



Saint Joseph Catholic Church

P. O. Box 365 117 South Main St.

Loreauville, Louisiana 70552

(337) 229-4254

FAX (337) 229-4255

Rev. Barry F. Crochet, Pastor

Rev. Godwin Nzeh CMF, Associate Pastor

Deacon Christopher Doumit, Pastoral Assistant

pastor@stjosephparishonline.org

stjosephparishonline.org

MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil Mass — 4:00 p.m. [5:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Victory]

Sunday — 7:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

[9:00 a.m. at Our Lady of Victory]

Monday, Wednesday and Friday — 6:45 a.m. at Our Lady of Victory

Tuesday and Thursday — 5:30 p.m. at Saint Joseph

First Saturday — 8:00 a.m. at Our Lady of Victory

SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION

Every Saturday from 3:00 p.m. to 3:40 p.m. [5:00 p.m. to 5:20 p.m. at Our Lady of Victory] and one-half hour before all weekday Masses, or by appointment during office hours.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday — 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

RECEPTIONIST/BOOKKEEPER/CEMETERIAN

Mrs. Gail Borel — gail.borel@stjosephparishonline.org

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Mrs. Sherry Hebert — sherry.hebert@stjosephparishonline.org

YOUTH MINISTRY/CONFIRMATION COORDINATOR

Mrs. Jeanne Stiles — jstiles@diolaf.org

MUSIC MINISTRY

Mrs. Janice Carboni (4:00 p.m.)

Mrs. Jeanne Stiles and Mr. Dro Gondron (10:30 a.m.)

BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE

Mr. Ken Theriot

SACRISTAN

Mr. Jerry Frugé

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

The chapel is open every day from 6:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.

FUNERALS

Please contact the parish office prior to contacting the funeral home. Funerals are celebrated in the morning of Tuesdays through Saturdays no later than 11:00 a.m.

A Funeral Vigil is celebrated on the preceding evening at 6:00 p.m.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Baptism classes are held on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:45 p.m. in the rectory. Baptism are held on the second and fourth Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m. Please contact the parish office for scheduling.

SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

Couples must contact the pastor at least six months prior to the proposed wedding date.

SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Contact the parish office to schedule a pastoral visit.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Contact the parish office.



Pour forth, we beseech You, O Lord,
Your grace into our hearts,
that we, to whom
the Incarnation of Christ Your Son
was made known
by the message of an Angel,
may by His Passion and Cross
be brought to the glory
of His Resurrection.

Please pray for our parish family members who are sick:

We invite you to submit the names of people who are in need of our prayers.



Jess Koch, Lisa Adcock, Kendall Romero, Alicia Durand, Janice Stacy, Joseph Huval, Marie Lee Prioux, Troy Barras, Kelly Ransonet, Jessica Scott, Mary Smith, Brian Thibodeaux, Cora Laviolette, Jackie Savoy, Barry Thibodeaux, Doris "Boutte" Barras, Michele Dugas Burke, Paul Crochet, Craig Breaux, Helen Simon, Ross Rouly, Jamie Brady, Holly LeBlanc, Faye Gary, Tony Berard, Glenn Romero, Stuart Sandoz, Duffy Domingue, Eric Clements, David Louviere, Judy Judice, Hayden Ransonet, Clark Provost, Trevor Louviere, Vanessa

Courville, Woodrow Ruiz, Austin Willett, Willey Poirrier, Inez Barras, Dennis and Helen Bastian, Butch and Debbie White, Gwen Borel, Guy Thibodeaux, Lydia May, Louis "CoCo" Landry Jr., Jerry Fruge, Jimmy Clifton, Michelle Breaux, Rowena Borel, Megan Scully, Terrel Dressel, Maxine Latiolais, Dawn Derouen, Deacon Chris Doumit, Beulah Dugas, Matil Lasalle Romero, Falyn Sonnier, Rickey Sonnier, Caline Provost, Jan Bourque, Lecia Broussard, Ronald Albert Sr.

Please note that our office will purge the names on our sick list every quarter. We ask anyone who lists someone's name to please call the parish office to add or remove a name.

Collection for December 16, 2018

Regular Sunday Offering Envelopes (62%)	\$ 3,996.00
Regular Sunday Offering Loose (38%)	\$ 2,485.00
Weekly Budget	\$ 9,136.00
Regular Collection Total	\$ 6,481.00
Difference	-\$2,655.00
Completion Loan Balance	\$ 111,880.87
Completion Collection	\$ 7,211.00
Insurance Balance 2018-2019	\$ 31,939.70
Insurance Collection	\$ 25.00

129 of 1314 families used collection envelopes (10% participation).
209 of 1314 families attended Mass this weekend (16% attendance).

Thanks to those who practice Sacrificial Giving and give of their time, talent and treasure as an act of profound Christian stewardship.

The Sanctuary Lamp is burning for:

Lawrence Courville
Claude and Nola Dugas

The Vocation Chalice is in the:

Adoration Chapel

Please pray for vocations. If you would like to have the vocation chalice in your home please call the rectory office at 229-4254.

The Bi-Monthly Statue is in the home of:

Shelly Foreman

The Weekly Statue is in the home of:

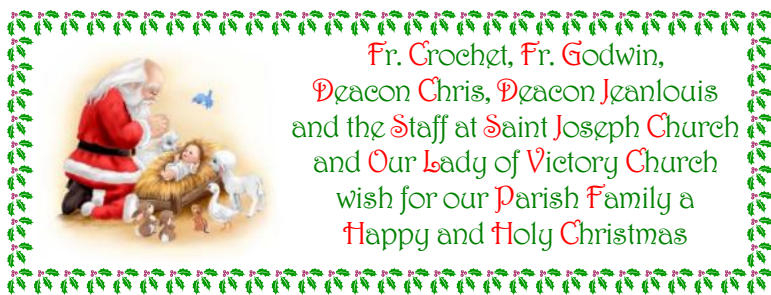
Russell and Michelle Stiener

Flowers on the Altar are in loving memory of:

Levie, Gladys and Dickie Ronsonet, Loto Louviere Jr. and Cobey Braquet

Saint Joseph Altar Candles are burning for:

Rogers and Jackie Courville, Special Intention, Chad Romero
Deyna Champagne, Baby Romero Family



Fr. Crochet, Fr. Godwin,
Deacon Chris, Deacon JeanLouis
and the Staff at Saint Joseph Church
and Our Lady of Victory Church
wish for our Parish Family a
Happy and Holy Christmas

**Please pray for our priests,
seminarians, deacons and religious**

Eternal Father, we lift up to You these special sons and daughters. Sanctify them. Heal and guide them. Mold them into the likeness of Your Son, Jesus, the Eternal High Priest. May their lives be pleasing to You. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

December 22	Rev. Steven LeBlanc/Joshua LaFleur Dcn. Brian Kirk/Sr. Robert Joseph Mire, O. Carm
December 23	Rev. Jerome LeDoux, SVD/Alex Lancon Dcn. Robert Klingman/Sr. Odile Theriot, O. Carm
December 24	Chaplain Col. Louis Ledoux/Cole Laurents Dcn. Denis LaCroix/Sr. Vera Vives, O. Carm
December 25	Rev. Mark Ledoux/Cade LeBlanc Dcn. Dennis Landry/Sr. Clare Cramer, O. Carm
December 26	Rev. Austin Leger/Jacob LeBlanc Dcn. Barry LeBlanc/Sr. Christina Marie Griggs, O. Carm
December 27	Rev. Lambertus Lein, SVD/Brett Lee Dcn. Josh Leblanc/Sr. Helen Ann Vinton, SP
December 28	Rev. Roland Lesseps, SJ/Calvin LeMaire Dcn. Eugene LeBoeuf/Sr. Jeanette Bernhardt, OP

Mass Intentions — 12/22-12/28

Saturday 4:00 p.m. Stjo — Walter and Doris M. Judice, Louis, Mac Mae and Ronald Broussard, Aymar "Poon" Dugas, Ide Dugas Family, Alexis Laviolette Family, Moise Louviere, Martha Louviere, Jeanette Theriot, Harold Louviere, Vernon Louviere and Family, Loretta and Lloyd Dressel, Ken Segura, Earl Mestayer, Irving Judice, Darrell Judice, Bernie Judice, Sue Crochet, Sam Delcambre and Family, Chad Romero, Deyna Champagne, Margie and Calvin Berard, Wayne LeBlanc, Lily Mae and Alvin LeBlanc, Tasey Eldridge, Clarence Champagne Family, Robert Prados Family and Breaux Family, Audrey Crochet, Jordan Prince and Special Intention, Joseph Dressel, Kimberly Decuir, Decuir and Dugas Family, J.O. Sr. and Marie Neuville and Ted Neuville Family, Barry Eldridge and Ned Broussard Families, Melvin Dugas, Roy Sr. and Gladys Berard, Forbus Mestayer Sr., Granger and Mestayer Family, Ronald Gonsoulin Sr. and Mildred Gonsoulin, Leed and Mabel Gondron, Fred Laviolette, Louis and Grace Moran, Virginia Frioux, Lennet and Marie Antoinette Crochet, Dorothy T. Latiolais and Kathy Latiolais Holtzclaw, Clenie and Eve Segura and Billie, Jay and Judy Gonsoulin Family, Paul Sonnier Family and Clyde Warfel Family, Sally Domingue, Cabrol and Domingue Family, Lorraine Huval, Preston and Agnes Huval, Martha Escagne Rodriguez, Lloyd Broussard, Claude and Felicie Granger, Nancy Broussard, Clarence and Hilda Landry, Otto Sr. and Laurence Girouard, Terradot Family, Theresa Girouard Allen, Antoine Judice Families, Suzette B. Judice, Kelly Louviere, Sylvia Thibodeaux, Francis and Art Mazerole, Billie and Armanee Barrilleaux, Herman Walet, Oneil and June Landry, Al Broussard Jr. Family and Abby Dugas Broussard Family, Will and Lily Roberts, Collins and Doris Louviere, Kay Dooley and William and Dolores Dooley.

5:30 p.m. OLV — For Our Parish Family
Sunday 7:00 a.m. Stjo — Esma Braquet Champagne, Sue Crochet, Sandra P. Horton, John Michael Steiner, Joe and Rita Habetz, Kay Habetz, Thomas Voorhies, Howard and Irene Duplantis, Louis Landry, Loto and Leah Louviere, Cathy Braquet Latiolais, Mark Braquet, Antoine "Boy" LeBlanc Family, Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Albert Sr., Champagne and Landry Families and Souls in Purgatory, Priest, Religious, Pope, Maude Granger and Mr. and Mrs. Francis Granger, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Granger, David Provost, Dr. Raymond Schneider, Elaine Schneider, Skip Schneider, Lolly Harbin, Breaux and Delcambre Families,

Lenwood Delcambre, Roy Freyou Family and Frank Fruge Family, Emus Borel, Tony and Rita Chataignier.

10:30 a.m. Stjo — Odette Gondron Blanchard, Emile Gondron Family, Joel Blanchard Family, Betty B. Broussard, Donald Lasseigne, Louis and Verna Dugas, Lionel Duplechain Jr. and Lionel Duplechain Sr., Ury Louviere, Sue Crochet, Loto Sr., Leah and Loto Louviere Jr., Gam and Velma Gondron Family, Alvin and Faye Tauzin, Edmonia Tauzin, Marcel and Nadage Broussard, Jimmy Eldridge, Elaine Plessala and Eldridge Family, Sylvia Thibodeaux, Cheryl Segura, Jeanette "Jan" Crochet, Pliny Walet Family, Agnes Breaux, Angus and Florence "Flo" Mestayer, Louis and Elbay Judice, Boots Thomas, Joe Boudreaux and Justin Boudreaux, L.J. and Anita Grivat and Parents, Louis Landry, Una and Otto Landry, Widley Louviere, Anita and Lennet Grivat, Antoine Judice Families, Suzette B. Judice, Kelly Louviere, Butsy Walet, Sandra Angelle, Glenn Angelle, Percy Granger.

Monday 6:45 a.m. OLV — Sandi and Glenn Angelle, Walet and Judice Families Mr. and Mrs. Ferdinand Breaux and Breaux and Viator Families, Mr. and Mrs. Collins Louviere and Kerney, Mr. and Mrs. Will Roberts, Cobey Braquet, Mabel and Wayne Gondron, Louis J. "Nego" and Lita N. Judice and Parents, Sue Crochet, Landry and Champagne Families Ancestors and Descendants and Souls in Purgatory, Pope, Priest, Religious.

Christmas Eve Vigil Mass
Monday 4:00 p.m. Stjo and OLV
Monday 6:00 p.m. Stjo
See page 4

Christmas Day Mass
Tuesday 7:00 a.m. Stjo
See page 4

Wednesday 6:45 a.m. OLV — Sue Crochet, Landry and Champagne Families Ancestors and Descendants and Souls in Purgatory, Pope, Priest, Religious.

Thursday 5:30 p.m. Stjo — Sue Crochet, Landry and Champagne Families Ancestors and Descendants and Souls in Purgatory, Pope, Priest, Religious.

Friday 6:45 a.m. OLV — Sue Crochet, Felicie Granger, Simon Sr. and Family, Landry and Champagne Families Ancestors and Descendants and Souls in Purgatory, Pope, Priest, Religious.

MINISTERS FOR NEXT WEEK

Date and Time	Readers	Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers	Altar Servers
Dec. 29 4:00 p.m.	Roberta Degeyter	Marcus Hebert Sherry Hebert	Bella Smith Noah Smith Dominic Smith
Dec. 30 7:00 a.m.	Sandy Sonnier	Belinda Phillips Isela Kerne	Brynn Blanchard Chaz Blanchard
10:30 a.m.	Mike Lawson	Shelly Foreman Betty Guidry Guinn Lancon	Landon Lancon David Devillier
Dec. 31 4:00 p.m.	Victoria Landry	Roberta Degeyter Linda Dore	Kristyn Dorsey Nicholas Gondron
Jan. 1 10:30 a.m.	Catherine Dugas	Beth Mora Raymond Bergeron Cheryl Koch	William Stiles Brynn Adcock Avery Begnaud

Parish Calendar of Events

Sunday, December 23, 2018

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Monday, December 24, 2018

Christmas Eve Vigil Mass

4:00 p.m. — Saint Joseph Church and
Our Lady of Victory Church

6:00 p.m. — Saint Joseph Church

Tuesday, December 25, 2018

Christmas Day Mass

7:00 — Saint Joseph Church

9:00 a.m. — Our Lady of Victory Church

[There is NO 10:30 a.m. Mass]

Sunday, December 30, 2018

Feast of the Holy Family

Monday, December 31, 2018

Solemnity of Mary Vigil Mass

4:00 p.m. — Saint Joseph Church

Tuesday, January 1, 2019

Solemnity of Mary Mass of the Day

9:00 a.m. — Our Lady of Victory Church

10:30 a.m. — Saint Joseph Church

Saturday, January 5, 2019

First Saturday Mass

8:00 a.m. — Our Lady of Victory Church

Sunday, January 6, 2018

Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

Sunday, January 13, 2019

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

A Troubling Year in Review by Fr. Gerald E. Murray

One aspect of getting older, and wiser, is the shedding of once comforting, but in fact naïve illusions about individuals or groups. We normally trust that certain people and groups who profess to carry out a particular and demanding mission in society are in fact going to do just that. Past performance, as far as we know, was good and the future promises more of the same.

But reality is more complicated than that. Illusions give way to a more realistic understanding. High expectations about people and groups are often shown to be illusions based on incomplete knowledge of their past performance. The reputation for competence and integrity may exist largely because contradictory evidence of failure was carefully hidden from public view, or downplayed when made public.

The overcoming of the false impressions that once buttressed our appreciation of persons and groups is a good and necessary step in facing the world as it is, not as we would wish it to be. I remember being told that growth into maturity consists in the ever-increasing ability to deal effectively with complexity. Simplistic judgments are often attractive but are not usually sufficient.

Knowing the complexity of things, however, should not mean losing our sense of awe for God's providence in guiding the course of the world and His Church. Discovering facts and casting aside illusions is unsettling, especially when it comes to the way the Church manages Her affairs, which means how the leaders of the Church carry out their duties, which should be in absolute fidelity to the teaching of Christ.

These year-end reflections on illusion and reality are of course prompted by what has been happening in our Church during the past twelve months. The reality is that the once common high regard for bishops as a group, and for many individual bishops, has been shattered by the revelation of sexual abuse and episcopal patterns of covering up immorality and malfeasance.

Catholics in the United States and elsewhere were genuinely stunned to discover the sordid story of ex-Cardinal McCarrick's depredations, the hidden payoffs made by other bishops to seminarian and priest victims of McCarrick, and the seemingly unhurried response of the Holy See in pursuing these canonical crimes.

McCarrick resigned from the College of Cardinals in July and was ordered to live a life of prayer and penance without travel and public appearances while awaiting completion of a canonical process. He was first accused of molesting a seminarian in September 2017. The Holy See judged this accusation to be credible in June 2018. McCarrick has not been tried by a canonical court as of December 2018. Why the delay if the evidence was compelling six months ago?

In August, the Pennsylvania Grand Jury report was released and precipitated the downfall of the most influential American cardinal, Washington's Archbishop Donald Wuerl. Shortly thereafter, Bishop Michael Bransfield of Wheeling, West Virginia, a McCarrick protégé, was abruptly retired and placed under investigation for sexual harassment of adults.

There followed accusations by the former Nuncio to the United States, Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, that many people in the Holy See, in particular Pope Francis, knew about McCarrick's immorality and abuse of authority and acted in ways that kept him from being held accountable.

When Pope Francis refused to answer journalists' questions about Viganò's charges on a flight back from Ireland, he frustrated those who want to know how McCarrick amassed such power and prestige when his behavior had been reported multiple times to the Holy See in the past. Francis told the journalists to do their job and look into Viganò's charges. But when journalists started to call the cardinals and bishops named in Viganò's memorandum no one wanted to respond. A cone of silence seemed to descend on the Vatican.

The American bishops asked for an investigation of McCarrick's rise. The Holy See has only responded that a review of documents

in various curial offices is being conducted. While a good first step, that hardly constitutes a thorough investigation. What about taking testimony from those in the know? Or promising to make public the evidence and the findings? Or inviting McCarrick's victims to meet with the Holy Father and tell him directly what happened, as was the case in Chile?

The U.S. bishops were set to take concrete steps at their annual November meeting to put an end to a hierarchical culture in which priests, and even bishops such as McCarrick, were protected from revelations of crimes and allowed to continue in place, thanks to payoffs and confidentiality agreements. The last-minute instruction from the Holy See to take no action until after a February meeting in the Vatican was met with stunned incredulity. Is this the right way to address a five-alarm crisis of confidence in the Church and Her leaders regarding horrendous crimes and malfeasance?

The faith and love of Catholics for Christ and His Church has been severely tried this year. The common expectation among Catholics that the bishops as a whole shared the same horror of sexual, and in particular of homosexual, immorality among the clergy has been shown to be an illusion. So be it.

Love for the Church has prompted laity to call for a reform of the hierarchy. Accountability for past failures to root out sexual immorality is the first necessity, as is a clear demonstration that a repeat of the career path of a Theodore McCarrick will be impossible in the future.

Bishops will only regain the respect of ordinary Catholics if they truly live up to what we all believe is the Church's true Mission, the salvation of souls. If the dark clouds of 2018 have a silver lining, it's that there is now at least some chance that immoral and conniving priests and bishops will no longer be tolerated, protected, or promoted, but rather called to repent and held to account.

The Rev. Gerald E. Murray, J.C.D. is a canon lawyer and the pastor of Holy Family Church in New York City.

Christmas Mass Intentions

DECEMBER 24

4:00 p.m. Christmas Vigil Mass
Saint Joseph Church and
Our Lady of Victory Church

Justin Boudreaux, Philip Hebert Sr. Family, Elton Bourque Family, Bienek Family, Ancona Family, The Sick, Souls in Purgatory, Felicie Granger, Claude and Simon, Lloyd Broussard and Family, Porier Family, Louviere Family, Courville Family, Badeaux Family, DeRoruen Family, Bonin Family, Glenn and Sandi Angelle, Mr. and Mrs. Ferdinand Breaux, Breaux and Viator Families, Mr. and Mrs. Collins Louviere and Kerney, Mr. and Mrs. Will Roberts, Cobey Braquet, Earl O. and Dorothy Savoy, Perry J. Burke, Bertha B. Eaves, Elaine L. Dugas, Alton Louviere, James Dugas Sr. Family, Stephanie Cormier, Darrell Judice, Lester Delaune Family, Linda Trahan, Robert Johnson Family, Sophie F. Bonin Family, Octave "Tot" Judice Family, Rhule, Mabel and Wayne Gondron, Louis J. "Nego" and Lita N. Judice and Parents, Sue Crochet, Landry and Champagne Families Ancestors and Descendants, Souls in Purgatory, Pope, Priest, Religious, Walet and Judice Families, George, Iris and Robbie Dugas, Dr. Russell Romero, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Landry, Ossie Romero.

6:00 p.m. Christmas Vigil Mass
Saint Joseph Church

For Our Parish Family, Francis and Lorena Dupoy, Dean, Patrick and Theresa Lasseigne, Emus Borel, Rita and Tony Chataignier.

DECEMBER 25

7:00 a.m. Christmas Day Mass
Saint Joseph Church

Moise and Martha Louviere and Family, Cody Bourgeois, Family Living and Deceased, Phyllis Crochet LeBlanc, Glenn and Sandi Angelle, Cobey Braquet, Berard, Bonin, Morvant and

Douet Families Living and Deceased, Murphy, Brett and Trent Romero, Antoine Judice Families, Suzette Judice, Butsy Walet, Kelly Louviere, Lionel Duplechain Sr. and Family, Earline Ruiz, Rusty Ruiz, Mr. and Mrs. T.L. Legnon Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Russell Ruiz Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Albert Broussard, Lora Bloom, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Boudreaux, Noeie Seneca, Mr. and Mrs. Kernis Peltier, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Peltier, Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Peltier, Jack Braquet, Francis Crochet, Yvonne LeBlanc, Don Davis, Linda Derouen, Lucien and Lorena Angelle, Georgean Babin, Louto, Anite, Alton and Jason Gondron, Wilbert "Spic" LeBlanc, Anthony "Tony" LeBlanc, Eunice Giblan, Ossie Romero Jr., Melissa Bayard, Laurent Bayard, Lucy Bayard, Martha Escagne Rodriguez, Brian Derouen, Sue Crochet, Lawrence Courville, Sam Delcambre and Family, Pete and Cora Judice and Family, Edgar Oubre and Family, Willie Judice and Family, O.P. Delcambre and Family, J.B. and Ivelle Tausin, Edmond and Euline Judice Lancon, Cheryl L. Bradshaw, Sis Provost, Maurice Provost, Noeie and Warren Solar, Loto Sr., Leah and Loto Louviere Jr., Gam and Velma Gondron Family, Goldie T. Bonin, Janell B. Broussard, Leroy J. Bonin, Lionel Duplechain Jr. and Lionel Duplechain Sr., Landry and Champagne Families Ancestors and Descendants, Souls in Purgatory, Pope, Priest, Religious, Edwin Thibodeaux, Odile V. Thibodeaux, Tommy Thibodeaux, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Walet Family, Pliny II, Herman and Carolyn Walet, Pliny and Delia Walet, Rita, Teresa and Lillian Walet, Anatole Bonin Sr., Clemonce F. Bonin and Emmeline Bonin.

THERE IS
NO 10:30 A.M. MASS

Christmas Flower Memorials

Mr. and Mrs. Sanders Broussard, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Guillotte, Bill Elliot Family, Walter and Doris M. Judice, Lorena "Tauntsie" and Francis Dupoy, The Monday Line Dancing Class, Mr. and Mrs. Laurent Braquet, Linda Bergeron, Mae Provost Lassalle, Dolores Dooley, William Dooley, Sidney P. Lassalle Jr., Kathryn Rader Hebert and Lenard Hebert Sr., Alvin and Alice Broussard Deceased Family, Alvin Broussard Jr., Rogers Courville and Jackie Courville, Courville Family, Porier Family, Louviere Family, Badeaux Family, Bonin's Family, Derouen's Family, Kamryn Elizabeth Dorsey, Loto Louviere Jr., Loto Sr. and Leah Louviere, Gam and Velma Gondron, Darrel and Kathy Eldridge, Hubert and Lily Richard, Eddie and Lavinia Edler, Bonnie E. Oubre, T.J. and Barbara Eldridge, Hazel and James "Boo" Richard, Magnolia Pratt, Hosie Thigpen, Eddie Pierre, Ozita Pierre Egby, Yola Pierret, Kapkeo "Kappy" Khiemdavanh, Kyle Foreman, Herman Walet, Delia and Pliny Walet, Teresa, Rita and Lillian Walet, "Been" and Mag Judice, Howard, Laurence and Carolyn Walet, Deyna Hulin Champagne, Chad Romero, Wilfred Hulin, Bertha Chastant Hulin, Calvin and Margie Berard, Herman Walet, Johnnie Boatright, Mike Vidallier, Ruby and Clarence Begnaud, Nick Bienvenu, Keith Eldridge,

Sandoz, Eldridge and Berard Families, Sam, Bea and Grace Napoli, Mike, Catherine and Anthony Catanzaro, Mr. and Mrs. Marvis Barras, Mr. and Mrs. Melicour Dore, Jim Dore, Wayne "Butch" Judice, Perry M. Judice, Mary Ann Louviere, Patrice Hebert, Edna and Merlin Walet, Butsy Walet, Harold Heitkamp, Darrell P. Judice, Robert and Edelia Johnson, Clarence Champagne, Maudery Landry, Bonnie Boudreaux, Landry and Champagne Families Ancestors and Descendants, Wallace Goudeaux, Violet Broussard, J. Elmo Broussard, Prioux, Trahan, Bonin and LeBlanc Families, Goldie, Whitney and Mollie Viator, James B. Voorhies, Bruce Temple, Annie Lee J. Bourgeois, All Souls, Louis Broussard, Wolla Mae Broussard, Ronald Broussard, Earl Zimmerman Sr., Marie Ory Zimmer, Ruth McIntyre, Ted McIntyre Sr., Margaret and Sidney Breaux, Pauline Guidry, Buddy and Paul Stephens, Susan Lassalle, Earline Crochet, Crochet and Prince Families, Gam and Velma Gondron and Family, Antoine and Marie Judice and Jeanne Judice, Leah and Loto Louviere Sr. and Louis and Elbay Judice, Loto Louviere Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Howard Walet, Herman, Pliny, Carolyn, Rita, Lillian, Theresa, Pliny and Delia Walet, Faye and Alvin Tausin Family and Jimmy Eldridge.



The Ox, the Ass, and Us by Joseph Ratzinger

One who has not grasped the Mystery of Christmas has failed to grasp the decisive element in Christianity. One who has not accepted this cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven – and this is what Saint Francis of Assisi wished to recall anew to the Christians of his own day and of every succeeding generation.

Francis directed that an ox and an ass should be present in the crèche in the cave of Greccio on Christmas night. He had told the nobleman John: “I wish in full reality to awaken the remembrance of the Child as He was born in Bethlehem and of all the hardship He had to endure in His childhood. I wish to see with my bodily eyes what it meant to lie in a manger and sleep on hay, between an ox and an ass.”

From then on, the ox and ass have had their place in every crib scene – but where do they actually come from? It is well known that the Christmas narratives of the New Testament do not mention them. When we investigate this question, we discover an important factor in all the customs associated with Christmas and, indeed, in all the Christmas and Easter piety of the Church in both liturgy and popular customs.

The ox and ass are not simply products of the pious imagination: the Church’s faith in the unity of the Old and New Testaments has given them their role as an accompaniment of the Christmas event. We read in Isaiah: “The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master’s crib; but Israel does not know, my people does not understand.” (1:3) The Fathers of the Church saw in these words a prophecy that pointed ahead to the new people of God, the Church consisting of both Jews and Gentiles.

Before God, all men, Jews and Gentiles, were like the ox and ass, without reason or knowledge. But the Child in the crib has opened their eyes so that they now recognize the Voice of their Master, the Voice of their Lord. It is striking to note in the mediaeval pictures of Christmas how the artists give the two animals almost human faces and how they stand before the Mystery of the Child and bow down in awareness and reverence.

But after all, this was only logical, since the two animals were considered the prophetic symbol for the Mystery of the Church – our own Mystery, since we are but oxen and asses vis-à-vis the Eternal God, oxen and asses whose eyes are opened on Christmas night, so that they can recognize their Lord in the crib. Who recognized Him, and who failed to recognize Him? But do we really recognize Him?

When we place the ox and ass beside the crib, we must remember the whole passage in Isaiah, which is not only good news – in the sense of the promise of a future knowledge – but also a judgment pronounced on contemporary blindness. The ox and ass have knowledge, “but Israel does not know, my people does not understand.”

Who is the ox and ass today, and who is “my people” without understanding? How can we recognize the ox and the ass? How can we recognize “my people”? And why does the lack of reason recognize, while reason is blind?

In order to discover the answer, we must return with the Fathers of the Church to the first Christmas. Who recognized Him? And who failed to recognize Him? And why was this so?

The one who failed to recognize Him was Herod, who did not even understand when they told him about the Child: instead, he was blinded all the more deeply by his lust for power and the accompanying paranoia. (Matthew 2:3) Those who failed to recognize Him were “all Jerusalem with him.” (ibid.) Those who failed to recognize Him were the “people in soft garments” – those with a high social position. (Matthew 11:8) Those who failed to recognize Him were the learned masters who were experts in the Bible, the specialists in biblical interpretation who admittedly knew the correct passage in Scripture but still failed to understand anything. (Matthew 2:6)

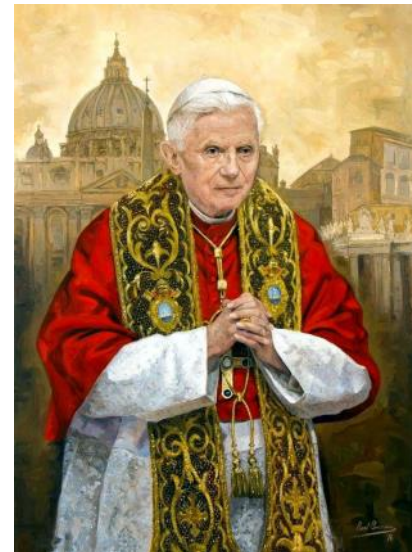
Those who recognized Him were the “ox and the ass” (in comparison to these men of prestige): the shepherds, the Magi, Mary and Joseph. But could things have been otherwise? Those with a high social position are not in the stable where the Child Jesus lies: that is where the ox and the ass have their home.

And what about us? Are we so far away from the stable because our garments are much too soft and we are much too clever? Do we get entangled to such an extent in learned exegesis of the Scriptures, in demonstrations of the inauthenticity or the historical accuracy of individual passages, that we become blind to the Child Himself and perceive nothing of Him?

Are we so much “in Jerusalem,” in the palace, at home in ourselves and in our arrogance and our paranoia, that we cannot hear at night the voice of the angels and then set out to adore the Child?

In this night, then, the faces of the ox and the ass look at us with a question: My people does not understand, but do you perceive the Voice of your Lord? When we place the familiar figures in the crib scene, we ought to ask God to give our hearts the simplicity that discovers the Lord in the Child – just as Francis once did in Greccio. For then we, too, might experience what Thomas of Celano relates about those who took part in Midnight Mass in Greccio – and his words echo closely Saint Luke’s words about the shepherds on the first Christmas night – each one went home full of joy.

Joseph Ratzinger was elected as Pope Benedict XVI on April 19, 2005. He renounced the office of the papacy on February 28, 2013, the first pope to do so in nearly 600 years. Pope Emeritus Benedict lives in the Mater Ecclesiae monastery in the Vatican.



Midnight Mass
Homily of the Holy Father
Pope Saint John Paul II
Christmas, 24 December 2000

1. “Today is born our Savior” (Responsorial Psalm)

On this night, the ancient yet ever new proclamation of the Lord’s Birth rings out. It rings out for those keeping watch, like the shepherds in Bethlehem two thousand years ago; it rings out for those who have responded to Advent’s call and who, waiting watchfully, are ready to welcome the joyful tidings which in the liturgy become our song: “Today is born our Savior”.

The Christian people keep watch; the entire world keeps watch on this Christmas night which is linked to that unforgettable night a year ago, when the Holy Door of the Great Jubilee was opened, the Door of grace opened wide for all.

2. It is as if the Church had never ceased to repeat day after day during the Jubilee year: “Today is born our Savior”. This proclamation, with its inexhaustible power to renew us, echoes once more on this holy night with special force: this is the Christmas of the Great Jubilee, a living remembrance of Christ’s two thousand years, of His wondrous birth, which marked the new beginning of history. Today “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

“Today”. On this night, time opens to eternity, because You, O Christ, are born among us, coming from on high. You came to birth from the womb of a Woman blessed among all women, You “the Son of the Most High”. Once and for all Your holiness made all time holy: the days, the centuries, the millennia. By Your Birth, You have turned time into the “today” of salvation.

3. “Today is born our Savior”.

On this night we celebrate the Mystery of Bethlehem, the Mystery of an incomparable night which is, in a sense, within time and beyond time. From the Virgin’s womb was born a Child, a manger became the cradle of immortal Life.

Christmas is the festival of life, because You, Jesus, born like all of us, have blessed the moment of birth: a moment which symbolically represents the Mystery of human life, joining labor to expectation, pain to joy. All of this took place in Bethlehem: a Mother gave birth; “a man entered the world” (John 16:21), the Son of man. The Mystery of Bethlehem!

4. With deep emotion I think back to the days of my Jubilee pilgrimage in the Holy Land. My thoughts return to the stable, where I was given the grace to pause in prayer. In spirit, I embrace that blessed land that saw the blossoming of imperishable joy for the world.

I think with concern of the Holy Places, and especially of the town of Bethlehem where sadly, because of the troubled political situation, the evocative rites of Christmas cannot be celebrated with their usual solemnity. Tonight I would like the Christian communities in those places to feel that the whole Church is very close to them.

We are close to you, dear brothers and sisters, in a particularly intense prayer. We share your anxiety for the destiny of the entire region of the Middle East. May the Lord hear our plea! From this Square, the center of the Catholic world, let the angels’ proclamation to the shepherds ring out once more with new strength: “Glory to God in the highest heavens and peace on earth to those whom He loves” (Luke 2:14).

Our confidence cannot be shaken, nor can our wonder at what we are celebrating ever fade. Today is born the One Who brings peace to the world.

5. “Today is born our Savior”.

The Word cries in a manger. His name is Jesus, which means “God saves”, because “He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

It is not a palace which sees the Birth of the Redeemer, destined to establish the eternal and universal Kingdom. He is born in a stable and, coming among us, He kindles in the world the fire of God’s love (cf. Luke 12:49). This fire will not be quenched ever again.

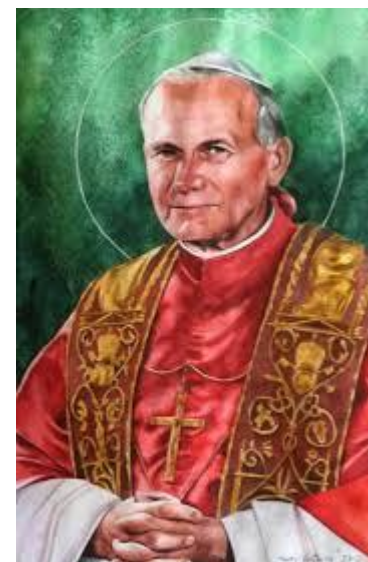
May this fire burn in our hearts as a flame of charity in action, showing itself in openness to and support of our many brothers and sisters sorely tried by want and suffering!

6. Lord Jesus, Whom we contemplate in the poverty of Bethlehem, make us witnesses to Your love, that love which led You to strip Yourself of divine glory, in order to be born among us and die for us.

As the Great Jubilee moves into its final phase, pour out Your Spirit upon us, that the grace of the Incarnation may inspire in every believer a determination to respond more generously to the new life received in Baptism.

Grant that the light of this night, brighter than day, may be cast upon the future and guide the steps of humanity in the way of peace.

You, O Prince of peace, You, O Savior born for us today, be with Your Church on the road which stretches before us into the New Millennium!





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