



ST. PAUL PARISH

The Nativity of the Lord

December 25th 2022



The Nativity of the Lord

ST. PAUL CHURCH

Mon.-Sat. 8:00 a.m.- Daily Mass
Saturday 4:30 p.m.- Vigil Mass
Sunday 8a.m. & 10:30a.m.

ST. CLARE CHURCH

Eucharistic Adoration & Rosary
Monday-Friday 4p.m.-5p.m.
Rosary begins at 4:30 p.m.

Rev. Mon. Neil J. Van Loon, V.F., Pastor
Deacon John A. Hanni

St. Paul Staff

Rita Cicco - Director of Religious Education

Robert Fitzsimmons - Sacristan

Eugene Mentz - Director of Liturgical Music

Marci Stevens-Scanlon - Administrative Assistant

Phoebe Wilson - Operations Manager



St. Paul Parish

*Dear Parishioners,
May the graces that come
through the birth of Christ Jesus
bring you blessings, strength and
hope during the Christmas season
and through the New Year.*

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

*Monsignor Neil Van Loon &
Deacon John A. Hanni*



Merry Christmas

*St. Paul Parish
Christmas Mass Schedule
St. Paul Church*

Christmas Eve Saturday
Nativity of the Lord (Vigil)
December 24th 4:00 p.m.
(Live streamed on our Facebook Page)
10:00 p.m. Mass

Christmas Day Sunday
Nativity of the Lord
December 25th
9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
(No 4:30 Mass)

St. Paul Church

Corner of Penn Avenue
and Marion Street,
Scranton, PA 18509

St. Paul Rectory

1510 Penn Ave.,
Scranton, PA 18509
Phone: 570-961-1549
Fax: 570-961-0335
Office Hours: Mon-Fri
8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

MASS SCHEDULE

CONFESSIONS- Sat.-4pm
8 am Mass ~ Mon.-Sat.
4:30 Mass ~ Sat. (Vigil)
8 am & 10:30 am ~ Sun

St. Clare Church

2235 N. Washington Ave.
Adoration and Rosary
Monday ~ Friday
4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Rosary at 4:30 p.m.

FOOD PANTRY

3:00 p.m. ~ 4:30 p.m.
St. Clare Church Basement

JOIN US FOR MASS

Join us on Facebook at St.
Paul's Parish for our
live-streaming of the
Celebration of Mass.
info@stpaulscranton.org
Facebook ~ Saint Paul's
Parish Scranton

www.stpaulscranton.org

Sacrament of Baptism

All first time parents are
asked to attend
a baptismal preparation
meeting prior
to the Baptism.
Please call the parish
office to schedule dates.

Sacrament of Matrimony

A meeting with the
parish priest should
precede all other
wedding plans. Contact
the parish
office at least six months
before
date of the intended
marriage.

Sacrament of Holy Anointing

All who are seriously
sick, hospitalized,
or having surgery can
receive this sacrament.
Please call the rectory
if you wish to be
anointed.

Sponsor Cards

Sponsor cards for
Baptism or Confirmation
will be issued to
parishioners who attend
Mass regularly;
are Baptized and
Confirmed Catholics;
are married in
conformity with the
laws of the Church.

ST. PAUL MASS INTENTIONS

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

Saturday, December 24 Vigil: Nativity of our Lord

4:00 p.m. † Ralph Longo (Family)

10:00 p.m. † Sirgany & Mille Family (Daughter, Karin)

Sunday, December 25 Nativity of our Lord

9:00 a.m. Maryclaire Jordan (Family)

11:00 a.m. † Paul Dougherty (Renard Family)

Monday, December 26 St. Stephen

8:00 a.m. † Same Cottone (Family)

Tuesday, December 27 Saint John, Apostle

8:00 a.m. † Msgr. John O'Brien (St. Paul Parish)

Wednesday, December 28 The Holy Innocents

8:00 a.m. † Jay Yeager (Family)

Thursday, December 29 5th Day within Octave

8:00 a.m. † Aldona & Edward Pocius (Jim & Kris)

Friday, December 30 Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

8:00 a.m. † Mollie Maloney Conway (Mark & Children)

Saturday, December 31 Vigil: Solemnity of Mary

8:00 a.m. † Leo Jacoby (Family)

4:30 p.m. † Eugene P. Grady (Marge & Family)

Sunday, January 1 Solemnity of Mary

8:00 a.m. † Lindsay Doherty (Family)

10:30a.m. † Daniel Finnerty (The Renard Family)

REMEMBERED AT THE ALTAR:



St. Paul's Sanctuary Candle

In Loving Memory of:

† Robert McAndrew

With Love From:

Family

St. Paul's St. Joseph Candle

In Loving Memory of:

† Jay Yeager

With Love From:

Family

St. Paul's Marian Candle

† Frank & Margaret Rosenella

With Love From:

MaryAnn Answini

St. Paul's Wine and Host

† Eleanor & Gus Mille

With Love From:

Daughter, Karin



We ask for your ongoing prayers for
Deacon John Hanni
of our parish
as he convalesces.



RECENTLY DECEASED

Please pray for the repose of the soul of
Kathleen O'Hara. May her soul and all the
souls of the faithful departed, through the

MEMORIALIZING A LOVED ONE

You may memorialize a loved one by requesting a Mass to be
said or a candle to be lit in their memory.

There are many daily Masses still open as well as
candles each week throughout our 2023 Mass Book.
Please call 570-961-1549 for more information.



An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the
Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things,
And I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I
cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace
you as already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never
permit me to be separated from you. **Amen.**

Food Pantry Hours: Fridays 3-4:30pm Food Pantry Volunteers for Friday December 30

Kris Pocius, Mary Lou Riley, Sally Walsh, Nancy
Wilson, Jody Maloney, Barbara Burkhouse

St. Paul Food Pantry Donations

In Loving Memory of:

† Frank & Alice Fontinell

With Love,

Richard Fontinell

In Loving Memory of:

† Paul Harrington

With Love,

Maribeth & Megan

RECTORY OFFICE CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

The Parish Office will be closed for
Christmas on

Friday December 23rd and re-open
December 27th & 28th from 8:30-12pm

RECTORY NEW YEAR SCHEDULE

The Parish Office will be closed

Thursday December 29th & resume regular office hours
on Monday Jan. 2nd



***Due to early submission deadlines
12/18 & 25 totals will posted in the
following week's bulletin.***

***Every donation counts!!
If you have not yet pledged, please...
Help us reach our Annual Appeal Parish Goal!***

**OUR PARISH IS AT
53% OF OUR \$66,000 goal
Our parish is reimbursed 75% for any gifts made
to the Appeal in excess of our Appeal goal.**

WHAT ARE YOU CARRYING?



Diocese of Scranton DIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL



Start the Oplatki Family Christmas Tradition...

St. Paul Parish has Christmas Wafers located in the church for anyone interested in purchasing them!
(Pick up at St. Paul church or the Parish Rectory 3.00 per package of 4 wafers – 3 white / 1 pink)

What is Oplatki? It is a thin Communion-like rectangular wafer made of unleavened bread and stamped with different Christmas symbols. Some families call it the “bread of Love” and it is widely known in English-speaking countries simply as the Christmas wafer.

Following time-honored tradition, many families will begin their Christmas Eve celebration by waiting for the appearance of the first star in the early evening sky as they look toward the East. This first star appearing symbolizes the Star of Bethlehem, which announced that the Great Light was coming into our world, to the “people who lived in darkness.”

The table at which the family gathers for the Christmas Eve dinner typically has some straw strewn beneath a fine white tablecloth to commemorate the birth of the Christ Child in the manger or cave where the animals lived. A more modern adaptation includes the use of straw or sprigs of evergreen, which are placed on a serving platter and then covered with a fine white napkin on which the wafers rest.

The Christmas Eve meal begins with the eldest member of the family taking an Oplatek wafer, breaking it and sharing it with the family member next to them. Each then shares pieces of the wafer with everyone else present at the table. Some families, particularly of the Slovak tradition, share the Oplatek with honey on it, as a symbol of the sweetness and joy of the occasion. The sharing-ritual is accompanied by embracing and the exchange of good wishes.

The symbolism of sharing the wafer to each person, and then back and forth, symbolizes the giving and the sharing in our lives.

We hope you continue or decide to start this beautiful tradition in your homes with your family this year!

GIFTS THAT DON'T COST A CENT



THE GIFT OF LISTENING
Listen without interrupting.



THE GIFT OF A SMILE
Give a smile to those around you.



THE GIFT OF LOVE
Give a hug, a compliment or a loving detail.



THE GIFT OF GRATITUDE
Say “thank you” to the people in your life.



THE GIFT OF FAVOR
Every day try to do someone a favor.



Notice Regarding Reporting Sexual Abuse of a Minor

It is the policy of the Diocese of Scranton to report any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor to law enforcement. If you are a victim of sexual abuse committed by a priest, deacon, religious or lay employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Scranton, you are encouraged to immediately report the matter to law enforcement. If any priest, deacon, religious, lay employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Scranton has cause or reason to suspect that a minor has been subjected to any form of abuse, including child sexual abuse, the matter will be reported to law enforcement.

It is also the policy of the Diocese to adhere to all civil and state regulations. To this end, the Diocese is equally committed to adhering to the norms of the *Code of Canon Law* and to upholding the tenets of the USCCB *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, which includes supporting victims of sexual abuse in their pursuit of emotional and spiritual well-being. As such, information regarding an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor should also be reported to the Victim Assistance Coordinator, Mary Beth Pacuska at (570) 862-7551.

GOSPEL MEDITATION - ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

December 25, 2022: The Nativity of the Lord

As we age, time seems to pass more quickly. Years seemingly fly by as one holiday flows into the next, January quickly becomes December and life maintains its hectic pace. What do we accomplish in all of that busyness? Perhaps technology is responsible for some of the frenzy, keeping us isolated in our social media worlds, communicating through texts rather than in person, and always connected to world events.

We're over stimulated in many ways by information, noise, opinions, and ideologies.

Yet, we still find the time to decorate our homes, purchase gifts, and plan Christmas gatherings. We know, however, that the true meaning of Christmas is not found in twinkling lights, beautifully adorned trees, perfectly set tables or exchanged gifts. We are being called to something deeper and more authentic.

Christmas reminds us to look for God along the way of our lives and not get distracted by the illusions around us. Our world's complexity can leave us feeling displaced, desperate, alone, neglected, and unimportant. Joseph and Mary felt that way too. In the midst of all that captures and intrigues us in our self-created virtual worlds, is this longing for the anchor of faith to keep us grounded and make sense of it all. Only faith can give us the perspective to see what truly matters in life. We discover our divinely blessed humanity. The uncertain and challenging journey to Bethlehem gives way to the tender moments of birth and its embrace. Christmas softens us and slows us down a bit.

It shows us Jesus as the light who enlightens everyone. It shows us the truth.

The faith that comes from Christmas calms our fears and allows us to go into the nighttime of our lives courageously. We are never lost or alone. We need to stop and savor more of life's moments before they slip away in time. God is with us, loving us, and leading us where we need to be. God is born again and again in every soul willing to give birth to His presence. God connects us and provides us with a place where we feel safe and welcome: home. Merry Christmas! ©LPi

Family Issues? Don't Let It Ruin Your Holidays

Christmas is a time to spend with loved ones and share the joys of the birth of our Savior. However, it can be bittersweet when it reminds us of strained relationships or loss of connection. Christmas is an important time to consider the restoration of the family. We see within our family lines the traces of the rupture of Adam and Eve, such as factions, divisions, loss, and sin. We long for our families to bear the marks of the Holy Family: love, fidelity, joy, truth, safety, belonging, rest, and peace. These longings are beautiful, but how can we make them a reality?

"We know well that every family on occasion suffers moments when one family member offends another. Through our words, actions, or omissions, instead of expressing love for our spouse or children, we can sometimes diminish or demean that love. Hiding these hurts only deepens such wounds, leading to anger and friction between loved ones...Let us ask the Lord for a strong faith to see with his eyes the reality of family life, and for a deep love to approach all families with his merciful heart." - POPE FRANCIS

Though we are with people we *love*, get-togethers can be a struggle for many and may bring up painful reminders of the past. Recent political situations may have posed some added stress in families and friendships. **Family relationships are often some of the most difficult and tender relationships that we have.** It takes work to be Christ-like to our family members, but it is important that we show mercy and sow love within our own families.

The following page is a guide you can use to help enjoy one another despite differences or past difficulties. May the hope, joy and peace of Christmas last throughout the New Year!

"It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you."

- Mother Teresa of Calcutta

10 Ways To Keep the Peace With Family During the Holidays

1. Prepare with Prayer

As with everything in the Christian life, prayer comes first. Make it a priority to pray for your family beginning today. Pray for peace and joy in your home during this season. Pray for yourself. Ask the Holy Spirit to be your guide and to fill you with His gifts so that you can best represent Christ to those you love the most, even when it is difficult to do so. Spend time in front of the Blessed Sacrament as often as you can to help strengthen your spirit.

2. Selfless Acts of Love

When you arrive at your family gathering, commit to serving. Do the jobs that no one else wants to do. Let others go first in the food line. Talk to your great uncle that everyone else ignores. Play some games with the kids so that other adults can relax. There are countless opportunities to serve with the love of Christ. Let your actions be your witness.

3. Don't be a Sensitive Sally

Does this sound harsh? Most of us need to toughen up just a bit. We live in a culture that takes everything personally. Yes, sometimes your relatives might say things that are offensive ("Looks like someone had a lot of ice cream in 2016," "So, when was the last time you went on a date?" "Still can't find a job, huh?").

We have to learn to let these slightly infuriating comments roll off our backs. Check out this post for some tips. These statements often have nothing to do with us and everything to do with the insecurities of the person making them. It's not worth getting upset over. In the words of a famous Disney princess, Let it go. Let it go.

4. Perfect your balancing act

The holidays are often about finding a balance so that you don't become too stressed or overwhelmed in one place. If you're married, this is especially important. You need to spend time with your own family as well as your spouse's family and also find time for your marriage. Creating boundaries and establishing traditions can be very helpful. Just as it can be difficult to be around family, it can be even more difficult to be apart from them and spend time with your in-laws. It is necessary that you don't allow one family to occupy all of your time and that you make the sacrifices necessary to be with your spouse's family. Remember, now that you are married, they are your family too.

5. Take a Hike (or a bubble bath or a coffee break or a...)

In addition to creating time to be with both sides of your family, take time for yourself. What is it that allows you to unwind and clear your mind? Go for a run, read a good book. Whatever it is that gives you a chance to regain composure and start over again, make time to take care of yourself.

6. Leave the political debates for the candidates.

The holidays are not the appropriate time to engage in political or religious debates. Often there are people within our own families whom we strongly disagree with, but if you feel the need to engage in a battle, refrain out of courtesy for everyone else. If you are convicted that the Holy Spirit is prompting you to say something or stand up for your beliefs, invite that relative out for coffee or dinner, and pick a time and place away from the family meal. A simple, "You are probably already aware that I don't agree with that, but let's talk about it another time", can show the other person that you are not going to discuss the subject further.

7. Honor thy Father and Mother

It can be so difficult to come back home to Mom and Dad's. They often fail to realize that you have grown into an adult and might revert to treating you as a child. Though honoring them doesn't mean you have to give in to all their demands, remember that this duty is so central that God gave us a Commandment: love and honor our parents.

This looks different for adults than it does for children, but they do deserve our respect and we are instructed by our Church to care for them as they age. Pray about ways that you can show your parents honor.

8. Look for the good

It can be so easy to focus on the negatives – your grumpy aunt, your annoying little cousin, or your overbearing mom. However, there are things that you love about these people. When you find yourself getting aggravated, play a mental game. Look around the room and think of one positive thing about each person there. Do this as often as necessary. God has put these specific people in your life for a reason. What is He trying to teach you through each one of them?

9. Forgive

Of course, forgive those who have hurt you in the past. You are only hurting yourself when you hold on to grudges and can't let go of things that happened long ago. If you struggle with forgiving someone, seek the counsel and wisdom of a priest. Offer it up in prayer. Remember that you also need to forgive yourself. In stressful times, we often make mistakes. You might say something you don't mean to a family member or act in a way you didn't intend during the holidays. If this happens, seek God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and be refreshed.

10. Be thankful

There are so many people in the world who are spending the holidays alone. Be grateful that you are not one of them. God has blessed you with many gifts, including family, food, and shelter. Offer up your sacrifices for those who lack these basic gifts. Praise God for His goodness.