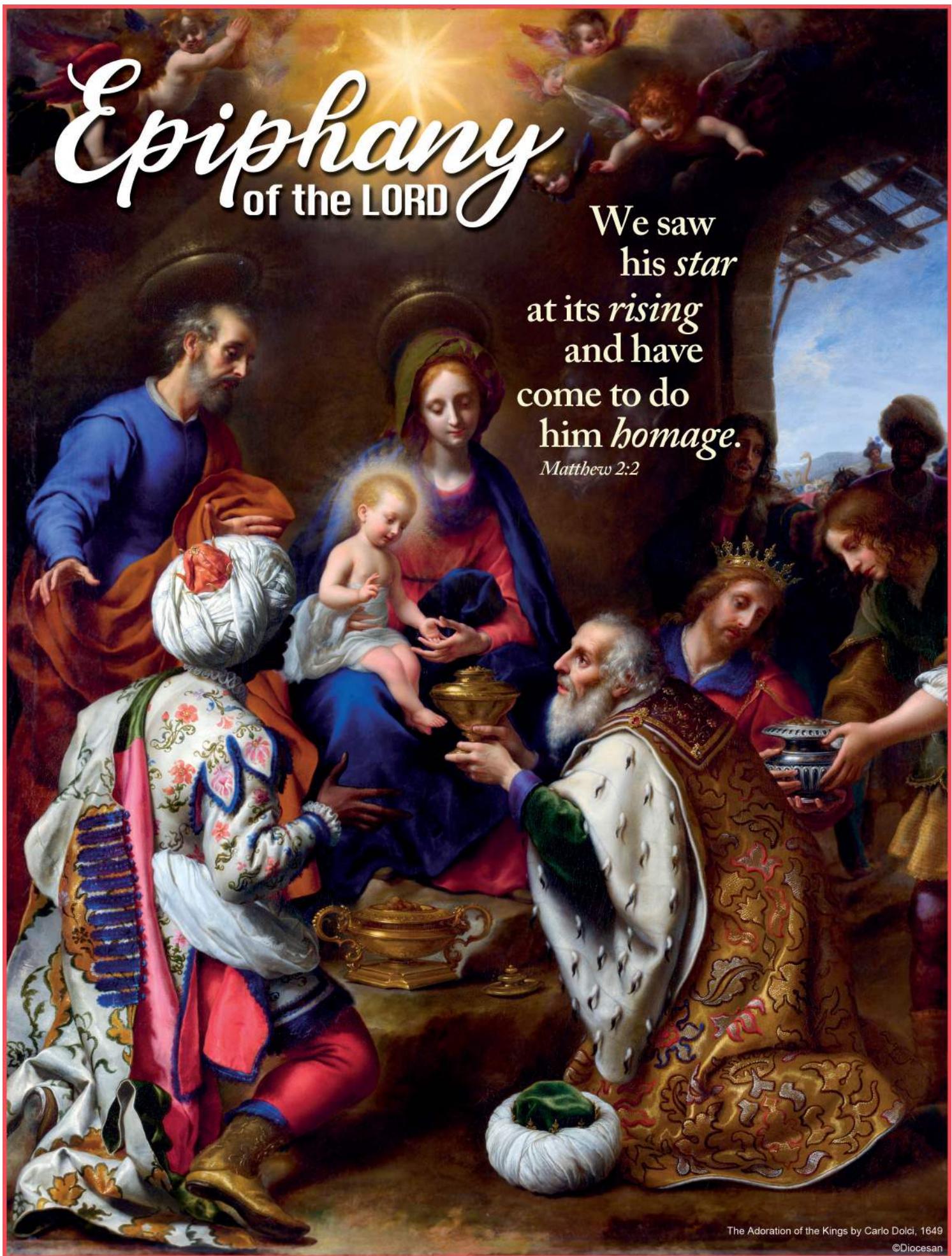


# Epiphany of the LORD

We saw  
his *star*  
at its *rising*  
and have  
come to do  
him *homage.*

*Matthew 2:2*



# THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

January 4, 2026



## WELCOME TO HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH

*Served by the Mercedarian Friars USA (www.orderofmercy.org)*



### PARISH OFFICE, 588 W. Gay Street, Columbus, OH 43215

Open ..... Monday – Thursday: 8:00 am – 3:00 pm

Main No.....614-221-4323 Fax No: 614-221-9818

Web:.....[www.holyfamilycolumbus.org](http://www.holyfamilycolumbus.org)

Email.....[office@holyfamilycolumbus.org](mailto:office@holyfamilycolumbus.org)

Facebook.....Holy Family Catholic Church

Flocknote.....[holyfamilycolumbus@flocknote.com](http://holyfamilycolumbus@flocknote.com)

### PERSONNEL STAFF

Father Michael J. Donovan, O. de M...Pastor

Father Daniel Bowen, O. de M.....Vocation Director

Brother Kevin Cush, O. de M.....Seminarian

Secretary.....Mary Gamble

Maintenance.....Tim Kearns

Music Director / Organist.....Shawn Kenney

OCIA (RCIA) Coordinator.....Linda Hamilton

Religious Education.....Sr. Bozena Tyborowska LSIC

### PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

Altar Servers – *Br. Kevin Cush, O. de M., Director*

Confraternity of Christian Mothers – *Rita Martinez, President*

Diocesan Center for the Guard of Honor

of the Sacred Heart of Jesus – *Rebecca Rector, Zelatrix*

Eucharistic Adoration – *Sarah Hill, Coordinator*

Holy Family Young Adults – *Bear Bates, Coordinator*

Hospitality – *Kathy McKinniss & Linda Hamilton, Coordinators*

Knights of Columbus – *Br. Kevin Cush, O. de M., Grand Knight*

Liturgical Ministry – *Linda Hamilton, Coordinator*

Mercedarian Lay Third Order – *Fr. Michael J. Donovan, O. de M., Spiritual Director*

Respect Life – *Aurelio & Rosalinda Morales, Coordinators*

Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary – *Sr. Bozena Tyborowska, Dir.*

### SOUP KITCHEN – (backyard of Parish Center building)

Donations...Monday – Friday

8:00am – 12noon, preferred (back of building)

12noon – 3:00pm, optional (please call in advance)

Main No.....614-221-4323

Web.....[www.hfsk.org](http://www.hfsk.org)

Email.....Dennis Shope, Director

[soupkitchen@holyfamilycolumbus.org](mailto:soupkitchen@holyfamilycolumbus.org)

[maintenance@holyfamilycolumbus.org](mailto:maintenance@holyfamilycolumbus.org)

### BAPTISM

Call the Parish office to schedule a Baptism. Children over the age of 6 will require some special instruction.

### MARRIAGE

Please call the Parish Office at least six months before the wedding. Diocesan Pre-Cana and Natural Family Planning classes are required and six meetings with the priest.

### THE SACRAMENT OF THE SICK

Call the Parish Office during general office hours. Otherwise, call Parish Office and select "Sacramental Emergency" option.

### RECEPTION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Those who desire Holy Communion at home should call the Parish Office.

### MASS SCHEDULE

Weekdays: 12:15pm

Saturday: 9:00 a.m.

Sunday: 9:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m. 5:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.

### Convent of St. Birgitta – 40 N. Grubb St., Columbus

Weekly: 7:00 a.m. Mon., Tues., Thurs. Friday

4:00 p.m. Wednesday

*(Each day is open to the public)*

### THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Weekdays: 11:30 a.m. – 12 Noon

Sunday: 8:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 4:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

### EUCARISTIC ADORATION SCHEDULE

#### Holy Family Church

Weekly: 1:00 p.m. Thursday – 12 Noon Friday

First Friday Adoration in Reparation to the Sacred Heart – 8:00 p.m. – 8:45 a.m. First Saturday

Please contact Sarah Hill at **740-418-0517** or [thehills1936@gmail.com](mailto:thehills1936@gmail.com) if you have interest in being scheduled weekly or monthly in either location

#### Convent of St. Birgitta (CSB)

40 N. Grubb St., Columbus

Weekly: 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. Tuesday

8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Mass Wednesday

4:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. following 4pm Mass

9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. Friday

### MOST HOLY ROSARY

Weekdays: 11:30 am (*Tuesday is Respect Life Rosary*)

Chaplet of Divine Mercy follows Rosary

Saturday: 8:30 a.m. before 9:00 a.m. Marian Mass

8:15 a.m. before 9:00 a.m. First Saturday Mass

Sunday: 8:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. & 4:30 p.m. (before Mass)

Please contact the Parish Office if you wish to be scheduled to lead before 9am Saturday or 9am; 5pm Sunday Mass.

### REGULAR DEVOTIONS



Each Tuesday following the 12:15 p.m. Mass there are Devotions to **St. Anthony of Padua**.



Each Saturday Novena Prayers to **Our Lady of Mercy** following 9:00 a.m. Mass.



On First Wednesday of each month a 7:00 p.m. Mass is offered in honor of **Good Saint Joseph**.



On First Friday of each month following the 12:15 & 7:00 p.m. Masses there is **Act of Consecration of the Human Race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus**.

# THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

January 4, 2026

## MASS INTENTIONS JANUARY 4-11, 2026

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Sun Jan 4</b>   | <b>THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD</b>   |
| 9:00 AM *          | Repose of the Soul of Robert Wanner<br>by Bob & Natalie Wanner                      |
| 11:00 AM *         | The Unborn Children and All Priests and<br>Religious, by Knights of Columbus #13428 |
| 5:00 PM *          | Shawn Kenney  |
| 8:00 PM            | People of the Parish  |
| <b>Mon Jan 5</b>   | <b>Saint John Neumann, Bishop</b>   |
| 7:00 AM            | CSB—Repose of the Soul of Jorge Toyohama  |
| 12:15 PM           | Pam Spinneweber, by Sr. Miriam Joseph, SSCJ   |
| <b>Tues Jan 6</b>  | <b>Christmas Weekday</b>  |
|                    | <b>Saint Andre' Bessette, Religious</b>   |
| 7:00 AM            | CSB—All Souls in Purgatory<br>by Yvette Reategui                                    |
| 12:15 PM           | The White Family  |
| <b>Wed Jan 7</b>   | <b>Christmas Weekday</b>  |
|                    | <b>Saint Raymond of Peñafort, Priest</b>  |
| 12:15 PM           | Susan Morris and Living Family Members  |
|                    | <b>Good Saint Joseph Mass</b>   |
| 7:00 PM            | Repose of the Soul of Dominic Linh Nguyen<br>by The Nguyen Family                   |
| <b>Thurs Jan 8</b> | <b>Christmas Weekday</b>  |
| 7:00 AM            | CSB—Vicki Gamble, by Family   |
| 12:15 PM           | Repose of the Soul of Ardie Schirtzinger  |
| <b>Fri Jan 9</b>   | <b>Christmas Weekday</b>  |
| 7:00 AM            | CSB—The Bridgettine Sisters<br>by Deanna Gordon                                     |
| 12:15 PM           | Repose of the Soul of Anita Hamilton<br>by Kathy McKinniss                          |
| <b>Sat Jan 10</b>  | <b>Christmas Weekday</b>  |
| 9:00 AM            | Repose of the Soul of George Allen Patterson<br>by Jennie Gallastegui               |
| <b>Sun Jan 11</b>  | <b>THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD</b>  |
| 9:00 AM *          | People of the Parish  |
| 11:00 AM *         | Deceased Members of Holy Family Alumni  |
| 5:00 PM *          | Special Intention for Charles Rieper<br>by Chris Ruder                              |
| 8:00 PM            | Repose of the Soul of Carol Lee Messerle<br>by Kathy McKinniss                      |

\* Incense will be used at this Mass.

**Correction is made this issue for 5:00 & 8:00 PM Mass Intentions on Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup> that were posted incorrectly in the December 28, 2025 bulletin issue.**

## HOMEBOUND AND/OR ILL IN NEED OF PRAYERS

|                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Debbie Newell      | Debbie Newell      |
| Theresa Piatt      | Theresa Piatt      |
| Maura Renouf       | Maura Renouf       |
| Bob & Jane Sowers  | Bob & Jane Sowers  |
| Michelle Stewart   | Michelle Stewart   |
| Josh Stroud        | Josh Stroud        |
| Celeste Trautman   | Celeste Trautman   |
| Bill Warren        | Bill Warren        |
| Mary Ann Wirsching | Mary Ann Wirsching |

## 2026 Are you officially registered as a Holy Family member?

Some people think if they consistently attend Holy Mass at our Church giving generous donations will automatically make them a member. But sacrament and contact information is most needed to save time and confusion.

Please contact or stop by our Parish Office. A registration form can easily be mailed or emailed to you. **You are what makes our Church shine!** Help Holy Family to shine brightly by becoming a part of us, *completely*.

## LECTOR SCHEDULE



|          |                     |
|----------|---------------------|
| 9:00 am  | Austin Hill         |
| 11:00 am | Knights of Columbus |
| 5:00 pm  | Rebecca Rector      |
| 9:00 am  | Mary Gamble         |
| 11:00 am | Brett Ballantyne    |
| 5:00 pm  | Tom Martello        |

## SERMON ON THE AMOUNT

*Giving for December 15 to December 21, 2025*

### Offertory

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| <i>Collection</i>                       | \$ 4,956        |
| <i>On-Line</i>                          | 2,638           |
| <i>Mail</i>                             | + 3,480         |
| <i>Total</i>                            | \$11,074        |
| <i>Less: Assessment (10%)</i>           | - 1,107         |
| <i>Net</i>                              | \$ 9,967        |
| <i>Soup Kitchen</i>                     | \$26,254        |
| <b>Total Capital Campaign Donations</b> | <b>\$76,760</b> |
| <b>Donations Toward Match</b>           | <b>\$15,582</b> |
| <i>The Appeal Pledges</i>               | \$62,620        |
| <i>The Appeal Goal</i>                  | \$82,347        |

**God Reward your Generosity**

## Matching Gift to the Capital Improvement Campaign

We are pleased to announce that a parishioner has generously pledged up to \$40,000 in matching contributions for all donations received between December 1 and January 15. All matched funds will be allocated exclusively to the building fund designed for repairs. Let's do our best to be able to receive the entire pledge!

Remember, you can give multiple ways to the campaign:

**On-line Giving** – You may use our on-line giving system, Pushpay, to contribute to the campaign either on a one-time or a recurring gift. Your gift can be charged to a credit card, or can be taken directly from your checking or savings account. To access the on-line giving system, you may use the QR code at the bottom of this letter, or go to our website at [holyfamilycolumbus.org](http://holyfamilycolumbus.org) and click on Parish Life, then Giving, then the On-line Giving button. This will take you to Pushpay: select how you want to give; the Frequency; when to start; and under Fund, select Capital Improvement Needs.

**Check** – You may give by writing a check to Holy Family Church and dropping it in the offertory basket, or mail it to the office. In the memo field, please note Capital Improvement Needs.

**Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)** – For those who are required to take a Required Minimum Distribution from their IRA, you have the ability to send that RMD to a charitable organization and the distribution will be non-taxable. To do this, please talk to your financial advisor or investment company and direct them to send your contribution directly to Holy Family Church with a designation that the donation go to the Capital Improvement Needs Campaign.

**Donor Advised Funds** – Some of our families contribute to our parish through their Donor Advised Fund, often held at the Catholic Foundation. To donate to our Campaign through this method, please contact the Catholic Foundation directly.

**Steeple Fund** – Several years ago, the Parish began collecting funds for the replacement of the church steeple. Fr Michael and Parish leadership has determined that this project is not a need for the parish. Therefore, we would like to redesignate these funds to repairing the church roof. We would like to make this redesignation in January 2026. If you contributed to the Steeple Fund and object to this redesignation, please contact Bill Davis, Accountant, at [accountant@holyfamilycolumbus.org](mailto:accountant@holyfamilycolumbus.org) to arrange for time to discuss your gift and objection.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and generosity.



# THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

January 4, 2026



## HOLY FAMILY KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS #13428

We continue to collect aluminum cans for the Seminarians. All proceeds will go to these young men of Christ. Please drop the cans off at the Parish Center.

### Upcoming Events

**Sunday, January 4, 2026**—Knights of Columbus Corporate Mass at the 11am Mass.

**Sunday, January 11, 2026**—Knights of Columbus monthly Council meeting in the Church Undercroft after the 11am Mass.

If you are interested in becoming a Knight of Columbus, please contact **Jack Gookin** at **(614) 309-2519**.



## HOLY FAMILY RESPECT LIFE MINISTRY

**There is no meeting Monday, January 5<sup>th</sup>;** our next meeting will be **February 2, 2026 at 7pm** in the Parish Center.

The Respect Life Ministry prays that God grants you a blessed New Year.

## HIS INCREDIBLE SENIORS EXERCISE PROGRAM

Our upcoming class is scheduled 1:30—2:30pm Tuesday, January 13 in the Parish Center. The next class is same time and location on Wednesday, January 14.

Start the new year out right and come check us out! Lose weight and gain some friends!

## HOLY FAMILY YOUNG ADULTS MINISTRY

**HFYA (18—35)** meets weekly, with a rotation of activities including prayer/spirituality, talk, adoration, and social nights. **Use this QR Code to connect with this group.**



Join us for coffee, donuts and fellowship the first Sunday of every month after the 9 AM and 11 AM Masses in the undercroft. The Hospitality Committee also provides tea, hot chocolate, water, orange juice and lemonade. Take a few minutes to grab some refreshments and enjoy a conversation with other parishioners before the drive home.



*Thank you to the Rudolph Family who provides gluten-free donuts each month.*



## CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN MOTHERS

*& LADIES GUILD*

Serving the Women of Holy Family Since 1887

Our prayers go out to the family of Mary Karabinos, who passed Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. Mary was loved by many and was a devoted member of our Confraternity and many other Holy Family groups and parishes throughout the diocese. We await the word regarding final arrangements. Her Mass will be scheduled after Christmas at St. Leo's as she was devoted to the Latin Mass. If you were unable to join us last Sunday in our prayer for deceased Christian Mothers, please take a moment to offer additional prayers for her and her family and friends.

### Prayer for Deceased Christian Mother

Mother of Sorrows and Patroness of all Christian Mothers, you know that a member of our Confraternity, Mary Karabinos, has died. We beg you Dear Mary, to intercede with your Son, Jesus Christ, for this friend of ours. May her time of suffering in purgatory, if any, be very limited. She prayed and worked with us while here on earth. May she be rewarded for the sacrifices she made. Strengthen her family and friends in their sorrow. Inspire us at the sight of death to improve our own way of living so that all of us maybe worthy to be reunited in heaven for all eternity.

Eternal rest grant her, O Lord, and let the perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. Amen.

We look forward to celebrating Christmas as a group in the undercroft on **January 10** this year at 6:00 pm with a Pot luck. Please **RSVP** to **holyfamilyccm@gmail.com** and include your food item so we can coordinate. Gift exchange is voluntary. Please limit cost to no more than \$20.

The 2026 calendar will be issued soon. Wishing everyone a continued blessed Christmas Season and a safe, faith-filled New Year.

### Holy Family Confraternity of Christian Mothers Officers

Rita Martinez, President / Sondra Wright, Vice-President  
Anita Van Order, Treasurer / Kendy Troiano, Secretary  
Father Michael J. Donovan, O. de M. Director

**OCIA class sessions resume on January 6.**

Have a safe and Blessed New Year!

## THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

January 4, 2026

### Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children

To commemorate the **Day of Prayer** for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children on **Thursday, January 22, 2026**, the Catholic Conference of Ohio (CCO) is hosting Adoration at the Ohio Statehouse from **10am—2pm**. This provides an opportunity for those unable to make it to D.C. for the March for Life to unite in prayer locally.

**Please help spread the news about this event!**

**Support Our Pontifical College Josephinum Seminarians by “voting” for your favorite Clergy Chef at the FOJ event: Clergy Who Cook!**

On **Friday, January 30, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.** at the Pontifical College Josephinum, Clergy from around the diocese are stepping into the kitchen for the Clergy Who Cook competition—a fun and delicious way to support the seminarians of the PCJ! Sponsored by the Friends of the Josephinum, Clergy Who Cook is a friendly competition where clergy showcase their culinary skills. You “vote” for your favorite dishes and chefs by donating dollars—each dollar equals one vote! Every penny raised directly supports seminarians’ education, housing, and formation. Vote early and often! You can help by (1) Vote for our Clergy Chefs: Visit [www.pcj.edu/clergywhocook/](http://www.pcj.edu/clergywhocook/) to see who’s competing and to donate and cast your votes and by (2) Join the Friends of the Josephinum: This group hosts events like Clergy Who Cook, supporting seminarians with scholarships, medical care, and more. For questions, contact **Katy Wyatt** at [kwyatt@olp-parish.org](mailto:kwyatt@olp-parish.org).

### Columbus Young Catholic Professionals Event: Fourth Annual Gala

Columbus Young Catholic Professionals is having their Fourth Annual Gala on **Saturday, January 31, 2026 from 6:00 p.m.—10:30 p.m.** at St. Catherine Church located at 500 S. Gould Rd Columbus OH 43209. All young adults in their 20s and 30s are invited. Come enjoy a fun night out, cocktails, dinner, dancing, poker, blackjack and more. This year’s theme is “Casino Royale.” Formal attire. If you’re not a member of YCP, join today at <https://www.youngcatholicprofessionals.org/join-belong>. YCP is our nation’s largest young professional network. For questions, contact **Naomi Delguidice** at [naomi.delguidice@ycpcolumbus.org](mailto:naomi.delguidice@ycpcolumbus.org).

### Job Listing for Buckeye Catholic

Buckeye Catholic is hiring a full-time Marketing & Communications Coordinator. At Buckeye Catholic, our vision is to evangelize the campus of The Ohio State University and form the next generation of Catholic leaders for the world. We are now searching for an innovative new team member to help us amplify our voice and expand our impact on the rising generation!

If you or someone you know is interested, please apply at: Catholic Diocese of Columbus.

### A Gift for Your Spouse

Give the gift of a **Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend** providing you and your spouse the tools for a stronger and more loving marriage! “But some seed fell on rich soil and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold.” Help your marriage be like the rich soil and attend an upcoming Worldwide Marriage Encounter Experience on **February 6—8, 2026**. Get away from jobs, kids, chores, and phones and focus only on each other. Location: Procter Camp and Conference Center—London, OH. Other weekend dates are available on our website. Apply at [WWME.org](http://WWME.org) or scan QR code. Early registration is recommended.



### We Love because He First Loved Us—February 7, 9am to 4pm at St. Simon the Apostle

825 Pontius Rd Cincinnati OH 45233

First Saturday Mass and talk by Fr. David Endres, academic dean, professor of church history and historical theology at Mt. St. Mary’s Seminary, in Cincinnati, Ohio, and author.

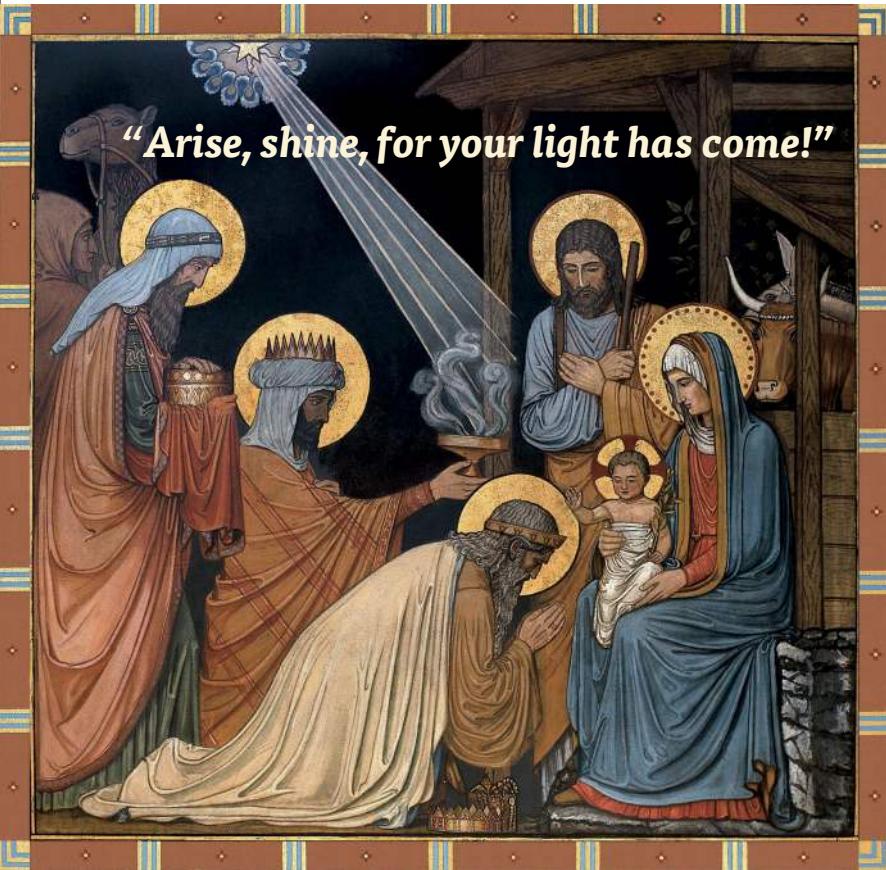
Our Retreats are in person and live streamed. Phone: (937) 587-5464 or (513) 373-2397

Register: Online at our website [www.presentationministries.com](http://www.presentationministries.com) or Email: [bpojesu2000@gmail.com](mailto:bpojesu2000@gmail.com)

Cost: A donation—**Pray and “do whatever He tells you”**

# THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

January 4, 2026



Isaiah and Matthew spoke about the same reality and proposing reactions from people who heard of it. Ignatius of Loyola would explain that when good people hear the Gospel, the “good spirit” gives them peace and consolation; the “evil spirit” causes the same news to bring dreadful consternation to those whose purposes run counter to God’s designs.

First, let’s look at the evil side. According to Matthew’s narrative, the news of a newborn king so disturbed King Herod that he ordered a massacre of all boy children born around the time of the Magi’s travels. This story is probably less factual than symbolic: It creates a parallel between Jesus and Moses who was saved from Pharaoh’s slaughter of the Hebrews (Exodus 1:15-2). Yet even if Herod didn’t order the massacre, he was cruel enough to order the death of his own sons, whom he saw as rivals.

Typical of Jesus’ enemies, Herod couldn’t tolerate the danger Jesus posed to the evil powers that propped him up. To Herod, as to the pharaoh, the good news posed a lethal threat.

## The Epiphany of the Lord

Now to the good spirits. Isaiah proclaims that the very glory of God will shine on and through the people. The darkness they experienced stood in stark contrast to what Good was working among them. Isaiah teaches that knowing God’s glory causes people’s hearts to throb and overflow such that their very faces reflect divine glory. According to Isaiah, knowing God’s glory makes people so attractive that the whole world will be drawn to them.

In Matthew’s narrative, the Magi symbolize all people who seek the glory of God and who, when they see signs of it, are willing to journey beyond their own horizons, seeking God’s yet—unknown grace and wonders. Paul, in his own way, reflects the Magi’s spirit through his life—changing discovery of the mystery of Christ’s love. In contrast to the murdering of Herod, when Paul encountered Christ, he became the apostle who proclaimed the good news to the Gentiles, insisting that Christ came for all Earth’s people.

Matthew’s Gospel invites us all to contemplate the reality of Emmanuel, God with us here and now. We are setting off into a year of paying particular attention to recognizing Emmanuel; in our midst.

The feast of the Epiphany reminds us that the good news is for everyone of every age. Its proclamation can bring great joy or cause terrible consternation. Depending on what each person or society values.

The feast of the Epiphany invites us to enter deeply into these readings. With Isaiah, we can meditate on what truly makes our hearts throb and grow.

If we are adventurous enough, we might ask the Magi what would draw them forth today. What is happening that would echo in their hearts? Who would they invite to journey with them seeking God’s newness? The Magi would then ask us, “What do you long for so much that you would search heaven and earth to find it?

Epiphany urges us to decide what will orient us in this coming year and to set off toward it with the bold and adventurous hope that can only spring from faith—a wonderful way to begin a year of concentration on the Gospel of Matthew.

# Lectio Divina

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## SCRIPTURE READING + MEDITATION + PRAYER + CONTEMPLATION

“What page, what passage of the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments is not the truest of guides for human life?” +Saint Benedict, from the Rule of Saint Benedict (73:3)

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*The month of January is dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus*

**“When you invoke Saint Joseph, you don’t have to say much. Tell him, ‘if you were in my place, Saint Joseph, what would you do? Well, pray for this on my behalf.’”**

+SAINT ANDRE BESSETTE

### Monday, January 5 ~ Twelfth Day of the Christmas Season

#### Saint John Neumann, Bishop

**Holy Gospel: Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25** When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled:

Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen.

From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.” He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people. His fame spread to all of Syria, and they brought to him all who were sick with various diseases and racked with pain, those who were possessed, lunatics, and paralytics, and he cured them. And great crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan followed him.

**Meditation:** Notice that in announcing the good news, Jesus made two simple demands: (1) repent, and (2) believe! Repentance requires a life-change and a transformation of heart and mind. The Holy Spirit gives us a repentant heart, a true sorrow and hatred for sin and its consequences, and a firm resolution to avoid it in the future. The Holy Spirit gives us grace to see our sin for what it is – rebellion and a rejection of the love of God. God’s grace helps us to turn away from all that would keep us from his love. Faith or belief is an entirely free gift which God makes to us. Believing is only possible by grace and the help of the Holy Spirit who moves the heart and converts it to God. The Holy Spirit opens the eyes of the mind and makes it easy for us to accept and believe the truth. To believe is to take Jesus at his word, to believe that God loved us so much that he sent his only begotten Son to redeem us from the slavery of sin and death.

**Prayer:** O God, who called the Bishop Saint John Neumann, renowned for his charity and pastoral service, to shepherd your people in America, grant by his intercession that, as we foster the Christian education of youth and are strengthened by the witness of brotherly love, we may constantly increase the family of your Church. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** Do you know the joy and freedom of the gospel? John the Baptist’s enemies had sought to silence him, but the gospel cannot be silenced. As soon as John had finished his testimony Jesus began his in Galilee. Galilee was at the crossroads of the world and much traffic passed through this little region. It had been assigned to the tribes of Asher, Naphtali and Zebulun when the Israelites first came into the land (see Joshua 9). For a long time it had been under Gentile occupation. Isaiah foretold (see Isaiah 9) that the good news of salvation would be proclaimed in this land and reach to the Gentiles. Jesus begins the proclamation of the gospel here to fulfill the word of God. The Old Testament prophets spoke of God’s promise to send a Redeemer who would establish God’s rule. That time is now fulfilled in Jesus.

### Tuesday, January 6 ~ Thirteenth Day of the Christmas Season

#### Optional Memorial: Saint André Bessett, Religious

**Holy Gospel: Mark 6:34-44** When Jesus saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. By now it was already



late and his disciples approached him and said, "This is a deserted place and it is already very late. Dismiss them so that they can go to the surrounding farms and villages and buy themselves something to eat." He said to them in reply, "Give them some food yourselves." But they said to him, "Are we to buy two hundred days' wages worth of food and give it to them to eat?" He asked them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they had found out they said, "Five loaves and two fish." So he gave orders to have them sit down in groups on the green grass. The people took their places in rows by hundreds and by fifties. Then, taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; he also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied. And they picked up twelve wicker baskets full of fragments and what was left of the fish. Those who ate of the loaves were five thousand men.

**Meditation:** Many ask what the significance of this miracle conveys to us? The miraculous feeding of such a great multitude pointed to God's provision of manna in the wilderness for the people of Israel under Moses' leadership. This food foreshadowed the true heavenly bread which Jesus would offer his followers. The sign of the multiplication of the loaves when the Lord says the blessing, breaks and distributes through his disciples prefigures the superabundance of the unique bread of his Eucharist or Lord's Supper. Jesus makes a claim only God can make: He is the true bread of heaven that can satisfy the deepest hunger we experience. The feeding of the five thousand shows the remarkable generosity of God and his great kindness towards us. In the multiplication of the loaves and fishes we see a sign and a symbol of what God always does. When God gives, he gives abundantly. He gives more than we need for ourselves that we may have something to share with others, especially those who lack what they need. God takes the little we have and multiplies it for the good of others.

**Prayer:** Lord our God, friend of the lowly, who gave your servant, Saint André Bessette, a great devotion to Saint Joseph and a special commitment to the poor and afflicted, help us through his intercession to follow his example of prayer and love and so come to share with him in your glory. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** Despite what we may think, no matter what we may purchase, the trappings and allurements of this earthly world will not bring us true and lasting happiness, for nothing can satisfy the deepest longing and desire of the heart, except God alone. Do you believe that is true? Of all the miracles Jesus did, this is the only one which is repeated in all four gospels. A great multitude had gathered to hear Jesus, no doubt because they were hungry for the word of life. Jesus' disciples wanted to send them away at the end of the day because they did not have the resources to feed them. They even complained how much money it would take to feed such a crowd – at least six month's wages! Jesus took the little they had – five loaves and two fish – and giving thanks to his heavenly Father, distributed to all until they were satisfied of their hunger. In the end, they took up what was left over – twelve baskets full so that nothing would be wasted.

## **Wednesday, January 7 ~ Fourteenth Day of the Christmas Season**

**Optional Memorial: Saint Raymond of Peñafort, Priest**

**Holy Gospel: Mark 6:45-52** After the five thousand had eaten and were satisfied, Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and precede him to the other side toward Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. And when he had taken leave of them, he went off to the mountain to pray. When it was evening, the boat was far out on the sea and he was alone on shore. Then he saw that they were tossed about while rowing, for the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them. But when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out. They had all seen him and were terrified. But at once he spoke with them, "Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid!" He got into the boat with them and the wind died down. They were completely astounded. They had not understood the incident of the loaves. On the contrary, their hearts were hardened.

**Meditation:** Does the Lord ever seem distant to you? After the great miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, Jesus sends his disciples away to fend for themselves in the dark of the night while a storm begins to brew on the sea. Although they were experienced fishermen, they were fearful for their lives. The Lord's sudden presence on the sea only made them more fearful! Mark says they were terrified (verse 50), not only because the sea was threatening to drown them. When they saw Jesus walking on the water, they thought he was a ghost waiting for their imminent destruction. Jesus had to calm them with his reassuring voice: "Take heart, it is I; have no fear." Jesus gave them the courage to cast their anxiety and fear on him who is Lord of the seas as well as their lives. Scripture reminds us that no fear can

overtake us if we put our trust in God's love and care for us. John the Evangelist tells us that God's love abides in us and perfect love casts out fear. (1 John 4:16,18).

**Prayer:** O God, who adorned the Priest Saint Raymond with the virtue of outstanding mercy and compassion for sinners and for captives, grant us, through his intercession, that, released from slavery to sin, we may carry out in freedom of spirit what is pleasing to you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** Do you ever find yourself thinking how much we are like the apostles – especially when we experience trials and adversity? While the Lord may at times seem distant to us, he, nonetheless is constantly present at our side. The scriptures remind us that the Lord is "a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). Whatever storms make beset us, he promises to "bring us to our desired haven" (Psalm 107:29-30). The Lord keeps watch over us at all times, and especially in our moments of temptation and difficulty. Do you rely on the Lord for his strength and help? Jesus assures us that we have no need of fear if we trust in Him and in his great love for us. When calamities and trials threaten to overwhelm you, how do you respond? With fear and panic, or with faith and trust in God's love and presence with you?

### **Thursday, January 8 ~ Fifteenth Day of the Christmas Season**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 4:14-22** Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all.

He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.*

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth.

**Meditation:** In and through Jesus Christ we see the grace of God in action. His gracious words brought hope, joy, and favor to those who were ready to receive him. Where did Jesus begin his public ministry? In his own land of Galilee where he was reared from his youth in Nazareth. His proclamation of the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah brought wonder to his kin and townsfolk. Isaiah had prophesied that the Messiah would come in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring freedom to those oppressed by sin and evil (see Isaiah 61:1-2). Jesus awakened their hope in the promises of God. They, in turn, received his words favorably and wondered what would become of "Joseph's son". Their hearts were hungry for the word of life and they looked to Jesus with anticipation and wonder. Do you look to Jesus with confidence and hope in the fulfillment of all God's promises?

**Prayer:** O God, who by; the Nativity of your Only Begotten Son wondrously began for your people the work of redemption, grant, we pray, to your servants such firmness of faith, that by his guidance they may attain the glorious prize you have promised. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** What did Jesus come to do for us? He came to set us free from the worst tyranny possible – slavery to sin and the fear of death, and the eternal destruction of both body and soul. God's power alone can save us from emptiness and poverty of spirit, from confusion and error, and from hopelessness and the fear of annihilation. The gospel of salvation is "good news" for us today. Do you know the joy and freedom of the gospel?

### **Friday, January 9 ~ Sixteenth Day of the Christmas Season**

**Holy Gospel: Luke 5:12-16** It happened that there was a man full of leprosy in one of the towns where Jesus was; and when he saw Jesus, he fell prostrate, pleaded with him, and said, "Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean." Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, "I do will it. Be made clean." And the leprosy left him immediately. Then he ordered him not to tell anyone, but "Go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them." The report about him spread all the more, and great crowds assembled to listen to him and to be cured of their ailments, but he would withdraw to deserted places to pray.

**Meditation:** In today's gospel the leper who met Jesus did something quite remarkable. He approached Jesus confidently and humbly, expecting that Jesus could and would heal him. Normally a leper would be stoned or at least warded off if he tried to come near a rabbi. Jesus not only grants the man his request,

but he demonstrates the personal love, compassion, and tenderness of God in his physical touch. The medical knowledge of his day would have regarded such contact as grave risk for incurring infection. Jesus met the man's misery with compassion and tender kindness. He communicated the love and mercy of God in a sign that spoke more eloquently than words. He touched the man and made him clean – not only physically but spiritually as well. The Holy Spirit inflames our hearts with the love of Christ that we may reach out to others with compassionate care, especially to those who have been rejected and mistreated. The love of God impels us to do as Jesus did – to love the unlovable, to touch the untouchable, and to forgive the unforgivable. Do you allow the Holy Spirit to fill your heart with the love and compassion of Christ for others? If not, what is holding you back?

**Prayer:** Cast your kindly light upon your faithful, Lord, we pray, and with the splendor of your glory set their hearts ever aflame, that they may never cease to acknowledge their Savior and may truly hold fast to him. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** Jesus did the unthinkable by physically touching the untouchable. Jewish law forbade anyone from touching or approaching a leper, lest ritual defilement occur. Are there people in your life that you might treat as a leper? They may not have leprosy, but the way you sun them, the way you look upon them, the way you treat them, the way you avoid them, perhaps they might as well have leprosy. When someone who is begging for food, or for your pocket changes approaches you for help, do you pretend not to see them? People created in the same image and likeness of God just like you? Think about it...then do something about it the next time someone needs a helping hand, a kind word, and to know that the love of Christ – the love in your heart – is pouring forth to help them.

## Saturday, January 10 ~ Seventeenth Day of the Christmas Season

**Holy Gospel: John 3:22-30** Jesus and his disciples went into the region of Judea, where he spent some time with them baptizing. John was also baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was an abundance of water there, and people came to be baptized, for John had not yet been imprisoned. Now a dispute arose between the disciples of John and a Jew about ceremonial washings. So they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing and everyone is coming to him." John answered and said, "No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said that I am not the Christ, but that I was sent before him. The one who has the bride is the bridegroom; the best man, who stands and listens for him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made complete. He must increase; I must decrease."

**Meditation:** When the friends of John the Baptist complain that all are now going to Jesus, John in his characteristic humility exclaimed that he was not the Messiah but only the messenger sent to prepare his way. John describes the Messiah as the Bridegroom and himself as the friend of the Bridegroom. The image of marriage and the wedding feast is used throughout the scriptures to describe God's joy in his people, who are regarded as his bride. As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you (ref. Isaiah 62:5).

**Prayer:** Almighty ever-living God, who were pleased to shine forth with new light through the coming of your Only Begotten Son, grant, we pray, that, just as he was pleased to share our bodily form through the childbearing of the Virgin Mary, so we, too, may one day merit to become companions in his kingdom of grace. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Contemplation:** John acted as the best man in arranging the marriage and in making preparations for the marriage feast. John and his disciples rejoice that the Bridegroom has come to make his bride, the church, ready for the marriage feast. We see this fulfilled in the New Jerusalem in the marriage feast of the Lamb and his Bride (ref. Revelations 21-22). Do you look with joyful anticipation to the consummation of God's plan for his people at the end of the ages? Something to pray for, to plan for, and to look for!

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