had feelings and thoughts that they needed to share. Both were holy, prayerful individuals. Surely Mary's visit was a blessing for both women.

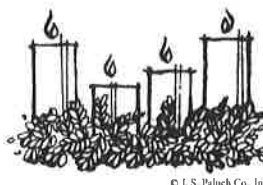
Our Visits: During this holiday season many of us will be visiting family and friends. I hope and pray that any visits you may have with loved ones will be a blessing for everyone. Enjoy your time together! As you know, this is the Year of Mercy and during this year Bishop Rozanski is asking us to make it a point to evangelize - to share our faith with others. If you have the opportunity to do so during your holiday visits, perhaps you could somehow bring "faith" into the conversation. Mention the Year of Mercy. Initiate a conversation about Pope Francis. Talk about our efforts to bring people back to the Church. I am not suggesting that you get on a soapbox and start preaching to people. Do not preach, nag or judge! Simply say something positive about the Church, our parish or your relationship with the Lord. Plant the seed and let God take care of the rest.

Warm Welcome: Part of evangelization includes welcoming people when they come to Mass. On Christmas, our church will be filled with many individuals whom we haven't seen since last Christmas (or perhaps Easter). Please, please, please, make them feel welcome! Sometimes we tend to get aggravated with these individuals because they have taken "our" parking spot or "our" pew. Instead of being aggravated with them, let us be happy that they have come to Mass. Say hello to them. Make room in the pew for them. Offer them a heartfelt greeting at the Sign of Peace. Smile. Be friendly. Wish them a Merry Christmas! And say a little prayer that we see them in church again.

You Came Through For The Children: In last Sunday's Gospel the crowds asked John the Baptist: "What should we do?" John's response: share your cloaks and your food with those in need. This year we had a significant number of "angels" on our Angel Tree, many more than last year. Last Sunday we still had many angels left on the tree and I was a bit worried. In response to our pleas for help, you came through. I know that some of you, even though you had already purchased a gift, took another angel. Several non-parishioners also took angels. To each and every one of you who took an angel/s from the Angel Tree, THANK YOU! You will make many children in foster care extremely happy this Christmas.

Even Priests/Deacons Need Confession: This past Tuesday, Fr. Mietek and I were asked to hear confessions during a Day of Recollection for the priests/deacons of the Diocese. Quite a few of them took the opportunity to experience the Lord's mercy in this sacrament. I mention this only because some individuals forget that priests/deacons (and religious sisters & brothers) need confession just as much as lay people. We ALL need the sacrament of reconciliation as we strive to grow in holiness.

Peace,
FR. ALBERT



Quotable Quotes

***"I've witnessed the most amazing thing in my life -
24,000 kids kneeling and staring at the Eucharist."***

~ Andrew Hawes, 15, from the Archdiocese of Louisville, Kentucky,
after attending the 2015 National Catholic Youth Conference
in Indianapolis on Nov. 19-21

This Week at Our Lady of the Cross

December 19: 8:30 am Religious Education Classes

December 21: 6:00 pm Confirmation Classes

December 25: MERRY CHRISTMAS TO OUR LADY OF THE CROSS PARISH FAMILY!

December 27: Take & Eat Ministry

Stewardship of Treasure

Offertory Collection for December 13

First Collection:

262 Envelope Users:	\$4,894.00
Loose Money:	\$386.00
27 Envelopes Mailed:	\$1,713.00
TOTAL:	\$6,993.00
Retired Religious:	\$1,889.00
Milk Money:	\$76.00

Thank you for loving and supporting our parish!

Second Collection

The annual Diocesan Appeal for the **College of Our Lady of the Elms** — the Catholic college of western Massachusetts — will be made throughout the Diocese at all Masses on January 2 and 3. **Elms College** educates young women and men to be reflective, principled, and creative learners in the tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph, and offers scholarships for students to make this faith-based education more affordable. The need for your support is great. We urge you to take part in this effort, and there is an envelope in your packet for this purpose. We also encourage you to check with your employer to see if they offer a matching gift opportunity. For more information about how you can support **Elms College**, log onto their website, www.elms.edu, or by calling 413-265-2446.

Parish Office Closed

Due to the Christmas Season and New Year, the parish office will be closed on:

Christmas Eve; Thursday, December 24

New Years Eve; Thursday, December 31

Monday, December 28



Picture depicts students preparing the boxes for Kate's Kitchen before Thanksgiving. Nineteen (19) cases of food were collected by Grades One and Two at the school and given to Kate's Kitchen.



Don't forget wrapping paper
Don't forget tree lights and tinsel
Don't forget to visit Santa
Don't forget last minute gifts

DON'T FORGET.....

THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS!!!

Charitable Considerations

During this Christmas Season, please consider Our Lady of the Cross Parish in your plans for charitable giving.

SIGNIFICANT TAX DEDUCTIONS

Currently Accepting:

Insurance Policies

Appreciated Stocks & Bonds

Savings Bonds

Houses

House Contents

Cars, Motorcycles, Boats

Art Work & Precious Medals (gold, silver & coins)

If you have any questions, call the parish office.

Thank you for thinking of us!!!

TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION

Many of our most treasured traditions link the liturgy of the church with the hearth of the home. The food on the table at certain feasts and fasts helps to extend the mystery into everyday life. Tonight, for example, many families of Italian heritage, especially those with links to the south of Italy, will settle down to the "Feast of the Seven Fishes," or *La Vigilia*. It is a command performance for the whole family, as the saying goes: *Natale con I tuui, Pasqua conchi vuoi*, or "Christmas with your family, Easter with whomever you wish." Seven different fish, some say one for each day of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, others say one for each sacrament, or one for each day of creation, are served. Eel and shrimp, lobster and crab, calamari, pasta with clam sauce, flounder and hake all abound, but most especially baccala, dried salted cod. Why? Many say that it is a way to pay homage to the beasts of the stable who witnessed the holy birth and relinquished their manger to make way for God. Tonight, if someone asks you to "pass the shrimp," you'll be able to shed a little light on a menu that is a delicious treasure in our tradition! —Rev. James Field

New Eucharistic Ministers

Recently seven of our parishioners were trained and commissioned to become Eucharistic Ministers at Our Lady of the Cross. They are: Stan Czerwiec, Walter Gonet, Terry Keeler, Maxine Stawasz, Roland & Claire Stebbins and Shelley Whelihan. We express our sincerest gratitude to them for their willingness to serve our parish in this important ministry.

We also wish to acknowledge those who attended the classes in order to be recertified for another three years: Jeff Brazeau, Harold Brunault, Louise George and Fran Millane. We are grateful to these individuals for their willingness to continue serving as Eucharistic Ministers.

Others Are Needed

We could always use more Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Ushers and Altar Servers to help out during our weekend Liturgies. If anyone is interested in any of these ministries, please call the parish office.



Celebration of Ministries

Saturday, January 9

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, Westfield

All Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Sacristans, Ushers, Catechists, Choir Members, Music Ministers, Adult and Youth Altar Servers are invited to attend a Mass in their honor.

9:30 am Mass with Bishop Mitchell Rozanski

Refreshments will follow

11:00 am Fr. Warren Savage will give a presentation to help us in our evangelization efforts.

If you plan on attending, please call the parish office at 532-5661. If people are interested, we will car pool from OLC church.

Thank You

We thank all those who supported our Food Sale the past two weekends. We raised \$1,101. We also would like to thank those who sold the food for us. If you would like to purchase cabbage or potato/cheese pierogi, please call the parish office. A special word of thanks to Linnea Williamson who donated homemade salad dressing for the Food Sale and to Dorothea MacNeil for her homemade jellies/jams. Thank you one and all!

Bus Trip to Shrine of LaSalette

Everyone had a wonderful time last Sunday on our bus trip to Wright's Farm and the Shrine of LaSalette. We wish to thank Charlotte Martin for organizing the trip!



Pictured with Dorothea MacNeil are some of the many gifts that were purchased for the Angel Tree. We take this opportunity to express our deepest thanks to Dorothea for coordinating this year's Angel Tree. We also thank Mimi Doyle and Doris Fleming for all of their time and efforts. And finally we wish to thank Bob Bober, Adrien Briere and Mike Rodgers for loading up the trucks and taking all of the gifts down to the Department of Children and Family Services.

A Prayer for Advent

May the God of peace make us completely holy. May God keep us blameless in spirit, soul and body for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Forever faithful is the One who calls us - God our Father! Expectant, let us live in joyful hope for the revelation of the glory of our God and Savior, Christ Jesus! To him be glory forever! Come, Lord Jesus! Your grace be with us all.

Knights of Columbus Elder Council Spaghetti Supper

460 Granby Rd., Chicopee

Benefits the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi

Tuesday; January 5

4:30 pm - 6:30 pm

Tickets: Seniors/Students \$5.00

Adults \$6.00

5 years and younger free

Menu: Spaghetti & Meat Sauce, Meatballs, Roll & Salad, Coffee, Tea, Lemonade & Bake Sale

Calendars

Calendars for 2016 are now available at all the church doors as well as in the middle of the church. The calendars feature beautiful pictures of Pope Francis as well as various quotations from his homilies/talks. There are also calendars in Polish. These calendars were provided by Michael Usher at Messier Funeral Home. We thank Michael for his generosity to our parish family!