

St. Thomas More Catholic Church
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Parishioner

Volume 2, Issue 1

Advent/Christmas
 2015

**Advent
 Reconciliation
 Times:**

Thursday, Dec. 10th

8:30 am School Reconciliation

Tuesday, Dec. 15th

7:00 pm Parish Reconciliation

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The Season of Advent

Advent began sometime after the 4th century as a time of preparation for Epiphany and not in anticipation of Christmas. Epiphany celebrates the manifestation of Christ by remembering the visit of the Magi and the baptism of Jesus. At this time new Christians were baptized and received into the faith, and so the early church instituted a 40-day period of fasting and penance, historically known as "little Lent".

Later, in the 6th century, Pope St. Gregory the Great was the first to associate this season of Advent with the coming of Christ. Originally it

was not the coming of the Christ-child that was anticipated, but rather, the second coming of Christ.



By the Middle Ages the church has extended the celebration of Advent to the familiar format we know today. The early weeks are rich with the prophecies of Isaiah, reminding us to wait and

prepare for the coming Messiah. Later, the pace quickens and we focus more directly on the events leading up to Jesus' birth.

The final days of Advent, from December 17 to December 24, focus particularly on our preparation of the celebrations of the Nativity of our Lord.

Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and therefore varies in length between 22 and 28 days. This year it is 26 days long.

Taken from: AllSaints-Press.com; Catholicism.com; usccb.org

Prepare the Way of the Lord

All St. Thomas More families with children in grades preschool through 5th grade including Religious Education students are invited to attend a special evening to make us ready for Advent. There will be a prayer, song, and activities. Become a part of the "Living Advent Story". This event takes place

on December 1st from 5:30 to 7:30 pm in the social hall. Supper will be available for \$2 per person at 5:30 pm. The program begins at 6:00 pm.

The Advent Wreath

The Best-known of all Advent symbols is the Advent Wreath, a custom that originated among German Lutherans but was soon adopted by Catholics.

Customarily the Advent Wreath is constructed of a circle of evergreen branches into which are inserted four candles. According to tradition, three of the candles are purple and one is pink or rose colored. There can also be a fifth candle placed in the middle which is white and represents Christmas. The candles on the advent wreath correspond to the four Sundays of Advent.

On the First Sunday of

Advent, the first purple candle is lit. This candle is typically called the "Prophecy Candle" in remembrance of the prophets, primarily Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ. This candle represents hope or expectation in anticipation of the coming Messiah.

On the Second Sunday of Advent, the second purple candle is lit. This candle is also sometimes called the "Bethlehem Candle" symbolizing Christ's manger. This candle typically represents love.

On the Third Sunday of Advent, the pink or rose colored candle is lit.

This pink candle is customarily called the "Shepherds Candle" and represents joy.

On the Fourth Sunday of Advent the last purple candle is lit. It is often times called the "Angels Candle" and represents peace.

On Christmas Eve, the white candle is lit. This candle is called the "Christ Candle" and represents the life of Christ that has come into the world. The color white represents purity. Christ is the sinless, spotless, pure Savior.

Using an Advent Wreath is a great way to help keep Christ in Christmas.

Excerpts from Christianity.com and EWTN.com

Blessing of an Advent Wreath

Lord God, Your Church joyfully awaits the coming of its Savior, who enlightens our hearts and dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin. Pour forth your blessings upon us as we light the candles of this wreath; may their light reflect the splendor of Christ, who is Lord, for ever and ever. Amen



Baptisms

***Connor Andrew Michael Barges
Myles Oscar Burrell
Adalyn Marie Coleman
Eleanor Maureen Kohn
June Kaylynn Macaitis
John Francis Mello
Jack Daniel Peklo***

***Oley Pyke Pfeffer
Harper Avery Regan
Charlie Faye Sain
Briar Francis Sak
Isaiah David Wilkins
Caleb Charles Wilson***





The “O Antiphons” of Advent

*Glory to God
in the highest
and on earth
Peace to
those on
whom his
favor rests.*

Luke 2:14



The O Antiphons of Advent are more than one thousand years old. They have long been used at the very end of Advent in the liturgical prayer of the Church and are the antiphons that accompany the *Magnificat* canticle of Evening Prayer from December 17-23. They are a magnificent theology that uses ancient biblical imagery drawn from the messianic hopes of the Old Testament to proclaim the coming Christ as the fulfillment not only of Old Testament hopes, but present ones as well. Each Antiphon invokes the coming of the Messiah, beginning with a biblical title and closing with a specific petition.

Taken from Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers & catholic-resources.org

December 17

O Wisdom of our God Most High,
guiding creation with power and love:
come to teach us the path of knowledge!

December 18

O Leader of the House of Israel,
giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai:
come to rescue us with your mighty power!

December 19

O Root of Jesse’s stem,
sign of God’s love for all his people:
come to save us without delay!

December 20

O Key of David,
opening the gates of God’s eternal Kingdom:
come and free the prisoners of darkness!

December 21

O Radiant Dawn,
splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:
come and shine on those who dwell in darkness
and in the shadow of death.

December 22

O King of all nations
and keystone of the Church:
come and save man, whom you formed from the
dust!

December 23

O Emmanuel, our King
and Giver of Law:
come to save us, Lord our God!

The Pope’s Pulse

Pope Francis’ Prayer for the Jubilee Year of Mercy



You are the visible face of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy: let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified. You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error: let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God. Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind. We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy, you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

Excerpted from Pope Francis’ Prayer for the Jubilee Year of Mercy

The Twelve Days of Christmas

We are all familiar with the Christmas song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas". To most it's a delightful nonsense rhyme set to music, but it had quite a serious purpose when it was written.

Catholics in England during the period from 1558 to 1829 were prohibited from ANY practice of their faith by law—private or public. It was a crime to BE a Catholic. The "Twelve Days of Christmas" was written in England as one of the "catechism songs" to help young Catholics learn the tenets of their faith—a memory aid. To be caught with anything "in writing" indicating adherence to the Catholic faith could get you imprisoned or executed.

The songs gifts are hidden meanings to the teachings of the faith. The "true love" refers to God himself. The "me" who receives the presents refers to every baptized person.

**BE BORN
IN US TODAY**



The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, symbolically presented as a mother partridge which feigns injury to decoy predators from her helpless nestlings.

The other symbols mean the following:

Two turtle doves—The Old and New Testaments.

Three French Hens—Faith, Hope and Charity, the Theological Virtues.

Four Calling Birds—The Four Gospels or the Four Evangelists.

Five Golden Rings—The first five books of the Old Testament, the "Pentateuch", which gives the history of man's fall from grace.

Six Geese A-laying—the six days of creation.

Seven Swans A-swimming—The Seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven sacraments.

Eight Maids A-milking—The Eight Beautitudes.

Nine Ladies Dancing—The Nine Fruits of the

Holy Spirit.

Ten Lords A-leaping—The Ten Commandments.

Eleven Pipers Piping—The Eleven faithful Apostles.

Twelve Drummers Drumming—The Twelve points of doctrine in the



Apostle's Creed.

The actual Twelve Days of Christmas begin on Christmas Day, December 25th and continue through January 5, which is the eve of the Feast of the Epiphany.

Excerpts from ewtn.com



S A V I O R



Christmas Masses

December 24

4:00 pm

10:00 pm

December 25

8:00 am

10:00 am

Holy Days of Obligation Masses

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

December 7

5:30 pm

December 8

7:00 am

8:15 am

7:30 pm

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

December 31

5:00 pm

January 1

8:00 am

10:00 am

The Epiphany of the Lord

The Solemnity of Epiphany falls on January 6 or the twelfth day of Christmas, and according to the decision of the episcopal conference, can be celebrated on the Sunday between January 2 and January 8. This year Epiphany is celebrated on Sunday, January 3, 2016.



The word epiphany means “manifestation” or “revelation” and is com-

monly linked in Western Christianity with the visit of the Wise Men or Magi to the Christ Child. Through the Magi, Christ revealed himself to the gentiles.

The gifts given to the Christ child by the Magi were gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts he was given tell a story: gold fit for a king, incense for the worship of god, and myrrh, bitter yet precious, for the hero who will lay down his life for his people.

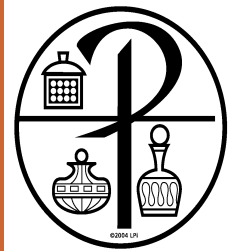
There are several important things to note about these prestigious visitors. They are Gentiles, not Jews. From the very beginning of his hu-

man existence, then Jesus is clearly not just the Jewish messiah who has come to deliver the people of Israel from foreign oppression. No, he is the universal king, the ruler of all, who has come to tear down the hostile wall dividing Jew from Gentile, nation from nations.

Excerpts from: crossroadsinitiative.com & catholicculture.org



Magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem saying, “Where is the newborn kin of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.” Mt.2:1b-2



St. Thomas More Parish & Education Memorial Endowments

In Memory of John Adams

Larry, Loretta & John Houlton

In Memory of Mildred Baines

Robert Hladik Family

In Memory of Anne Bahun Barta

Jim, Dave, & Kim Payne

Katherine Smith

In Memory of Ludmilla Birkel

Theresa Ptacek

In Memory of William Boddy

Bob & Margie Hladik

In Memory of Clara Bojan

Eddie Galas

In Memory of John S. Bolger, Jr.

Marie A. Overfelt

In Memory of John Bowen

Nick & Lucille Mickells

In Memory of Barbara Campos

Eddie Galas

In Memory of Thomas F. Cavanaugh

Mary A. Wardian

In Memory of Mary Beth Coate

Bernie & Katie Wees

John & Marie Bohls

Mary Wardian

Larry, Loretta & John Houlton

Paul & Lorrie Reed

Cecil & Donna Blake

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Jim & Lorri Linenbrink

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Dolly Kubat

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John Dethlefs

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Joseph & Millie Fanciullo

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Margaret Coniglio

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In Memory of James Ripa

Rita Seminara

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Joe & Ann Benes

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In Memory of Albert Sibilja

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Margaret Welsh

Joseph & Anna Stankiewicz

Janice Mangiameli

Mary Beth McKee

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Barbara Jarnecic

In Memory of Jean Zulfer

Phil & Sue Franco

