



## Worship Schedule

### Saturday, 20 December

3:30 pm ... Confession & Reconciliation  
4 pm ... †George Coppez (5th Anniv.) by Scott Coppez

### Sunday, 21 December **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

7:30 am ... †Agnes Costello by P. Jerome  
9:30 am ... Our Parish Family  
4:30 pm ... Confession & Reconciliation  
5 pm ... †Deceased of Bienvenue family by Mary B. Marzal

### Monday, 22 December

12 pm ... †Shaun M. Keane by Colleen Byrne

### Tuesday, 23 December

12 pm ... †J. Marjorie Costello Day (29th Anniv.) by P. Jerome

### Wednesday, 24 December

4 pm ... Christmas Vigil Mass



### Thursday, 25 December **The Nativity of the Lord**

8 am ... †Noel Hebert by Pat Tremblay  
10 am ... Our Parish Family

### Friday, 26 December **Saint Stephen, Protomartyr**

~PARISH OFFICE CLOSED~

5:30 pm ... Confession & Reconciliation  
6 pm ... †John & †Irene Narkey by Teresa Greene

### Saturday, 27 December **Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist**

3:30 pm ... Confession & Reconciliation  
4 pm ... Our Parish Family

### Sunday, 28 December **Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph**

7:30 am ... †Rita DeCotis (15th Anniv.) by Dottie DeCotis  
9:30 am ... †Laurent Cote (6th Anniv.) by Jeannine Cote  
4:30 pm ... Confession & Reconciliation  
5 pm ... †Romain & †Louise Marcoux by Diane Gallant



## Christmas and New Year Mass Schedule

Christmas: Nativity of the Lord—Wednesday, Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Vigil Mass at 4 pm; Wednesday, Dec. 25 Christmas Day Masses at 8 am and 10 am.

Mary Mother of God—Wednesday, Dec. 31 Vigil Mass at 6 pm; Thursday, Jan. 1, 2015 Mass at 10 am.



Please pray for  
†Tamra J.  
(Horne-Bellemore) Malkin, who died Dec. 14,

*In Sympathy*

and whose funeral Mass was celebrated last week by P. Patrick Sullivan, O.S.B.



**If you have a family member who is currently serving in any branch of the Armed Forces, please contact the parish office at 623-2604 so that we can include them in our bulletin. Please**

**keep in your prayers:**

**Danielle Wells  
Kenneth Breuder  
Philip Breuder**



**Sanctuary candle** The sanctuary candle burns this week for †Agnes Costello by P. Jerome.

### **Poinsettias in memory of loved ones** Thank you to

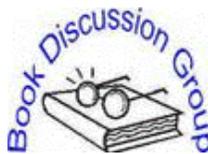


everyone who donated a poinsettia in memory of loved ones. The list of donors and intentions is included in this week's bulletin.



**The Angel Tree** Thank you to everyone who provided gifts to our families in need this Christmas.

*Your have made Christmas brighter for someone in your generosity. Thank you and God bless you!*



Please join the parish Book Discussion Group in reading *Light Upon Light: A Literary Guide to Prayer for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany*. A combination of literary anthology and prayer guide, the book shows us a wide range of beautiful poetry and prose as it encourages us to pray and to read Scripture as we prepare for the miracles of the Christmas season. Each section of the book contains an opening and closing prayer, readings from the Old and New Testaments, and literary selections, as well as an invitation to personal prayer and reflection. The book group will meet **Thursday, Jan. 12, 2015**, at 7 pm in the church classroom. Books are available at the parish office for \$16.

## Journey to the Stable of Bethlehem was the first Christian pilgrimage



During these weeks of Advent, we've explored the concept of **pilgrimage** in this column. I provided a working definition of pilgrimage, as well as highlights from some of the great traditional pilgrimage destinations. Then, I reflected on some of my own religious travels to places such as **Iona** and **Canterbury**. Last week, parishioner Roger Joly shared with us his reflections on his robust journey along the famous **Camino de Santiago**, the 500-mile hiking trail that leads pilgrims to the shrine of **Santiago de Compostella** in northern Spain. This week, I consider what might be considered **the first Christian pilgrimage, the journey to Bethlehem** to welcome the newborn infant king.

Back in the early 1980s, I had the opportunity to join a pilgrimage being run by my old high school friend, **Ceil (Gwozdz) Kaluza**. She called me up, asked how I'd like to visit **Israel**, received an enthusiastically affirmative response and, then, I said, "Of course, I can't afford it."

She started to laugh, saying that she bet I could, then told me that the trip was being subsidized by the Israeli government as part of a promotional effort to make U.S. religious leaders, such as **pastors, chaplains, teachers** and **others** with access to potential visitors, familiar with the country. Once she explained the procedure, I told her I was in – but that I'd have to maintain journalistic objectivity.

That trip was a phenomenal introduction not only to the sacred sites of the **Holy Land** but also to the modern features of Israel. I shall not forget, amid a wide range of spectacular impressions, the impact of the **Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem**. There, under the flickering lights of dozens of hanging votive lamps and candles, as well as wafting clouds of incense, the **silver star of Bethlehem** gleams (*photo above*). The star marks the spot where tradition claims Jesus of Nazareth was born during the reign of **Caesar Augustus** some 2,000 years ago. Visitors and pilgrims can kneel and place their hands through an opening in the star to touch the actual stone on which the manger rested, guides say. Christians of every kind – Orthodox, Armenian, Greek, Romanian, Russian,



Protestants from Anglicans, Methodists, Congregationalists and Baptists to fundamentalists, as well as Roman Catholics from around the world throng to the church, especially at this time of year. What is it that draws people to this remarkable spot? Perhaps it is the same as it was at the first Christmas – fascination with the fact **God bent down to the earth and kissed it with his love** in the person of an infant born of a virgin. The first pilgrims to Bethlehem were, of course, **Mary and Joseph**, returning to David's city for the imperial census. Mary was great with child, and Joseph undoubtedly worried by her condition and the crowded conditions in the village. Both of them exhibit a fundamental dimension of pilgrimage – we are **called by the Lord to come to him in faith**.

That call forces us to enter into a dimension that is challenging and sometimes even a little frightening as we leave our "comfort zone" and trust in him.

Joseph was called to take into his arms a woman pregnant by a source other than himself. For him to accept Mary's pregnancy, the Archangel Gabriel appeared and revealed to him the divine plan. Mary, even before Joseph, received a visit from Gabriel, to give her confidence that who she carried was of God. In due course, they began the physically arduous trip from Nazareth in the Galilee to Judea. For us, who call ourselves Christian disciples, the call to seek out and follow Jesus in his Church demands a willingness to **listen to the divine call in Scripture**, the voice of the Church and our own conscience. Not only must we listen, but we must act, move and direct ourselves as we are called.

In a real way, the **shepherds** who heard the angels shout out Christ's praise in the

night sky are pilgrims too. They must **believe** that what they see and hear is real and likewise **act on it**, leaving their flocks and their immediate concerns for something deeper and greater. Like the good shepherd, who goes to find the lost and possibly wounded sheep, they left their flocks, trusting that the Lord would see them through the moment.

When **the three kings**, sometimes understood to be three magi or three wise men, arrive at the stable on Epiphany, they complete their adventurous journey following a star that had risen in the East. Just as the three kings, known in tradition as **Gaspar, Melchior and Balthazar**, brought cases of gold, frankincense and myrrh, so too we are invited to come to Christ to offer some gift that touches on who we really are. Our **tithing program at Saint Raphael** reminds us that God summons us to be generous stewards of the good things with which he has blessed us – not simply financial resources, what we might call our **treasure**, but also our **time and talents**. If we are not using our talents for the good of others, we are succumbing to selfishness and/or we are wasting them. Obviously, we need the health to undertake such service and generosity, but if we don't, we can **pray for others**, something pleasing to the Lord.

Tradition tells us that **an ox and an ass** attended Jesus at the first Christmas, so they too might be said to be pilgrims. Legend has it that the heat of their breath warmed the Christ Child in the winter cold, and perhaps Mary even allowed them to nuzzle the divine infant. The **Prophet Isaiah**, in chapter 1, verse 3, declares that even the ox and ass will know the Messiah when he comes, so the presence of the symbolic animals is a sign that the whole of creation recognizes the hour of its visitation and awaits its renewal.

As with all pilgrimage destinations, the "**journey to**" is important, the "**arrival at**" is significant, and the "**departure from**" is valuable. When we depart from the stable, we are meant to be transformed and transforming. We have recognized that God has come to us as an infant, whom we desire to embrace. Having embraced him, we are called **to live fully as he has taught us!**

© Rev. Jerome Joseph Day, O.S.B.

# December 21, 2014

## Readings for the week of December 21, 2014

**Monday:** 1 Sm 1:24-28; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-8abcd; Lk 1:46-56  
**Tuesday:** Mal 3:1-4, 23-34; Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-10, 14; Lk 1:57-66  
**Wednesday:** 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Lk 1:67-79  
**Thursday:** Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 (18-25)  
 Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14  
 Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20  
 Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 (1-5, 9-14)  
**Friday:** Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22  
**Saturday:** 1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1a, 2-8  
**Sunday:** Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Ps 128:1-5 or Ps 105:1-6, 8-9; Col 3:12-21 [12-17] or Hb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40 [22, 39-40]

We are still looking to increase our group of altar servers **especially for the 4 pm Saturday Vigil, 7:30 am, and 5 pm Sunday Masses.** Typically, candidates are considered as soon as they reach third grade and have made their First Communion. *If you are interested in training to be a server, please contact Kerri Stanley in the rectory at 623.2604 in order to set up a training session.*



## Write on the Heart

As Catholics, we are called to evangelize! Our parish blog provides the opportunity to evangelize through modern technology and opens a forum for dialogue about issues of daily life and faith. You are invited to visit, follow and comment on entries and submissions at [saint-raphaelsblog.com](http://saint-raphaelsblog.com).



Please note that the rectory will be closed on Wednesday, Dec. 24—26 and Thursday, Jan. 1, 2015.

## Weekly Collection

**December 14, 2014**

Offertory Regular	\$ 4,252.00
Offertory Make-Up	397.00
Offertory Loose	800.70
Offertory Online Giving	210.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$ 5,659.70</b>
Stewardship	\$ 1,805.00
Stewardship Loose	330.00
Stewardship Online Giving	60.00
<b>Total Stewardship</b>	<b>\$ 2,195.00</b>
Immaculate Conception Mass	\$ 899.00
Immac Conception Loose	232.85
<b>Total Holy Day</b>	<b>\$ 1,131.85</b>
<b>Food Pantry</b>	<b>\$ 150.00</b>



## Saint Raphael Food Pantry

This past Monday, December 15, the Food Pantry served **22** families, and gave out **34** bags of groceries.

It also hosted its Annual Christmas Give-Away. We thank you very much for your generosity this year in providing new and gently used clothes, household items, and toys to the needy families in our neighborhood.

We need peanut butter and plastic shopping bags. Also, gently used blankets, any size, would be appreciated! Thank you!

## Parish Giving

Saint Raphael has implemented the online giving option for your convenience. You can access the link via our website,

[www.saint-raphael-parish.com](http://www.saint-raphael-parish.com) and follow the steps to register for automatic payments or just a one time donation. Have questions? Call the rectory at 623.2604 and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have. **Laminated cards are located on the table at the back of the church for you to drop into the collection basket during the offertory collections.**



First time visitor? Welcome! There are cards on the table at the entry for you to fill out with your contact information should you want to register.

We'd love to have you! Cards may be placed in the collection basket during Mass or left on the table.