



CHRIST THE KING

BENTON, PENNSYLVANIA

DECEMBER 31, 2023

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Feast of the HOLY FAMILY *of Jesus, Mary and Joseph*



GOD ENTERING AND TRANSFORMING OUR TERRAIN THROUGH MARY

We celebrate a New Year, and the final day within the octave of Christmas. Why do we have eight days? Why not just one day for Christmas? For the Jewish tradition, there is a significance for eight days. God created everything on six days and consecrated it all on the seventh day. But after the sin of Adam and Eve, something much more is needed. The eighth day points to the need for a new creation, and the eighth day became of sign of a new creation for the Jewish people.

That is why we have an octave of Christmas. The birth of Christ brings about a new creation. It is therefore perfect that the eighth day of Christmas is actually the new year! We celebrate a new year by celebrating the new creation that Jesus initiates.

We especially celebrate Mary today because she had an important role in this new creation. Jesus was not simply biding his time for thirty years until He began the work of redemption through his public ministry. He was performing the work of redemption by being born as a child through a human family, with a human mother that was destined to become the mother of the children of God.

This being born of a child through a human family raised many questions theologically for the early Church. They were trying to process everything that took place. We essentially have this solemnity of Mary Mother of God because of heresy known as Nestorianism that was creeping in the early Church.

A little history on this matter: Nestorius became bishop of Constantinople in 428. A rash and dogmatic man, Nestorius quickly got himself in trouble with Cyril, the bishop of Alexandria. He preached, toward the end of his first year in office, a sermon attacking the view that the Virgin Mary is properly called theotokos, “mother of God,” and suggesting that she should instead be known as the “recipient of God.” The underlying issue in this sermon was christological. The issue was this: if you say that Mary is the Mother of God, it means that she gave birth to God, which means that God is not eternal. The debate between Nestorius and St. Cyril of Alexandria came to a head at the Council of Ephesus (431),

Out of this debate came a proper articulation of irrefutable truth about Jesus: We do not say that the eternal Word became flesh by having his nature changed. We instead say that in an unspeakable and incomprehensible way, the Word united to himself human flesh.

The Incarnation means that the humanity and divinity of Jesus are distinct, but not separate from each other. Mary did not give birth to a human being only, and then the divine nature of Jesus jumped in and united itself. The Divinity of Jesus is united to the Humanity of Jesus without altering the divinity. The Word does not transform itself, but unites itself to flesh through the Incarnation. It is that truth that we can say that The WORD became Flesh. God became flesh without changing who God is. But by taking on flesh, He did transform Fleshly existence.

What does this practically mean? Jesus is in the flesh. God is in the flesh.

Do we trust that. Common error - God has his terrain, and we have ours. We can control and manipulate the flesh, reality, as it were.

Do we believe that the cosmos, all of reality, has truly been transformed by the Incarnation? If so, do we see our current situation as redeemed, transformed, made anew? Do we see our current situation as a manifestation of God’s fleshly presence here and now?

Homily by Fr. Andrew on January 1, 2022

STEWARDSHIP
DECEMBER 24/25

Offering	\$1372.00
Christmas	\$3384.00
Rainy Day	\$40.00
St. Nick	\$40.00
Total	\$4836.00

THANK YOU

Thank you for all who purchased gifts for the Benton Head Start and the Veterans that live at the Orangeville Manor.

Your generosity is most appreciated!

Thanks for all that helped to decorate the Church for Christmas and also those who helped with the Christmas Brunch.

HALLOW APP

We are excited to share with you a very special gift from the Knights of Columbus that will help you incorporate prayer into your daily lives. We have partnered with Hallow, a Catholic prayer and meditation app that helps people deepen their relationship with God through audio-guided prayer sessions. The app is the #1 Prayer app in the world and has over 10,000 sessions to choose from.

Specifically for Advent, Hallow has created a Pray25 Challenge. You'll even have access to a prayer companion to follow along and jot down your reflections each day, as well as beautiful Advent and Christmas music collections.

This Advent we have partnered with the Hallow team to provide Hallow access to all parishioners for FREE through Easter.

If you still need help with the Hallow App, please call Ken Houck at 570-951-2608.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION AT ST. MARTHA'S CHURCH

260 Bonnieville Rd. Stillwater, PA

every Tuesday following the 8:30 a.m. Mass until 9:00 p.m.

Looking for Adorers to spend one hour in the afternoon.

Call Rebecca Micca at 570-256-7329

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, December 30

Rev. Stanley Rother by Mary Ellen Neal

Sunday, December 31

Dolores Strazdus by David Strazdus
Alyse Haden by Paul Haden

Monday, January 1

Jack Eustice by Ann Eustice

Saturday, January 6

People of the Parish

Sunday, January 7

Nicholas Sabo by Justa Sabo

Mass intentions are available in memory of, or in honor of a loved one. The donation for having a Mass said for a personal request is \$10.00. You can drop your request in the collection or contact the parish office.

LITURGICAL ROLES

Lector

Dec 31 - Paul Haden
Jan 7 - Pete Yastishock

Extraordinary Minister

Dec 31 - Mark Sullivan
Jan 7 - Stephen Root

Collection Stewards

Dec 31 - Patricia & Mark Sullivan
Jan 7 - Anne Eustice & Sharon Tishler

LITURGY OF THE WORD

IMITATE THE HOLY FAMILY, THE TRUE MODEL OF LIFE.

Even in their holiness, Mary, Joseph, and their child Jesus were not exempt from suffering, and the difficulties of life. Yet they never wavered in their commitment to God or to each other. Theirs was a home where the child [Jesus] grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him. Let us strive to make our homes a haven for others to grow in love, virtue, and favor.

In the first reading, Abram puts his faith in God's promise of a child despite his and Sarah's old age. In the second reading the author emphasizes all that Abraham did was by faith. In the Gospel, Joseph and Mary present Jesus at the temple, and meet Simeon and Anna who prophesy about the child.

CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

THE NEXT GENERATION PARISH GRANT BEGINS IN ADVENT—it is a singular opportunity which our parish will take part in over the next several years. It will help us grow during a time in our history when the number of priests, parishes, baptisms, marriages and self-identifying Catholics are trending downwards in our country.

What can we do?

Fill out & return your written survey- your feedback is needed!

The survey is due back before Jan. 3, 2024.

HEART OF MERCY COUNSELING MINISTRY

(Sisters of the Good Shepherd), in the Danville area has two licensed therapists available to serve adults for individual or couples counseling. In-person or virtual counseling options. Please contact either one of them to schedule an appointment if you are seeking faith based counseling: Sr. Mary Frances Altavilla, Licensed Clinical Social Worker 410-245-0870 faltavilla@hotmail.com OR: Sr. Patricia Marie Barnette, Licensed Professional Counselor 352-328-8145 guadalupe531@aol.com (in Coal Township on Mondays.)

JOB OPENING

Sisters of Saints Cyril & Methodius in Danville are looking for 2 Full-Time 3rd shift Nurse's Aide/CNA, 1 Part-Time 2nd shift Housekeeper (Life Skills candidates are encouraged to apply for PT Housekeeping position) 1 Full-Time Cook and 1 Full-Time Dishwasher.

Please contact our HR Department for more information at 570-275-3581 ext. 156 or e-mail scole@sscm.org

UNBORN CANDLE DONATIONS

\$3.00/ week,
\$5.00/ 2 weeks or
\$10.00/ month
Month of January - Anne Kingsbury

BENTON FOOD BANK

For the month of January we will be collecting jello due by January 15th . The Food Bank at the N4C's is the 3rd Tuesday of every month.

EUCCHARISTIC REVIVAL

A Eucharistic Revival Week will be held June 2 - 8, 2024, throughout the Diocese of Harrisburg. Local, regional and Diocesan events to bring us closer to Christ in the Holy Eucharist are being planned. Look for more details in early 2024.

CYE NEWS

Many thanks to all who contributed to the success of our CYE Christmas program. We are very blessed to have such dedicated catechists, parents, and children in our program.

Classes resume Sunday, January 7, 2024

**LIVING JOYFULLY IN THE NEW YEAR
SO YOU ARE NO LONGER A SLAVE BUT A SON... GALATIANS 4:7**

We mark the beginning of a new calendar year in various ways. We make resolutions. We set new goals. We pick a saint, word or saying that we trust for guidance during the year.

Here's another idea: opening ourselves to the guidance of Spirit through the Word in an intentional way. I might, for example, consider the Scriptures for today's Mass and ask the Lord to point me to a passage or idea. For example, Paul's words from the Letter to the Galatians above. To what is my spirit still enslaved right now? What imprisons me? What steps can I take this year to live joyfully in the freedom God offers and invites me to dwell in?

Loving God, guide my steps this coming year and always.



**MARY, HOLY MOTHER OF GOD
JANUARY 1, 2023**

LET US STRIVE TO BE PURE AND HOLY LIKE OUR HEAVENLY MOTHER. ALL MOTHERS WANT THEIR CHILDREN TO INHERIT OR ACQUIRE THEIR GOOD QUALITIES. OUR HEAVENLY MOTHER IS NO EXCEPTION. WITH JOSEPH, SHE SUCCEEDED IN TRAINING THE CHILD JESUS, SO THAT HE GREW IN HOLINESS AND IN "FAVOR BEFORE GOD AND MAN." HENCE, OUR BEST WAY OF CELEBRATING THIS FEAST AND HONORING OUR HEAVENLY MOTHER WOULD BE TO PROMISE HER THAT WE WILL PRACTICE HER VIRTUES OF FAITH, OBEDIENCE, PURITY AND HUMBLE SERVICE. IN THIS WAY, WE WILL BE TRYING TO BECOME THE SAINTLY SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF OUR HEAVENLY MOTHER, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD.

**IN YOUR PRAYERS, PLEASE
REMEMBER:**

INTENTIONS OF THE HOLY FATHER,

- ALL PRIESTS INCLUDING:
 - FR. MOWERY
 - FR. ST. HILAIRE
 - FR. SOLA
- MICHAEL BARDI
- MAUREEN BECK
- LORENA BENNET
- CANDICE BERGER
- CHRISTINA CAPRIOLA
- RUSSELL CASTROGIOVANNI
- COBERT FAMILY
- HONOR DELL
- RYAN DELL
- CHRIS ERTWINE
- FARWELL FAMILY
- VIVIAN WHITENIGHT HYNICK
- BOB KALIE
- MARGARET KALIE
- AUSTIN KELSEY
- JOSEPH LABONTE
- MARY ANN LEVAN
- DOROTHY O'HANDLEY
- NANCY OMAN
- RICH SCAVONE
- JACKIE SCHERER
- JUDY SERRA
- MARK & PATRICIA SULLIVAN
- LENA TUNAITIS
- MIKE VERTUCCI
- MARISA WHITENIGHT
- NANCY WISBAR
- SONNY WOMELSDORF
- MARY ANN ZEVENEY

And how does
this happen
to me, that the
MOTHER
OF MY LORD
should come
to me?

Lk. 1:43