

# Faith IN WV

DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON



DECEMBER 25, 2022



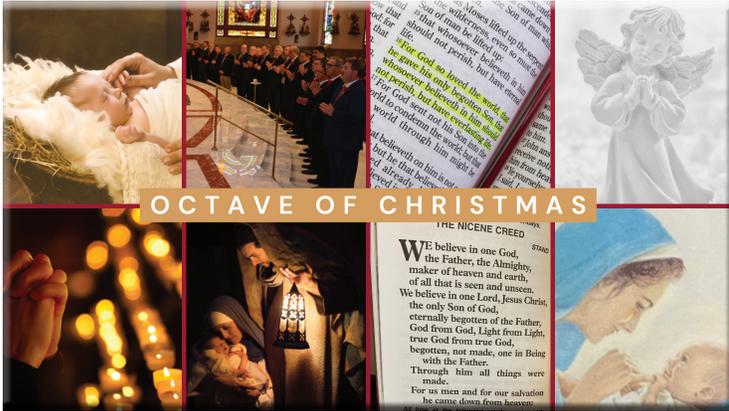
Amber Knorr Art

## IT'S CHRISTMAS!

The painting featured is "Under the Protection of St. Joseph" by Amber Knorr of Steubenville. You can see more of her art and purchase prints at: [WWW.AMBERKNORRART.COM](http://WWW.AMBERKNORRART.COM) or [WWW.ETSY.COM/SHOP/AMBERKNORRART](http://WWW.ETSY.COM/SHOP/AMBERKNORRART). Used with permission.

# CELEBRATE THE EIGHT DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

**THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS** is the eight days of prolongation of Christmas. It begins on Dec. 25th with the Solemnity of Christmas (the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord) and continues through Jan. 1, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.



Here is a summation of the Christmas octave days following Christmas Day:

## **THE FEAST OF ST. STEPHEN THE FIRST MARTYR DEC. 26TH**

Let us call upon St. Stephen, patron of deacons, to interceded for us as we pray for our permanent deacons, deacon candidates, and their families here in the diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. St. Stephen was one of the first deacons of the Church appointed by the Apostles to serve the people with hearts charity and proclaim the Good News to all. The latter caused him to be hatefully persecuted. He continued his ministry. Irate crowds who despised the truth and wisdom of Christ physically removed him from the synagogue and stoned him to death.

## **THE FEAST OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST DEC. 27TH**

The Apostle John was so loved by Jesus that upon the cross he entrusted His Mother to his care. John was also a witness of the Transfiguration of Christ. He wrote the fourth Gospel, three Epistles and the Book of Revelation. He doesn't describe the birth of Christ in his Gospel, but alludes to it not with wonder but with great affirmation and no doubt. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..." John 1:14. His bible verse, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life," is one of the most quoted in history. Let us leave no doubt that we are Christians by our words, deeds, and devotions just like St. John the Evangelist.

## **THE FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS DEC. 28TH**

This day reminds us of the ugly truth that King Herod had all children under the age of two killed out of fear that one of them was Jesus, the newborn king. He was furious when the wisemen did not return to him to tell him where Jesus was. Our faith teaches us these innocent victims will wear the crown of martyrs in heaven forever honored by the angels and saints as the first witnesses to the newborn King.

Let the truths of this feast turn our hearts and minds to a present-day sadness, committing ourselves to pray for all those who were aborted, their parents, and those considering abortion.

## **THE FEAST OF ST. THOMAS BECKET DEC. 29TH**

As Archbishop of Canterbury in the 12th Century, St. Thomas Becket defied the wishes of England's King Henry II. St. Thomas refused to limit the freedoms of the Catholic Church and the faithful; he refused to denounce his faith; and at the hands of his murderers who stormed the cathedral said he is a "priest of God. For the name of Jesus and the protection of the Church, I am ready to embrace death."

No matter the pressures in life or how challenging it may seem to keep the faith and hold sacred our religious obligations, let us recall the Divine loyalty of St. Thomas Becket.

## **THE FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY (THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS) DEC. 30TH**

We are all called to be holy families. We can find comfort in asking St. Joseph and our Blessed Mother to interceded for us, because they know all the emotions and trials of being a family. Let us call upon the Holy Family to strengthen us to encourage those in our life to become all that God has created them to be. Through Mary we know, "Nothing is impossible for God."

In Matthew's Gospel on this day we focus on Joseph and his faithful obedience to ensure the safety of the Christ Child and our Blessed Mother. He trusted God with all his heart as he fled to Egypt to escape the rath of Herod. Let us stay faithful to God and our families under the watch of the angels no matter what is threatened.

*continue...*

## THE FEAST OF ST. SYLVESTER DEC. 31

Pope Saint Sylvester's papacy was from 314-335. He ruled at the time of Emperor Constantine who called for an ecumenical council, the first Council of Nicea to debate religious teachings. This led to the writing of the Nicene Creed, proclaiming "Jesus is true God of true God consubstantial with the Father."

Let us celebrate our faith, the Church, and all that we recite together at Mass as we say the Nicene Creed. St. Sylvester, intercede for us and continue to teach us how to serve each other as a united people.

## THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD JAN. 1ST

A day to honor the Mary for saying yes to God to be the Blessed Mother of Jesus. It is fitting the Octave of Christmas

concludes by showing our love and respect for Mary the Blessed Virgin and Mother of God. She is the ultimate example for every mother and those who live, love, and serve like mothers even when they don't have children of their own.

It is overwhelming to think about the relationship she must have had with her son our Lord and Savior. She nurtured Him through every stage of life. She taught Him to walk, speak, sing, dance, and clap His hands. She worried for Him through life's routine struggles and those that were overwhelming. She cried for Him, laughed with Him, and lived fully in faith for Him. On this solemnity we honor her. Blessed Mother, pray for us.

# SPECIAL CHRISTMAS BLESSING DEFINES LONGING OF EUCHARISTIC PEOPLE



*Editor's Note: the following is an excerpt of a homily given by Father Justin Golna, of St. John the Evangelist Parish, Wellsburg. It was originally given at the 2022 Infant of Prague Novena at the Cathedral of St. Joseph.*

In the life of a priest or a deacon there are moments in which his heart is pierced with a love from God. On Christmas of 2019, I

experienced one of these moments.

I was a deacon, and I was in Rome, in seminary. I didn't want to travel anywhere for Christmas because I had a hope that I would be able to be a deacon at the pope's Mass. So, I waited as the days of Christmas break ticked by and finally on our bulletin board was the notice, "the Vatican needs acolytes and deacons to distribute Holy Communion at the pope's midnight Mass."

I arrived early and received training. As the Holy Father was celebrating the Mass, I was in the chapel praying and waiting with the other deacons for the time to distribute Holy Communion to the people in St. Peter's Square. As I prayed, I then saw the papal emcees with a trunk, which was supposed to hold 60 ciboria, which are the vessels that hold the consecrated hosts. Inside, however, they found only 15.

After consulting with each other, they announced to the deacons: "There is not enough time to get more ciboria, so the first 15 to come to this table will be the ones to distribute Holy Communion to the faithful gathered outside."

And the Lord was with me that evening because he positioned me right next to that table. So, I was the first in line. We received the hosts from the tabernacle and just as the Eucharistic prayer was starting, we were let out to the square.

Throng of people were eagerly waiting to receive our Lord.

For each person that I distributed Communion to, 100 more got in line. My hands were freezing so much from the cold that I could not feel his fingers, but I continued as the line's numbers increased.

The attendant who was with each of us tapped me on my shoulder and said, "Padre, it's time to go." I said, "Just a minute," and I kept trying to distribute more.

And with each host, more people joined the line.

"Padre, we have to go now." I said, "I can't. Give me one more minute." Finally, he started to pull me away. And it was in that moment when I looked out at the crowd of people who had not been able to receive because there were too great a number, I felt the same love that the Lord feels. I could see the longing to be united with him....

As I was led away, one of the Vatican police officers, dutifully guarding the deacons, pulled me aside, “Father, can I receive?” he asked.

I gave him one of my final hosts. In this moment that I realized that there is a true desire for us to be united with the Lord in this great sacrament.

For the people there, the longing was more tangible than it had ever been.

We, who live in this oasis of churches where we can receive Holy Communion whenever we want, need to cultivate this same longing that those people had.

This longing that we have to have for our Lord comes from a strong foundation of love. And what greater love is there, our Lord tells us, than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

We know the Eucharist is not a symbol. We know that it is the Real Presence of our Lord. We are able to see beyond the appearance to what lies beneath. To the substance, to what it truly is.

One of my favorite things about being a parish priest is seeing elderly couples. As couples grow old together, they begin to talk like each other. They use the same language as one another, they finish one another’s sentences. Because when one loves someone else so much, they take on the other’s identity, and they want to be surrounded by that love. They conform themselves to the person they love.

We are called to conform ourselves to our beloved, to Christ himself. Our heart is called to be whole, to be united in our

one love and that love is God. And when we do draw deeper into love with God, we conform ourselves to him.

Whether one is a priest, a deacon, a religious, or a lay person, all will have these moments where God’s divine love pierces our hearts.

We have these moments where we are fire for him, and that fire attracts. We are able to foster this fire. Our love must be rooted in the same love that Christ has for us. And a love that is total, that is absolute, that allows nothing else to enter into it. A love that is giving of everything we have back to our creator, in knowledge that we receive everything we have from him. This love is what animates us.

The reason we go to Mass when we don’t want to, the reason we love our neighbor and we pray for our enemies, is because we know love himself. Our Lord is unique in that his words create and when he says that he is the bread of life he has created this reality that we are drawn to. We know not just with our eyes but with the eyes of faith that the entirety—the body, blood, soul, and divinity of our Lord is contained in something so precious as this host. And we are drawn to it. We are drawn to it because of love.

Love alone is credible in a world which has inverted its priorities. Love alone will attract others to this same joy and love that one has when united to Christ. We are called to have love overflow from them to those they meet.

We are called to be in that state of awe and inspiration that those people in St. Peter’s Square to foster a sense of mystery in the face of so great a Lord that we humbly receive him, we humbly adore him, we humbly love him.



# NATIVITY OF THE LORD: CHRISTMAS

**Vigil: Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 89; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Matthew 1:1-25**

The prophet Isaiah foretells of the day when God's people will rejoice. St. Paul and Matthew tell the story of that day – the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, the descendent of Abraham and Sarah, lineage of King David, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. Welcome the Savior of the World!

**Midnight: Isaiah 9:1-6; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14**

Isaiah prophesied what the angels proclaimed – God will be with us born of the virgin in the city of David in the most humble of dwellings. Make room for the Prince of Peace in our lives!

**Dawn: Isaiah 62:11-12; Psalm 97; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:15-20**

Isaiah foretold the coming of the Savior, who would redeem His people. St. Paul in his letter to Titus declares that because of God's great love for us He sent His Son to give us eternal life. Luke shares that it was the ordinary shepherds who were summoned by the angels to be the first to see Mary, Joseph, and the Newborn King. Praise God!

**Day: Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18**

Isaiah's prophecies of the Word made Flesh has come to life. God dwells among us and with Him comes peace, grace, and the light of salvation. Thanks be to God!

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL SCRIPTURE TEXT  
BIBLE.USCCB.ORG/BIBLE/READINGS/122522-NIGHT.CFM](http://BIBLE.USCCB.ORG/BIBLE/READINGS/122522-NIGHT.CFM)

## PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that we always make room for Jesus in our hearts and all we do, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For the leaders of the world, that never tire of working toward peace no matter the sacrifice, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all those who are alone or away from us this Christmas, let their hearts be filled with the joy, comfort, and peace of Christ who unites us all, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all who celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, may our actions and words glorify our elation – Emmanuel, God with us, let us pray to the Lord. . .

*Lord hear our prayer*

# Christmas Mass<sup>2022</sup>

CELEBRATE MASS WITH US  
ON THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD  
FROM THE  
BASILICA OF THE CO-CATHEDRAL  
OF THE SACRED HEART

We hope you will join Bishop Mark Brennan as he celebrates Mass for the Nativity of the Lord at the Basilica of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Charleston at 8 pm, Saturday, Dec. 24.

The Mass will be livestreamed on our website, [DWC.ORG](http://DWC.ORG), and also available on our diocesan Facebook page at [WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DIOCESEOFWHEELINGCHARLESTON](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DIOCESEOFWHEELINGCHARLESTON).

The faithful may also view the Mass on television. See below for a list of channels broadcasting the celebration. May God bless you and your family as you prepare for the coming of Christ.

**CHRISTMAS MASS WILL BE BROADCASTED AT MIDNIGHT ON THE FOLLOWING CHANNELS**

WTRF-TV7	WHEELING
WBOY/NBC	CLARKSBURG/MORGANTOWN
WDVM	MARTINSBURG
WOWK	CHARLESTON/HUNTINGTON
WVNS	BECKLEY/BLUEFIELD

# SPECIAL COLLECTION AT CHRISTMAS MASSES

A special collection for Catholic Charities West Virginia is set for all Christmas Masses in the diocese Dec. 24-25. Prayerfully consider a gift to Catholic Charities West Virginia. Your donation helps tens of thousands of our vulnerable brothers and sisters every year. It allows CCWV to provide hope, provide safety, provide food and provide care.

Give to Catholic Charities:

- Through the second collection at Christmas masses
- Online at [www.CATHOLICCHARITIESWV.ORG](http://www.CATHOLICCHARITIESWV.ORG)
- By mail to 2000 Main Street, Wheeling, WV 26003

With your help, CCWV can continue providing caring and compassionate support to West Virginians in need. Thank you.



## EXPERIENCED WITH CURSILLO?

**HELP US RENEW THE MOVEMENT!**

Have you ever experienced a Cursillo weekend? Are you a cursillista?

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is trying to resurrect the Cursillo Movement in the diocese and is looking for people who have experience with the apostolic movement.

If you are experienced with Cursillo and would like to join the diocesan efforts in bringing it back to the diocese, please contact Daniel Maul, in the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, at 304-233-0880, ext. 376, or by email at [DMAUL@DWC.ORG](mailto:DMAUL@DWC.ORG), or communicate with Joe Pangilinan, at [JOEYPANG@AOL.COM](mailto:JOEYPANG@AOL.COM)

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~Also Streaming in WV at [www.rdo.to/WLOL](http://www.rdo.to/WLOL)~

### ENROLL TODAY

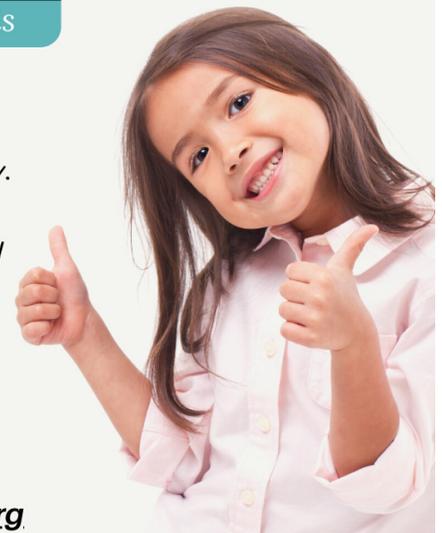
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## Liturgy of the Hours LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Pray the prayer for this day, this hour!

[EBREVIARY.COM](http://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](http://DWC.ORG).