



Happy New Year

LITURGY & PRAYER

Sunday Liturgy:

Saturday 5 PM

Sunday 8 & 11 AM

Daily Liturgy:

Tuesday-Friday 8 AM

*The Rosary is prayed at 7:30 AM
prior to Daily Mass

**First Friday Devotion
following Mass on first Fridays

Eucharistic Adoration:

Wednesday 8:30-7:30 PM

Reconciliation:

Wednesday 5:30-6:30 PM

Saturday 3:30-4:30 PM

CONNECT

OLBH.ORG

OLBH@OLBH.ORG

@Our Lady of the Black Hills
on Facebook and Instagram
605-787-5168

Office Hours: M-F 8:30-3 PM

CLERGY

Pastor Andrzej Wyrstek

Permanent Deacons:

Deacon Walt Wilson, Retired

Deacon John Osnes

Deacon Greg Sass

Deacon Phillip Thompson

STAFF

Lorraine Rieth-Ptacek –

Director of Liturgy & Music

Lorinda Collins – Bookkeeper

Mary Marich – Coordinator of
Faith Formation PreK-6

Angela Hart – Coordinator of
Evangelization & Grade 7-

Adult Faith Formation

Todd Phillipe – Maintenance

Chloe Allen – Housekeeping

Katie Harwood – Admin Assist
& SEC

Advent begins the new liturgical year for the Church. And often, the Season of Advent feels like such a busy time with all the preparations for Christmas, invitations to celebrations, kids' programs, and on and on. This year, it will probably feel even more demanding as we will experience the shortest possible Advent Season, only lasting three weeks and one day, a total of twenty-two days.

With such a short Advent, it would be good to put a plan together. So, what are some things you may want to include in your plan?

As I was growing up, creating a Christmas Wish List was one thing I often did, with the help of the Sears Roebuck Toy Catalog, along with my siblings, and probably most of you. That was something my kids did and most kids still do today. But how many of us have ever created a Thankfulness List during Advent? What are the things we already have which we should be thankful for? This list can include material possessions, but it should also include intangible gifts, like love, health, and family/friendships.

Cleaning our homes is another thing that is undoubtedly on our plan to prepare for Christmas. We need to make room for the decorations, so we are moving things around, cleaning up in places that maybe don't always get enough attention, wiping up the dust and grime that has accumulated. What dust and dirt exists in our spiritual lives that needs attention? In other words, when was the last time you went to confession, did a good cleaning up of your soul? The Sacrament of Confession is a powerful way to prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus.

Spending time with family and friends is often something we do during Advent, which continues into Christmas and the Christmas Season. Christmas is really about the birth of Jesus. How much time do we spend with Jesus during Advent? One way to spend time each day with Jesus, as an individual, but also as a family, to remind us about the "reason for the season" would be to read through the Gospel of Luke. There are twenty-four chapters in Luke. If you read one chapter per day, starting on December 1st, you will complete the entire Gospel of Luke before Christmas. If you are starting a few days late, spend the first weekend of Advent catching up. From then on, just a single chapter per day. In a little over three weeks, you will have read about Jesus' entire earthly life, from the infancy narrative to the resurrection narrative. What better of a gift could you give Jesus than to spend your limited time with Him, learning about Him, in return for His gift to you?

While the Season of Advent is short this year, make a plan, spend your time wisely on the things that are most important. Have a blessed and fruitful Advent Season.

Deacon Greg Serviam

THEOLOGY ON TAP
MONDAY, DECEMBER 4 AT 7PM

BURNOUT PREVENTION
WORKSHOP

WITH JIM KINYON



Jim Kinyon, Executive Director and Counseling Director at CSS, will be leading a Burnout Prevention Workshop

Young adults 21-39ish welcome. Bring your friends!
Snacks & drinks provided



THE RECTORY
8242 STAGESTOP RD
PIEDMONT, SD

MONTHLY OLBH EVENTS

MONDAY

12/4

Theology on Tap
Burnout Prevention Workshop
by Jim Kinyon, director of CSS
7 PM at the Rectory

TUESDAY

12/5

St. Vincent de Paul Meeting
6 PM in the Library
All are welcome.

WEDNESDAY

12/6

Coffee & Desserts
Bring a Dessert to Share!
8:30 AM in St. Joseph's Hall

THURSDAY

12/7

Knights of Columbus Meeting
7 PM in Bethlehem Cave

FRIDAY

12/8

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Mass at 8 AM & 6 PM
holy day of obligation

SATURDAY

12/9

First Reconciliation Retreat
1 PM in the Parish Hall

SUNDAY

12/10

Chili Lunch for Seniors
12 Noon in the Parish Hall

MONDAY

12/11

Advent Penance Liturgy
6-7:30 PM in the Church
All are welcome.

✦ OUR LADY OF THE BLACK HILLS



Extraordinary Ministers
of the Holy Eucharist



Training & Retraining

Saturday 12/2 at 6 PM

Sunday 12/3 at 9:15 AM

Please plan to attend one or the other or call the office to make arrangements for a different time.

SENIOR CHILI LUNCH



Come together on Sunday, December 10 for a chili lunch and fellowship after the 11am Mass.
All seniors (63+) welcome!

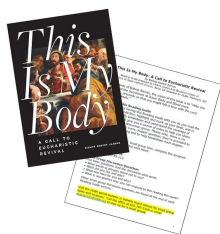
Sunday, December 10
11am Mass
12pm Lunch



Our Lady of the Black Hills
12365 Sturgis Rd
Piedmont, SD 57769

For more information and to RSVP, please call the office at 605-787-5168 or email angela.hart@olbh.org

Black Hills Area
Habitat for Humanity
presents
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2023 9:00AM
KICKOFF
EVENT
726 E. MADISON STREET
SPECIAL GUESTS
YOUR PASTORS, FRIENDS, AND YOU



Advent Book Study

'This is my Body: A Call to Eucharistic Revival'
by Bishop Barron with accompanying reading guide.
Study at your own pace or join a group for fellowship!

Small Groups available:

- **Sunday nights at 7pm** with Lisa Katzenstein - meetings on Dec 3, 10, & 17
- **Monday evenings at 6-7pm** with Lori Caouette, meetings on Dec 4, 11, 18
- **Wednesday mornings at 8:45-10am** with Jane Fortsch meetings on Dec 6, 13, 20

Call the office at 605-787-5168 or email
angela.hart@olbh.org to sign up for a small group

St. Vincent de Paul Bake Sale

December 16 & 17
following all Masses
Donate baked goods by 12/15.

BRING A DESSERT TO SHARE

COFFEE & DESSERTS

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6
FOLLOWING 8 AM MASS**

Giving Tree

Please take a tag from the Giving Tree and return it
UNwrapped by
Monday, December 11th.

Call Judy to refer someone for Christmas giving at 605-716-4647.



Solemnity of the
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**Friday, 12/8
Mass at 8 AM & 6 PM**

Our Lady of the Black Hills - Piedmont

Coming soon

Starting Sunday, December 3

TAKE A QUICK JOURNEY THROUGH SALVATION HISTORY IN

Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible

AN 8-PART BIBLE STUDY FEATURING
JEFF CAVINS

Sundays at 9:30-10:45am

Register by calling the office at 605-787-5168
or email angela.hart@olbh.org

Christmas Mass Schedule

The Nativity of the Lord Vigil Mass
24 December at 4 PM

The Nativity of the Lord Mass
24 December at 8 PM
(Christmas Night)

The Nativity of the Lord Mass
25 December at 9 AM

Mass of the 4th Sunday of Advent will be celebrated on 23 December at 5 PM & 24 December at 8 & 11 AM. This will fulfill your Sunday obligation. Attending a Christmas Mass (24 or 25 December) will fulfill your obligation to attend Mass on Christmas, a holy day of obligation. Please plan to attend Mass twice this weekend to fulfill your obligation as a good Catholic.

Knights of Columbus Christmas

Christmas

smoked brisket or pork loin

\$130 Brisket (13-17 pounds)
\$50 Pork Loin (10 pounds)

**order by Monday, 12/11
delivery following 8 AM Mass on 12/17**

*Contact a Knight or call the office to reserve yours today.

ADVENT PENANCE LITURGY

Our Lady of the Black Hills - Piedmont
Monday, 12/11, 6-7:30 PM

Blessed Sacrament - Rapid City | Tuesday, 12/5, 4-7 PM
Isaac Jogues - Rapid City | Thursday, 12/14, 6 PM
St. Therese - Rapid City | Thursday, 12/21, 4:30-6:30 PM

WEEKLY SCHEDULE Pss II

*The Rosary is prayed at 7:30 AM prior to daily Mass.

Monday, December 4
Saint John Damascene, Priest and Doctor of the Church
7:30 AM Early Bird Bible Study
6:30 PM RCIA in St. Joseph's Hall
7 PM Theology on Tap - Burn Out Prevention at the Rectory

Tuesday, December 5
8 AM Mass for the repose of Ricarda Flores
6 PM St. Vincent de Paul Meeting

Wednesday, December 6
Saint Nicholas, Bishop
8 AM Mass for the friends and benefactors of the Immaculate Heart Hermitage
8:30-7:30 PM Adoration
8:30 AM Coffee & Desserts in St. Joseph's Hall
4:30-5:45 PM Faith Formation
5:30-6:30 PM Confessions
6:15-7:30 PM Faith Formation
6:30-7:30 PM The Search, Adult Faith Formation

Thursday, December 7
SAINT AMBROSE, BISHOP AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH
8 AM Mass for all souls in Purgatory
9 AM 'Just Men' Bible Study
9 AM Gospel of John Study
7 PM Knights of Columbus Meeting

Friday, December 8
THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
8 AM Mass for the wellbeing of Joe George
6 PM Mass for the wellbeing of Halina Haladysz

Saturday, December 9
Saint Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin
1-3 PM First Reconciliation Retreat, a parent must attend
3:30-4:30 PM Confessions
5 PM Mass for Diocesan Masses for Life

Sunday, December 10
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
8 AM Mass for Joyce Williamson
9:30-10:45 AM Faith Formation
9:30-10:45 AM Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible - Adult Faith Formation
11 AM Mass for the wellbeing of Luke VonBank and Family
Noon Senior Chili Feed

WEEKLY MINISTRY SCHEDULE

12/8 FRIDAY 8 AM Mass with Fr. Andrzej
Altar Servers: Justin Carlin (lead) /Bruce Lehman
Lectors: Jan Evans (1st), Dave Allardyce (2nd)
Hospitality: Ken and Pam Freeman
Sacristan: Emma and Bruce Lehman
Eucharistic Minister: Deacon John Osnes

12/8 FRIDAY 6 PM Mass with Fr. Andrzej
Altar Servers: Freddy Weishaar(lead), Caleb Weishaar
Lectors: Teresa Thompson (1st), NOT FILLED (2nd)
Hospitality: NOT FILLED
Sacristan: Cindy Creager
Eucharistic Minister: Deacon Phillip Thompson

12/9 5 PM Mass with Fr. Andrzej
Altar Servers: Meaghan Allen (lead), Keeana and Kyah P.
Lectors: Deacon Walt Wilson (1st), Diane Clarke (2nd)
Hospitality: Tracy and Kimberly Cook
Sacristan: Joe and Linda Schacher
Eucharistic Minister: Deacon Greg Sass

12/9 8 AM Mass with Fr. Andrzej
Altar Servers: Brianne K. (lead) Hannah and Leslie K.
Lectors: John Usera (1st), Jeremy Thompson (2nd)
Hospitality: Lisa Katzenstein and Bernie Usera
Sacristan: Mike and Barb Coyle
Eucharistic Minister: Deacon Greg Sass

12/9 11 AM Mass with Fr. Andrzej
Altar Servers: Kaleb Arellano (lead) Robby T. and Alex A.
Lectors: Jan Evans (1st), Cathy Long (2nd)
Hospitality: Becca and Joe Cuiba
Sacristan: Richard Long
Eucharistic Minister: Deacon Greg Sass

STEWARDSHIP

"All good giving and every perfect gift is from above" (Jas 1:17)			
November 25-26, 2023			
	Automatic	Basket	Total
Adopt a Seminarian	54	-	54
Sunday Collection	3,263	2,909	6,162
Building Fund	44	-	44
Country Store	-	-	10
Priest Retirement	2		12
Votives			16
Thanksgiving			5
Total Contribution	3,364	2,909	6,302.91

Did you know that OLBH is a Stewardship Parish? We ask that you give us your time, talents, and treasure to support our wonderful parish. In return we will utilize your gifts and talents to provide the resources, facilities, and events to aid you in your journey of faith. **Please prayerfully consider automatic contributions via electronic withdrawal at www.olbh.org/donate.**

PRAYER MINISTRIES

PRAYER CHAIN To add an intention to the OLBH prayer chain text Shanesa Rhodes at 605-786-4240 or email shanesarhodes@gmail.com.

MASS INTENTIONS To request a Mass Intention please fill out the envelope on the back counter of the Narthex or call the office at 605-787-5168.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY To obtain a prayer blanket, contact the office at 605-787-5168.

COMMUNION FOR THE HOMEBOUND If you or a family member are sick and would like Communion from a priest or lay extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, please call the office at 605-787-5168.

ANointing OF THE SICK If you or a family member has been diagnosed with an illness, are preparing for surgery, or in the case of serious illness, call the office to request the sacrament at 605-787-5168.

INTENTIONS OF THE HOLY FATHER FOR NOVEMBER

Pope's Intention: For the Pope. We pray for the Holy Father; as he fulfills his mission, may he continue to accompany the flock entrusted to him with the help of the Holy Spirit.

NECROLOGY

To remember in prayer for the repose of their souls those whose death are recorded in the parish; and the bishops, priests, and deacons that served in the Diocese of Rapid City. We pray for:

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| December 5 | James Skaags (1973) |
| December 6 | Rev. James Michalski, S.J. (2014) |
| | Milton H. Gray (2000) |
| | Ember Erin Smith (2004) |
| | Alice Donely (2010) |
| | James Darwin Weisbeck (2010) |
| December 7 | Msgr. Vincent J. Christie (1953) |
| | Gene Albrecht (2017) |
| December 8 | Rev. Matthew Connell, S.J. (1957) |
| December 9 | Rev. James D. Becht (2002) |
| December 10 | Janice Y. Kosters (2021) |

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The Catholic Diocese of Rapid City is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for our young people. To report allegations of sexual abuse by church personnel, contact the Victim Assistance coordinator, **Barbara Scherr**. To ensure confidentiality in her outreach to victims, she can be contacted privately by phone at **1-605-209-3418**. All calls will be treated confidentially. Alleged victims are advised of their right to report alleged abuse to civil authorities. *In accordance with diocesan policy, all allegations of sexual misconduct involving children or young people by priests, deacons, lay employees, or volunteers in the Diocese of Rapid City will be investigated.*

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR OUR ILL & HOMEBOUND

Call 605-787-5168 to add a name to the prayer list. These individuals are in special need of your prayers. We pray for Edwin and Omel Weaver (parents of Bob), Blanche Rieth, Jean Schacher, Bernard Wiehl, Sid & Mary Ann Pulaski, Cap & Arlene Holzer, Linda Schacher, Tony Corbine, Joe George, Tim Curns, Dean & Mary Antonsen, Carol Michaelson (mother of Linda Schacher), Joyce de Paulo, Charlene Mizenko, John Mizenko, The Nally Family, Jean Scheope, Tim Keller (son in law of the Holzers), Crescencia Yanez, Iris Overholt, Joe Vetch, Lenny Tellefson, Mary-Elizabeth Crane (sister of Sheila), Sheila Keeler, Deb Bickford, Karen & Dennis Lau, Kathleen Leutenegger, Ted Schurman, Ruthann Koch, Lyn Gerving, Fr. Andrzej Wyrostek, Elizabeth Ravellette, Rayola Anderson, Patty Creek, Irene Katzenstein, Bishop Peter Muhich, Scotty Hudson, Gary Sexton, Bryan Champagne, Nancy Gamage, Brett Whealy

FOR THE DEPLOYED MILITARY We pray for Andrew Lucchesi

SCRIPTURE READINGS

The weekly readings are on the USCCB.org website.
Monday: Is 2:1-5; Ps 122:1-2, 3-4b, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9; Mt 8:5-11
Tuesday: Is 11:1-10; Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17; Lk 10:21-24
Wednesday: Is 25:6-10a; Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6; Mt 15:29-37
Thursday: Is 26:1-6; Ps 118:1 and 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a; Mt 7:21, 24-27
Friday: Gn 3:9-15, 20; PS 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38
Saturday: Is 30:19-21, 23-26; Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6; Mt 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8
Sunday: IS 40:1-5, 9-11; PS 85:9-10-11-12, 13-14; 2 PT 3:8-14; MK 1:1-8

DAKOTA CHORAL UNION presents

CHRISTMAS at the CATHEDRAL

3:00 pm, December 17

Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 520 Cathedral Drive, Rapid City, SD

Featuring special guest artists Bill Evans, Anthony Nesland, and C  ra Fried

Artistic Director & Conductor | Ellen Shirley
Assistant Director | Lindsey Torgerson
Collaborative Pianist | Andrew Belsaas

Admission is free with a donation of non-perishable food items for Church Response.

dakotachoralunion.org

Coats for Kids Bowling Tournament

Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024, Knights of Columbus Council 8025, St. Therese Church, will host a bowling tournament at Meadowood Lanes, Rapid City. Proceeds will be used to purchase new coats for children at the Black Hills Children's Home Society. Registration opens at 1 p.m., bowling begins at 1:30 p.m. Fee \$20 each or \$80 for a four-person team. Questions can go to John Schlim 605-390-1584 or email jschlim1@gmail.com.

FROM EMPTINESS TO ENCOUNTER

THE LIFE & WISDOM OF ST JOHN OF THE CROSS

The Lord worked in St. John of the Cross throughout his life, drawing him near to Him through beauty, through truth, through suffering, through emptiness. This great saint shows us how to encounter the Lord as we make space for Him in order to receive.

DECEMBER 15
10AM-3PM

Directed by Susan Safford, Friday, December 15, 10am - 3pm at Terra Sancta Retreat Center, this day of reflection will provide time for presentations, prayer, lunch, adoration, confessions, and Mass.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR THE DAY

10:00am Morning Prayer, Opening Conference
Living a Life for God
10:30 Exposition + Confessions
11:30 Mass
12:30pm Lunch
1:15 Conference #2
Making Space for God
1:45 Silent prayer
2:30 Conference #3
Receiving God
3:00 Closing Prayer, Depart

DONATION BASED

Suggested Donation of \$45 includes lunch and materials



ADVENT

Day of Reflection

terra sancta retreat center | 605-716-0925
terrasancta.org/advent

Catholic Daughter's

Join us December 11th at 6 PM in the St. Therese Church Hall for a monthly meeting and Advent party. Bring a dish to share, \$5 donation, a food item for Feeding South Dakota and a \$10 gift for the gift exchange.

The "KW Players" Catholic Youth Theatre Troupe presents

A Yuletide Musical Revue

featuring Songs of the Season, Showtunes, and more performed by the families of the KW Players!



Sunday, December 17, 2023 @ 4:00pm

at the Blessed Sacrament Church Theatre Room
(4500 Jackson Blvd/Rapid City)

—Admission is FREE/seating is limited—
This performance is appropriate for ages 8 yrs. and up.
A nursery will be provided in the upstairs area.

The KW Players Theatre Troupe was formed to carry on the spiritual, cultural, and artistic legacy of the Rhapsodic Theatre, a Polish underground theatre company co-founded by Karol Wojtyla (Pope Saint John Paul II) in the 1940s in opposition to Nazi oppression.

South Dakota March for Life

Join youth and young adults for a pilgrimage to South Dakota's State Capitol Rotunda in Pierre to on Saturday, **January 28, 2024**. South Dakota will likely be voting on the issue of abortion in the Fall of 2024... the battle for the sanctity of life is at our doorstep, and we are called to action! The March for Life will feature guest speaker Governor Kristi Noem, keynote speaker Bishop DeGrood, student pro-life essay winners from across the state, and music by The Bruse Family. Following the program, we will join Ft. Pierre for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Mass, dinner, and fellowship before returning to Rapid City that evening.

Pierre, SD March for Life

January 28, 2024 - 7:00am Departure (MT), Return Time around 9:00pm (MT)

Open to all high school and college-age students. Cost: \$35 for round trip bus ride from Rapid City - limited seating.

Register at: rapidcitydiocese.org/marchforlife24

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

December 2023

Our Lady of the Black Hills

Fr. Andrzej Wyrostek, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. Edmund Campion

Born to a Catholic family in 16th century England, St. Edmund left

a brilliant academic career at Oxford to become a Jesuit missionary – a death sentence, since Catholics were being heavily persecuted under Queen Elizabeth I. He traveled around, secretly ministering the Sacraments to English Catholics, until he was betrayed by an informer and arrested. Despite efforts to persuade or threaten him, St. Edmund remained true to his faith. He was martyred with two companions at Tyburn.



Mary's "Yes"

When the angel appeared to Mary and told her what God was asking of her, she didn't have to agree. God gave all of us free will to allow us to make our own choices. Mary said "yes" to God out of love. Her reward (and ours, too) is eternity with her Son.

"And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon Him"
(Luke 2:40).



A "Christ-centered" Christmas is a joyful one

For Catholics, the weeks leading up to Christmas are a sacred time to prepare our hearts for Christ's coming. For a joy-filled Christmas, try these ideas:

Encourage joyful anticipation. As disciples of Jesus, it is our role to help others to believe and hope in the power of God to change the world as He transforms hearts and minds. *"But as for me, I will look to the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me"* (Micah 7:7). Look for opportunities to share your confidence in His love.

Focus on prayer. Become an Advent prayer intercessor praying for every

soul to come home to God, especially at this time of peace. Ask that that He gives everyone the grace to live a new life reflecting glory on the Messiah.

Serve. Pope Francis said during Advent, "We are so busy with all the preparations, with gifts and things that pass, but let's ask ourselves what we should do for Jesus and for others! What should we do?" The pope said we should

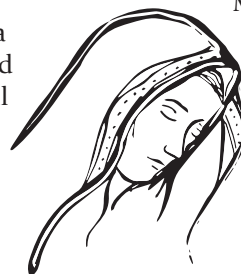
continuously ask God what we should do to contribute to the good of the Church and society. We can do "something concrete, even if it is small" to help others. He suggested visiting the lonely, the elderly, the sick or someone in need.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics celebrate the "Immaculate Conception?"

In 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed that Mary, by a special grace, was preserved from original and personal sin from her own conception in her mother's womb, in view of her role as the



Mother of God. This grace bore immeasurable fruit for all of us in Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross. On December 8 – a Holy Day of Obligation – we ask Mary to pray for us, so we, too, receive Jesus into our hearts with a faithful love like hers.

Have a peaceful, Merry Christmas!

Do you aim for an idyllic Christmas celebration complete with a warm fire, joyful music, and tinsel-covered tree? For many of us, Christmas comes at the end of weeks spent shopping, wrapping, and spending, and is wrought with family tensions, obligations, and exhaustion. Try these steps to keep your sanity and your Savior in your Christmas celebration:

Be realistic. It isn't the goal of the season to make everyone happy. If you don't overspend and over extend before Christmas, you'll be in a better frame of mind when it arrives.



Soothe the beast. Beautiful music can set a soothing tone for your celebration. Pick your favorite holy hymns to put yourself in the Christmas frame of mind.

Reach out. Want to make your own problems seem small? Take on someone else's. Do at least one good Christmas deed for someone needy.

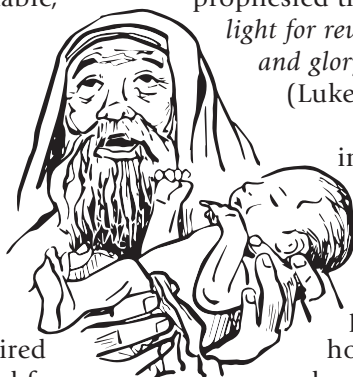
Seek the eternal. Jesus gives us peace, purpose, and perspective. Spend time with Jesus each day of Advent and Christmas to remind yourself of what is most important about Christmas.

from Scripture

Luke 2:22-40, Encountering God in the ordinary

To the uninformed observer, Jesus' birth was unremarkable, and His family was quite ordinary. In fact, when it was time to present Jesus in the temple, His parents couldn't afford the customary offering of a lamb, and instead made the offering of the poor – two pigeons. As faithful Jews, they did all that was required by their faith to thank God for the gift of their child.

Yet, when Joseph and Mary presented their new baby in the temple, Simeon immediately recognized Him as the Messiah.



Inspired by the Holy Spirit, he prophesied that Jesus would be *"a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel"* (Luke 2:32).

Simeon was not alone in recognizing the Lord in the temple. Anna was also filled with the Holy Spirit. Her faith in God's promises gave her hope. The hope God places in our hearts gives us a desire for the kingdom of Heaven. The Holy Spirit reveals the presence of the Lord to those who want to know Him, receive Him, and to be happy with Him forever.

Q & A How can I make Christmas joy last?

The Church's real Christmas season starts on Christmas Day and lasts until the Baptism of Our Lord. By celebrating the whole season, you can make your Christmas joy last long after you've taken down the tree. Here are some highlights of the season:

Feast of the Holy Family, December 31. Gather for a meal with loved ones, or contact out-of-town friends or family.

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, January 1.

Dedicate a Rosary to the Blessed Mother, asking her to help you grow in love and trust.

Epiphany, January 7. The example of the Magi honoring Jesus has become a symbol of sharing Him with the world. This is our chance to think about the way we live so that we can better reveal Christ to our world.

The Baptism of Our Lord, January 8. Baptism is our entry into the Kingdom. Take time this day to renew your Baptismal vows and decide what you can change in your life to help you live as Christ did.

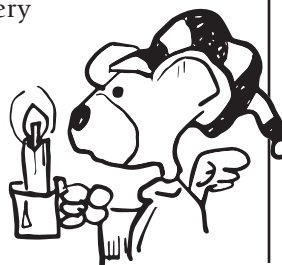
Feasts & Celebrations

December 3 – First Sunday in Advent. We anticipate Christ's birth and His coming on the last day. Catholics everywhere light candles in an Advent wreath to signal the coming of the light of Christ.

December 12 – Our Lady of Guadalupe (1531). The Blessed Mother appeared as a Native American maiden to St. Juan Diego. She asked St. Juan to carry roses to the bishop as proof. When the roses were emptied from his *tilma*, it retained the image of the Blessed Mother.

December 15 – St. Maria di Rosa (1855). Born into a wealthy family in Brescia, Italy, Paula was renowned for holiness, generosity, and concern for the sick. She founded the Handmaids of Charity in 1840. She took the name Sr. Maria Crucifixa di Rosa.

December 27 – St. John the Beloved (1st Century). As an apostle and friend of Jesus, St. John was known for his fiery temper. Scholars believe he is the "beloved disciple" who sat by Jesus at the Last Supper in John's Gospel.



Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible)

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Please read or attach this letter to your bulletins the weekend of December 1-2.



OFFICE OF BISHOP

DIOCESE OF RAPID CITY



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The 2023 collection for the **Retirement Fund for Religious** is scheduled on the Second Sunday of Advent, December 10, in our diocese. This annual appeal assists nearly 25,000 elderly sisters, brothers and religious order priests nationwide.

I am grateful for the significant influence that women and men religious, both past and present, have had on my own spiritual journey. I deeply appreciate their invaluable contributions to our diocese and the wider community. Perhaps you too have been touched by the kindness and guidance of one of the sisters or brothers serving our diocese.

Many of our senior vowed religious have dedicated their lives to service, usually receiving little pay in return. Consequently, their religious communities face a shortage of retirement savings. Compounding this challenge are rising health-care costs and decreased income. Religious communities find it increasingly difficult to meet the day-to-day needs of aging members, including their medical expenses, nursing assistance and other necessities.

Your generous donations to the Retirement Fund for Religious provide vital financial support, enabling religious communities to care for their aging members.

I know you are frequently asked to support many worthy causes. I invite you to contribute whatever you can toward this year's collection. In addition to your financial support, please keep all our women and men religious in your prayers.

May God's abundant blessings be upon you and your loved ones.

Sincerely in the love of Christ,

Most Rev. Peter M. Muhich
Bishop of Rapid City

*More information is
available online at
<http://www.retiredreligious.org>.*

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