



While we celebrate Epiphany Sunday, the arrival of three kings, let's ask ourselves, "What gifts will we bring to Christ?"

Wait!

Change that.

Instead of asking what, maybe we should be asking **who** will we bring to Christ?

Isn't that what Jesus asked of us?

The US Bishops and Bishop Mark Brennan have made it loud and clear the best gift to give Jesus is the evangelization of our worlds, sharing Him and His Church with others, bringing them to Heaven. Christ Himself said, "Go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you and behold, I am with you always to the close of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20).

On this Solemnity of the Epiphany let us open our hearts and minds to His word to strengthen our faith in this journey to Walk with One and lead others to the Lord.

Like the star of Bethlehem that shined brighter than anyone could ever imagine

guiding the shepherds and the wise men to Jesus, Christ shines more radiantly in our hearts as His faithful.

The great prophet Jeremiah shared in the Oracle of the Lord (Jeremiah 29:13-14) – "When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me... and I will change your lot; I will gather you together from all the nations...."

Let us reflect on how we seek Christ.

During final months of the Eucharist Revival's Year of Mission, focus on His continued presence in the tabernacle, where we are drawn to be one with Him in person - in the Eucharist.

Like the wise men, we are drawn by our faith to come together to celebrate and honor God the Son.

In the first reading on this special solemnity, the prophet Isaiah mentions gold and frankincense, as gifts befitting a king. He prophesies that these gifts would be presented to the one to come -



the Savior of the world. However, the magi also brought myrrh which was used in those days to anoint a body after death. This is another prophecy, because this newborn king is also to be a victim, called to suffer, like Isaiah's suffering servant, for the sins of all.

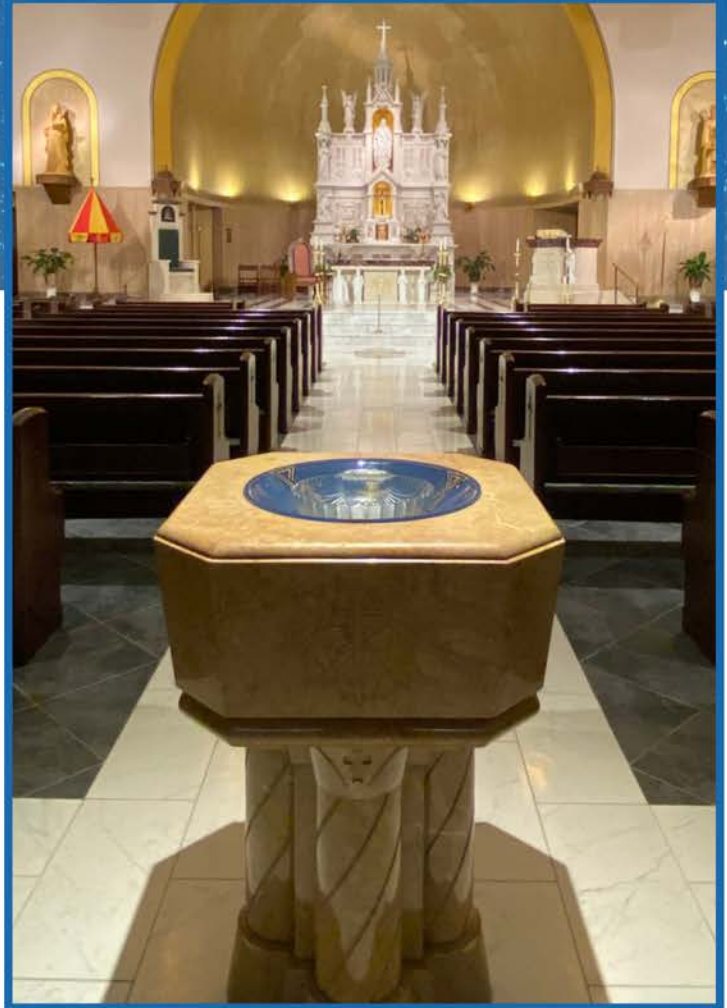
In our parishes and missions, we may not come with the riches of the magi, but we come to Mass with our greatest treasure - our love of God. Today, we gather thousands of miles from Bethlehem to honor the King of kings.

"Like the Magi, believers are led by faith to seek God in the most hidden places, knowing that the Lord waits for them there," Pope Francis said.

Let others see Christ in us for that is the true gift He wants from us.

He came to earth for us, so bring Him your sufferings, loss, fears, worries, and challenges, letting Him fill your spirit with love, joy, and peace. Be grateful in all ways for every joy and triumph - great and small. Let us commit to be life-long learners of faith, humble, and aware of signs from Heaven.

Let others know that the Real Presence of Christ is found in the Eucharist. We can



spend time with God at Adoration or praying before the tabernacle. When not with Him in Church, we can be with him in Scripture, prayer, and in faith formation opportunities.

Be mindful of your presence before the Lord and let others see Christ in you.

Be the light that leads others to Jesus.

Let Epiphany Sunday be a revelation to us all. Let us realize that the greatest present of all is our presence, where we can surely find His presence.

May God give us the strength and courage to be his hands and feet on earth, doing our part to bring souls to Heaven.

Confident in the Challenge

EVANGELIZATION TRAINING TO LEAD OTHERS TO CHRIST

It is time to take Bishop Mark Brennan's challenge seriously - lead others to the Lord.

Several Chancery staff and parishioners of the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling recently gathered in the Diocese of Pittsburgh for an inspiring "Invite One Back" training with St. Paul Street Evangelization. The day began with Mass celebrated by Bishop William Waltersheid, setting a prayerful tone for presentations led by Adam Janke, vice president of (SPSE), reminding all of our mission to share the joy of the Gospel and welcome others back to the Church!



As Bishop Brennan inspired the diocese in his most recent pastoral letter, Janke echoed: be intentional, welcoming, and confident.

Janke said evangelizing is not forcing religion on someone, true evangelization is non-confrontational, conversational, and intentionally prayerful.

"Many people have a great fear to bring up the Gospel or how Jesus has gotten them through a time of struggle or joy, but let's work together to overcome that fear and have faith," he said. "Invite God to make (evangelization a natural reaction). Let Him make it happen in you. You don't need a degree for that.

"It's taking time to break the silence around the subject of faith - of Jesus," Janke said. "It's building relationships and caring for others enough that you want to share your joy and hope found in Christ."

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- BE INTENTIONAL
Intentionally Catholic, Christian, and a servant of Jesus, asking the Holy Spirit to boldly guide us to gently bring others to Christ.
- BE WELCOMING
Lead others to Jesus, working as a shepherd for His Church.
- BE CONFIDENT
Celebrate your faith and what God has done for you - don't shy away from bringing your faith or Christ up in conversation because "society" and the devil want you to feel embarrassed or offensive if you share the Good News.

In Bishop Brennan's letter and again at Mass on the Solemnity of Mary the Holy Mother of God he emphasized, "Many of you have spoken to me about your sadness that family members and friends have walked away from the Church. Some of you lament that your parishes are aging with few young families and single persons in sight. I don't think any of us wants our Church to shrink and disappear. Our Catholic Church is the original Christian Church and by far the most universal. Our Church - meaning all of us working together - must fulfill our mission and not settle for just hanging on, sad and listless.

"If your faith matters to you, do your part. Join with other Catholics around the state to reach out to those we have lost and those we never had. It may take years to see the full fruit of our efforts, but we must begin."

Janke shared a true "wake up call" he had. "We have to take responsibility and not blame or make assumptions about why they are not there," Janke said. "I was totally put in my place one day in my parish. A man who had not been to church for a long time came up to me and said, 'Miss me?' I honestly was totally taken off guard. I knew he looked familiar, but I couldn't place how I knew him let alone his intentions. Then he proceeded to tell me he had been a member of the parish for 35 years, but he stopped coming. We didn't call to check in, we didn't send a Thinking of You card, no letter, no email, BUT he still got offertory envelopes!

"Wow, we failed him," Janke said shaking his head and added, "And really... we mindlessly insulted him. We have to look in the mirror. We have to let the Holy Spirit work through us. Let's pray as a small group. Let's pray as a community, and let's ask God to give us the right moments to talk to others about Him. Jesus is already in every person's life He just needs messengers to make it known."

So, start internally in the parish and in the family - with sincere kindness. Brainstorm as a small group in your parish or get together with others in your (vicariate, aka regional parishes and missions), open the doors of the church to the public for tours, and learn more about SPSE.

Intentional street evangelization is not a gathering for a debate, it is setting aside a time to be present in public to pray for others, introduce Jesus to others, and share, Janke said.

"Don't be apprehensive to share Jesus, God wants you to do it and we have to trust the Holy Spirit to give us the words to speak of Him," Janke said.

Don't forget to evangelize yourself by being more aware of great Catholic content all around, he said. In our diocese we have the FaithInWV weekly e-bulletin, diocesan social media and website, The Catholic Spirit, and the many events in our parishes and schools around the state.

Don't keep Christ, the Eucharist, the sacraments, the Gospels, and the saints and angels secret. God wants you to share and the saints are cheering you on.



Open door
leads
to new life

Mary's Refuge Celebrates Joyful Journey

Young mother completes program at Martinsburg maternity center

By MEG H. PARTINGTON

Administrative assistant, St. Joseph School
MARTINSBURG, W.Va. - With confidence earned by overcoming some of life's most difficult challenges and support from a Martinsburg maternity center, a young single mother is stepping into a new home and a new chapter of her life.

Savannah Smith (not her real name) is the first guest of Mary's Refuge to complete the program by reaching the goals she set for herself, including having a stable job and saving enough money so she can live on her own.

"Once they reach their goals and they're ready, it's their time," said Allison Ferrell, executive director of Mary's Refuge.

The 20-year-old has had a job working the night shift at Procter & Gamble since August 2023, got a car and a learner's permit, and has two lessons left to complete her driver training in hopes of obtaining a license. She moved into her new home on Dec. 19 with her son, who will turn 2 in April 2025.

Smith moved into Mary's Refuge - the first maternity home in the Eastern Panhandle - Smith moved into Mary's Refuge - the first maternity home in the Eastern Panhandle - in March 2023, just a few weeks before her son's birth.

A day before she moved out of the building

ion Stephen Street just outside downtown Martinsburg, Smith said she was stressed about packing and relocating her personal belongings, but was clear about what most excited her about the next stage of her life: "Freedom."

She was ready to be free of the worries that plagued her as a pregnant teen, when she often had insufficient food, hydration and hygiene items, and lived in a home infested with bed bugs. She was free from homelessness, which she experienced several times because of her now ex-boyfriend's behavior, which led them to repeatedly get kicked out of residences.

Smith attributed her success to staying focused on her goals and said she would advise other young single mothers currently going through what she did to "stay yourself."

"Just having a supportive environment and having people to talk with" was vital to Smith's progress, Ferrell said.

"I'm super proud of her," Ferrell said. "She has taken full advantage of what Mary's Refuge has to offer. She still has us as a support system to fall back on if needed."

In addition to being a place to call home, the refuge offers budgeting and parenting classes, help with education and employment, and connections to resources

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*Everything changes
when you realize
God loves you
unconditionally!*

Mary's Refuge
Maternity Home's first guest
has completed the program.
The door that was opened
for her and her now toddler
has lead to many
open doors
- the most significant one -
a new home of their own.

such as MountainHeart Community Services Inc. and Eastern Panhandle Instructional Cooperative (EPIC).

The maternity home opened Jan. 9, 2023, and is now occupied by 10 mothers and 16 children. A 17th child is due to arrive Dec. 30 after a scheduled C-section. Other women are on a waiting list.

Jessica Petrlik, who is a mentor to Smith, watched her dramatic transformation over the last two years.

“Her whole mindset was low self-esteem, not a lot of confidence,” Petrlik said while describing Smith when they met for the first time through YoungLives, which mentors and walks alongside teen moms, while linking them with community resources and sharing the Gospel. Now, “This girl is not afraid to speak up for herself,” she said.

With a stable living situation and people “speaking life into her,” Petrlik said she witnessed in Smith an “almost complete 180 (degree turn) in who she is, what she stands for. Seeing that confidence and independence come has been the highlight.”

Despite Smith’s newfound independence, Petrlik is confident that their relationship will stay strong.

“I don’t think it will change a bit,” Petrlik said. “I can’t see my life without them.”

Petrlik’s children, ages 14, 15 and 17, remarked to her recently how they can’t imagine the Smiths not being part of their tight-knit circle, particularly the toddler.

“He’s brought so much joy and happiness. He adds that extra joy and light,” Petrlik said.

There certainly have been difficult times for Petrlik while she helped her mentee work through insecurities and fears. But every detour and downturn were worth it because neither of them gave up.

“I do not regret it; I wouldn’t change it,” Petrlik said. “God is surrounding her with the people he has designed to be in her life.”

For more information about Mary’s Refuge or to make a donation, call 304-350-1632; email life@marysrefuge.com; or go to marysrefuge.com.



MARY'S

REFUGE

Prayer Chain Prison Ministry

BRING HOPE AMID ISOLATION



As the world enters 2025, Pope Francis' proclaimed Year of Hope, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Office of Social Ministry announced the Prayer Chain Prison Ministry.

The Prayer Chain Prison Ministry connects prayer "warriors" on the outside with prisoners on the inside, said Director Kathy Barton.

She said prisoners wanting prayer will be connected with someone who will commit to daily prayer for their assigned inmate. Inmates may ask for this daily prayer either anonymously or using their first name or a nickname. Those praying will identify themselves by using a first name.

"The purpose of this ministry is to offer the inmate hope and peace through prayers which are lifted up just for them," she said. "Often the 'chains' of prison go beyond the physical chains and shackles. Sometimes the heaviest chains to bear are those within our own mind and heart. Those are the chains that only Christ can break. This will be the ardent prayer of our prayer warriors-allow Christ to break those chains so that true freedom is possible."

The ministry is rewarding for all involved.

"If an incarcerated man or woman can know that someone out here knows their name, thinks about them, keeps them in their heart and talks to God about them, that could very well counter the hopelessness and isolation they may feel. It may help them to understand that they do still matter in this world, and most especially, to God," says Laura Cronk, Diocesan Finance Department, whose idea it was to connect inmates with prayer partners.

Barton outlined several ways that prayer can be said. A few options are:

- A daily decade of the rosary said each day can be dedicated to your inmate.
- A special intention said prior to grace before each meal.
- A mass for a "special intention" can be offered.
- A novena can be offered.
- Remembering them as we say our nightly prayers.

"Please consider offering the gift of REAL HOPE to someone who is CHAINED to despair and hopelessness through the power of prayer," Barton said. "Let's break these chains together!" if you are willing to be a part of this Prayer Chain Ministry. Contact Barton at kbarton@dwc.org or call 304233-0880 ext. 289

A Concert for Christmas & Epiphany

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2025 AT 3PM

**CATHEDRAL OF SAINT JOSEPH
1300 EOFF STREET, WHEELING, WV**



Featuring

Cathedral Schola • St. Michael Parish Handbell Choir
Katie Shaffer, flute • Erin Marion, oboe
Chad Carter, handbells • Robert Troeger, organ
Deborah Podolski Breiding, piano • Amanda Sable, vocalist
Christie Greenwood, vocalist • Braden Mills, vocalist

Free Admission

Donations will be accepted for the Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center



THE Cathedral of St. Joseph

Epiphany of the Lord

First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

The glory of the Lord shines on all people.

Responsorial: Psalm 72

“Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.”

Second Reading: Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

The Gentiles are coheirs of the promise.

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

The magi come with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

[FOR FULL SCRIPTURE TEXT GO TO USCCB.ORG](http://USCCB.ORG)

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that we may continually reveal the light of Christ to the world, sharing the Good News of God's love and mercy to all people, let us pray to the Lord...

For leaders of nations, that they may be unafraid to welcome those who are searching sincerely for safety, security, and peace, let us pray to the Lord...

For the gift of peace in our world, community and homes, that legions of angels led by St. Michael protect us from all evil, let us pray to the Lord...

That during this Jubilee Year of Hope, that the Holy Spirit guides us to lead others to Christ - giving them the joy and hope for eternal life, let us pray to the Lord...

Lord hear our prayer



LIFELONG CATECHESIS

JANUARY DEDICATION - THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS

Devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus has been long standing tradition in the Church, starting with Pope Gregory X in 1274, when he encouraged the Dominican order to preach and promote the devotion to the Holy Name. In 1721, Pope Innocent XIII instituted the feast day. It was temporarily removed in 1969, but restored by St. John Paul II for Jan. 3. The Church honors the Holy Name the entire month.

Have you noticed your priest, deacon, religious, or fellow parishioners bow their head when the name of Jesus is spoken during the Mass?


The reason is backed by what St. Paul says in his letter to the Philippians: "God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every other name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend ... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord..." ([Phil 2:9-10](#)).

This reverent bow stems from this passage.

The Roman Missal, the book that contains the prescribed prayers for the celebration of Mass states that "A bow of the head is made when the three Divine Persons are named together and at the names of Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Saint in whose honor Mass is being celebrated."

All are welcome and encouraged to make the pious gesture of bowing at the name of Jesus. Think of it as an honorable action meant to remind us of Christ's presence.

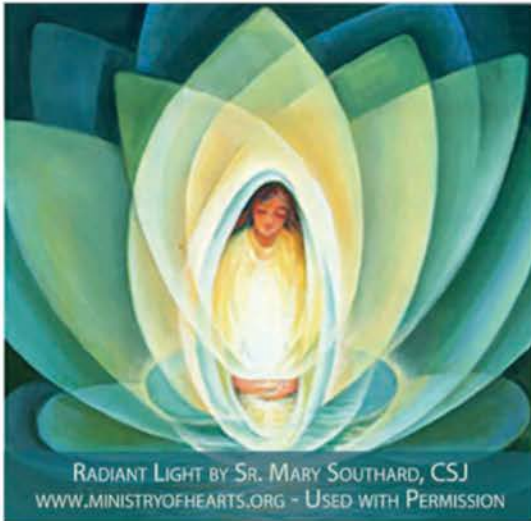
Did you know?



WOMEN'S RETREAT
ARE YOU A MARTHA OR A MARY?
LIVING A BALANCED LIFE.

Presented by Janet Schaeffler, OP

March 28-30, 2025 • St. John XXIII Pastoral Center, Charleston



The Scripture story of Jesus coming to the home of Mary and Martha (and Lazarus) is well-known to us.

What is the message for us, women living in 2025? Through this Scripture passage, what is God saying to us about our lives? Is it what we often hear – or might there be several messages?

- Do I feel too busy, to rushed?
- How – really – do I balance everything today?

What really are the answers to which Jesus challenges us – and comfort us.

For more information and to register visit:
www.dwc.org/2025-Womens-Retreat

WV CATHOLIC RADIO
 BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOU

Berkeley Springs - Hancock, MD	FM	96.3
Berkeley Springs	FM	107.9
Clarksburg-Bridgeport	FM	97.5
Dunbar - Charleston	AM	1450
Eastern Panhandle - coming soon	FM	88.5
Grafton - Clarksburg	AM	1190
Montgomery - Beckley	FM	89.7
Purgitsville	FM	98.7
St. Marys - Parkersburg	FM	105.3
Star City -Morgantown	FM	89.7
Summersville	FM	91.3
Wheeling - Martins Ferry, OH	FM	90.7
Weirton - Steubenville	FM	97.9

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Liturgy of the Hours

LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Pray the prayer for this day, this hour! EBREVIARY.COM LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Scan the QR code or visit the link below to view a PDF version of the Liturgy of the Hours.



MASS ONLINE

Saturday 6pm Masses will continue to be livestreamed from the Cathedral of St. Joseph, and will be available on our website each Sunday at DWC.ORG.