## The Nativity of the Lord, December 25, 2016

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
*— John 1:5*

# St. John Vianney Parish

**OUR MISSION**
***Devoted to Jesus Christ as disciples, we help others become disciples, and work to renew our culture.***

**OUR VISION**
***That all who experience St. John Vianney Parish in any way, find Christ irresistible.***

**NUESTRA MISIÓN**
***Como discípulos devotos de Jesucristo, ayudamos a otros a ser discípulos, y trabajamos para renovar nuestra cultura.***

***NUESTRA VISIÓN***
***Que todos los que se relacionen con nosotros encuentren la presencia de Cristo irresistible.***

**10497 Coloma Road, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670, Parish Office 8am—3:30pm, 362-1385, closed for lunch 12:30-1:30pm**
**fax 706-1135, email-sjvc@prodigy.net, parish website – sjvparish.com**

**Parish Clergy**

**Fr. Charles Kelly, Pastor**
**Fr. Raj Derivera, Parochial Vicar**
**Fr. Martin Moroney, Pastor Emeritus**
**Rev. Mr. Walter Little, Deacon**
**Rev. Mr. David Robinson, Deacon**
**Rev. Mr. Daniel Rangel, Deacon**

***WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE: Saturday Vigil Mass 5:30 pm, Sunday 8 am, 9:45 am, 11:30 am, 1:15 pm (Sp.), 6:30 pm, (Sp.)***
**Daily Mass: M-F 8 am (English), Wed 6 pm (Spanish)**
**Confessions: 5 pm (WED) & 4 pm (SAT)**
**Adoration (Blessed Sacrament): Thur. 8:30am-9pm (Eng.)**
**Adoración al Santísimo premier viernes del mes, 9pm-12am**
**Filipino Mass: Second Sunday at 3 pm**
**Indonesian Mass: Fourth Sunday at 3 pm**
**Hour of Mercy: Every Thursday evening in the Sister Bede Prayer Chapel, 6pm - 7pm.**

***Rosary for the Military and their families: 2nd Sunday of the month after 8am Mass.***

**PARISH STAFF**

| | |
|---|---|
| Parish Office—Vange Fisher, Office Manager | 362-1385 ext 200 |
| School Office—Ada Bauman, Principal | 363-4610 |
| Spanish Rel. Ed, Quinceañeras, (Sp) baptisms, call Sr. Vicenta Lemus for information | 368-9410 |
| English CCD—Sister Josefina Peralta Fdcc | 369-8669 |
| RCIA, Eng—Tom Beigel | 635-8399 |
| Baptism—Rose Ramos | 595-0243 |
| Youth Ministry—Valerie Anda | 362-3827 |
| Hall Office —Linda Condon, Manager | 362-5068 |
| St. Vincent de Paul Society | 362-4792 |
| Thrift Store—Karla Aguilera-Chavez, Manager | 363-1559 |
| Cordova Food Locker—Gregg B. Huestis | 364-8973 |

***Weddings: Contact parish office 6 months in advance.***
***Quinceañeras: Contact Sister Vicenta Lemus 6 months in advance.***

**Act Christmas:** It is easy to *think* Christmas,
and it is easy to *believe* Christmas, but it is hard to *act* Christmas." **Anonymous**

**May the gift of joy and the blessing of peace be yours this Christmas and in the New Year.**

**Que el Niño Jesús los bendiga en esta Navidad y durante todo el Año Nuevo.**

**Novena to the Holy Innocents**

Heavenly Father,

By their wordless profession of faith in your Son, the Holy Innocents were given a martyr's crown in the early days after the Savior's birth. Knowing how precious they are to you we call on them to join in our prayer for an end to abortion and all forms of violence against children:

**1.** That all governmental executives, legislators and judges may acknowledge the humanity of every child in the womb and enact laws and policies to defend them, we pray: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

**2.** For our own conversion and that of others so that all would recognize and defend the life and dignity of the unborn, we pray: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

**3.** Finally, that all innocent children, who are victimized in any way, would experience God's love and mercy, we pray: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For these intentions and in union with the Holy Innocents, we pray as the Lord Jesus taught us: "Our Father, who art in heaven..."

**Pray this novena for nine consecutive days any time of the year. The Feast of the Holy Innocents is celebrated on December 28th. (Cf. Matthew 2:13-18)**

**MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL !!**

**Novena a los Santos Inocentes**

Padre Celestial,

Por su profesión de fe sin palabras en tu Hijo, los santos inocentes fueron dotados con la corona del martirio días después del nacimiento de nuestro Salvador. Sabiendo lo preciado que ellos son para ti, acudimos a ellos para que se unan a nuestros ruegos para que culmine el aborto y todo tipo de violencia en contra de los niños:

**1.** Que todos los ejecutivos del gobierno, legisladores y jueces puedan reconocer la humanidad de cada niño en el matriz y promulgar leyes y pólizas para defenderlos, oremos: Señor, escucha nuestra oración.

**2.** Para nuestra propia conversión y la de los demás para que todos reconozcan y defiendan la vida y la dignidad de los que no han nacido, oremos: Señor, escucha nuestra oración.

**3.** Por último, que todos los niños inocentes, que son víctimas de cualquier manera, experimenten el amor y la misericordia de Dios, oremos: Señor, escucha nuestra oración.

Por estas intenciones en unión con los Santos Inocentes, oramos con las palabras que Nuestro Señor nos ha enseñado: "Padre Nuestro, que estas en el cielo..."

**Reza esta novena durante nueve días consecutivos durante el año, debido a que el Día de los Santos Inocentes se celebra el 28 de diciembre. (Cf. Mateo 2:13-18)**

# News From the Parish

**"Join us at the Chuck Wagon!" Annual Crab Feed, Hosted by Knights of Columbus Council # 5322.** Sat. January 28, 2017. 6:30pm-10:30pm at SJV parish hall. Terrific Food, drinks, Live music by the Proxy Band. Tickets are 45. pp until Jan 16, 2017—$50. pp from Jan 2-Jan 28, 2017. For info, reservations and tickets contact Paul Labbe—320.69.56 or Joe Galipeau—769-6549. To buy tickets go to **www.ranchoknights.com/crabfeed.**

***USE* E-WASTE RECYCLE:** Start recycling your old e-waste and help our school. Just log on to **www.eWaste4good.com** or call 1-800-317-3112. Make sure you let them know your beneficiary is **ST. JOHN VIANNEY SCHOOL.** They will pick-up most any electric waste working or not.

**FIND HELP IN THE BIBLE WHEN YOU NEED.....**
**Comfort** ***Psalm 23 • Corinthians 1: 3-4 • Psalm 55:22***
**Courage** ***1 Chronicles 28:20 • Hebrews 13:6 • Psalm 27:1***
**Faith** ***Joshua 24:15 • Romans 10: 8-13 • Hebrews 11:1-6***
**Forgiveness** ***1 John 1:8-9 • Matthew 6:14-15 • Luke 6:37***

**2017 Walk for Life (WFL) - SJV Parish Bus**
Current Status: 18 tickets sold, and 8 more tickets pre-ordered for pickup before Dec. 30th. There are only 56 seats on the bus -- less 26 sold thus far. ***Cost is still $27 per ticket.***
This is our opportunity as a parish to ***Walk for Life in January*** ( Sat., Jan 21st). We have a parish banner (green & white) and would love to have colors green & white stand out at the WFL Walk. Contact Chris Bailey @ 916 361-1340.

We wish to thank SJV parish community for the thoughts, prayers and Mass offerings during a very difficult time. It means so much to receive such enduring love from all who knew Daniel. He went home peacefully to rest God's arms.

*Christeta Masias & Family*

**CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS is having another fun filled — BUNCO PARTY!!! COME JOIN THE FUN**
**Jan. 7th 1:00 to 4:00pm**
**Prizes, lunch, friendship, all for $20.00**

**Winter Shelter Starts Tomorrow:** Monday, Dec. 26 thru New Year's Eve Dec. 31. Please pray for the success of our shelter. You can participate by donating warm winter clothing—new or gently used coats, socks, jeans, tennis shoes, or sweaters. Drop your donation in the box near the entrance of the church nearest the main parking lot. ***"Whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me." Matt 25:40.***

**SAVE THE DATE!!! C.D.A. BUNCO IS COMING JAN.7,2017. ALL ARE WELCOME !!**

**Schedule for January 2017**
Jan. 9, 2017 —Class: Inventory for Circle of Grace, review procedure with the catechists
Jan 16, 2017 — No Class, Martin Luther King Holiday
Jan 23, 2017—Class
Jan 30, 2017—Class
**Attention:** If you are interested in becoming a catechist for 2017-2018 please prepare for fingerprinting and background check. Contact Sister Josefina for more information at **josiesep@sjvparish.com.**

*Contribution Statements will be ready after January 31, 2017. Please be sure to update your parish registration. Registration forms available in the church or go online to* ***sjvparish.com****.*

**DON'T FORGET THE WOMEN'S RETREAT:** Jan. 13-15, 2017. At Christ the King Passionist Retreat Center. To register and information go to **cforrest@passionist.org** or call 916.725.4720 ext. 314

Advent fills us with anticipation and preparation. We make lists, plan special meals, search for ways to be generous to those in need. Married couples at St. John Vianney can put their relationship at the top of the list by planning to participate in the **Restore, Rekindle, Renew Enrichment (The 3RE).** Coming in early 2017, applications for **the 3RE** begin after the new year.

**Eucharistic Adoration: 8:30-9pm.** Do you want to grow closer to Our LORD? Is HE calling you to spend time with HIM? We are always looking for people willing to spend an hour with Jesus and pray with Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. **Call Jean at 916.857 -1695 for more info.**

# Around the Parish

**Christian Brothers High School Placement Exam for Incoming Freshmen – Saturday, January 21, 2017**
Eighth graders interested in attending CB in the 2017-18 school year are required to take the placement exam on Saturday, January 21 from 8:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Online applications are due on January 19, 2017. Please contact the Admissions Office for more information at (916) 733-3690 or visit the CB website at www.cbhs-sacramento.org.

**BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS** for adults experiencing the loss of a loved one are held at Mercy San Juan Medical Center, 6501 Coyle Ave., Carmichael, on the 1st & 3rd Wed. of each month, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m., in the conference room on the main level across from the Russell elevators. Sessions are facilitated by staff chaplains. No registration required. No cost. For more info. call **Spiritual Care Services Department @ (916) 537-5098, or email: Matt.Sanders@DignityHealth.org.**

**Silent Retreat:** "The Reign of God is Within You" Directed by Fr. Tom Bonacci, C.P. Dec. 28-Jan. 1, 2017. For more information or to register you can call 1-530-887-2019.

**FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS CANDLELIGHT PROCESSION AND MASS**
On Wednesday, December 28, the annual Feast of the Holy Innocents Candlelight Rosary Procession and Mass will meet at 5:00 p.m. at the steps of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament (11th & K) and pray for the sanctity of life as we walk to Our Lady of Guadalupe (7th & T) for concelebrated Mass at 6:00 p.m. This March for Life commemorates those male infants of Bethlehem who were killed by decree of King Herod, as well as those innocent unborn babies lost by abortion today. Bring your family, sing with St. Mary's choir, and walk to Mass praying the rosary. Candles will be provided. Carpools will shuttle people back to their cars. Dress warmly and bring umbrellas if needed. For more information, please call Leticia at (916) 519-0417

**Sunday Mass for the Homebound: KSPX Channel 29 at 6:30 a.m.** Prayer intentions from viewers, uplifting homilies, a Prayer for Spiritual Communion during distribution of the Holy Eucharist, and closed-captioning make Heart of the Nation's Sunday Mass on TV and online a time of spiritual comfort and belonging for the homebound. To watch the Mass online, please visit **www.heartofthenation.org.**

## SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

| | |
|---|---|
| Sunday: | The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) |
| Monday: | St. Stephen; Kwanzaa begins |
| Tuesday: | St. John |
| Wednesday: | The Holy Innocents |
| Thursday: | St. Thomas Becket; Fifth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord |
| Friday: | The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph |
| Saturday: | St. Sylvester I; New Year's Eve, Seventh Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord |

## Mass Intentions Dec. 24-31, 2016

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Christmas Eve | 5:30pm | Children's Mass |
| | 7:30pm | Spanish Mass |
| | 12:00am | Midnight Mass |
| Sunday | 8:00am | Christmas Mass—English |
| | 9:45am | Christmas Mass—English |
| | 11:30pm | Christmas Mass—English |
| | 1:15pm | Misa Navideña—Español |
| | 6:30pm | Misa Navideña—Español |
| Monday | 8:00am | Bryan Harradine † |
| | | Jewel Salazar † |
| Tuesday | 8:00am | Mary M. Ross † |
| | | Daniel Masias † |
| Wednesday | 8:00am | Al Dumont † |
| | | Virginia Piano † |
| | 6:00pm | Angelina Rodriguez **Special Intention** |
| Thursday | 8:00pm | Mary Soo In Thanksgiving |
| | | Special Intention |
| Friday | 8:00am | Leon Viray † |
| | | Special Intention |
| Saturday | 5:30pm | Viccel Belen † |
| | | Pacita Leuterio **Happy 82nd Birthday** |

## READINGS FOR THE WEEK

| | |
|---|---|
| Monday: | Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22 |
| Tuesday: | 1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1a, 2-8 |
| Wednesday: | 1 Jn 1:5 — 2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7b-8; Mt 2:13-18 |
| Thursday: | 1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-3, 5b-6; Lk 2:36-40 |
| Friday: | Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Col 3:12-21 [12-17]; Ps 128:1-5; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23 |
| Saturday: | 1 Jn 2:18-21; Ps 96:1-2, 11-13; Jn 1:1-18 |
| Sunday: | Nm 6:22-27; Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21 |

## TODAY'S READINGS

**First Reading** — All the ends of the earth will behold the salvation of our God (Isaiah 52:7-10).

**Psalm** — All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God (Psalm 98).

**Second Reading** — God has spoken to us through the Son, the very imprint of God's being (Hebrews 1:1-6).

**Gospel** — The Word became flesh; from his fullness we have all received grace (John 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14]).

The English translation of the Psalm Responses from the *Lectionary for Mass* © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

**PLEASE PRAY:** *For all who have died, that the Lord will show mercy and great kindness to them and raise them up to everlasting life.*

***PRAY FOR THE SICK:*** *And for their caregivers, that the Lord will show healing and comfort to them all.*

**PRAY FOR THE HOMELESS:** *Where there is charity and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance. - St. Francis of Assisi*

# Parish Ministries

**English CCD classes:** CCD classes every Monday 6:30-8:00pm.
Call Sister Josefina Peralta @ 916-369-8669 for additional information.

**English Baptism and classes, 1 classes required,** Next class—Jan. 8th. 2017, in the Southwest Room/Parish Hall. Baptism is Jan. 15, 2017 at the 11:30am Mass, St John Vianney Church. **Parents and godparents must attend both classes unless they have attended a class with in the last 2 years. Paperwork must be completed before 1st class**. Contact Rose Ramos @ 916.595.0243 for additional information.

**Spanish Rel Ed:** Sr. Vicenta 368-9410, Spanish Rel Ed Office is closed every Monday. **La oficina esta cerrada cada lunes.**

**Spanish baptism Classes:** Call to register Sr. Vicenta—368-9410

**Lifeteen:** For info please call Valerie Anda @ 362-3827

**SJV School Grades TK-8:** **Now enrolling for 2016-17 school year,** call - Ada Bauman 363-4610 x100 for information. **SJV** students share in the Liturgy of the Word and choir every third Sunday at 9:45 am Mass.

**RCIA:** Monday evenings 6:30pm - 8:00pm in the hall. Call Tom Beigel @ 916.635.8399 or Debbi Cushing @ 916.806.2907 for information.

**Children's Liturgy of the Word:** Ongoing every Sunday, 9:45am Mass, Children ages 5-10 yrs welcome—Kim Perry-Reed 916.203.5711.

**Adult Bible Study:** Contact Chris Bailey @ 916-361-1340.

**Caring Connections:** Parish Outreach Ministry to new parish members, the sick, homebound and the bereaved. Meetings are 2nd Mon-Sept thru May, 6pm at the Fr. Moroney Room. New members welcome. For info please call Linda Morales 635-2019

**Eucharistic Adoration/Home Bound Ministry:** Jean Pergande call 857-1695

**Catholic Daughters of the Americas:** Meeting 3rd Tuesday South West room of the hall at 7:00pm. For Info: Diane McDonald 916-316-5625

**PARISH ROSARY FOR MILITARY** Second Sunday of the month in the church after the 8 am Mass.

**SJV Mr. & Mrs. Club:** Come join us, become a member by calling Al or Carla Cervantes at 638-0060. Meetings-2nd Saturday of the month 7pm-hall. **Socials 4th Saturday.**

**YLI–Young Ladies Institute:** Immaculate Mary #238, 2nd Wed. of the Month, 7:30pm-Fireside Room, Contact: Marilyn Walter 638-7905.

**Meet Your Neighbor:** First Sunday of the Month in the Parish Hall after the 8:00 & 9:45am Masses—September thru June. Contact Traci for information @ 719.290.0163

**Knights of Columbus:** Meeting held 2nd Thurs. of the month - 7:15pm in the Fireside Rm. Contact: G. K. Steve Cushing @ 804-8875. **SJV Parish Family Breakfast** third Sunday of the month in the Hall after the 8:00 & 9:45am Masses, Sept. thru June.

**St. Vincent De Paul:** Meets the third Tuesday of the month 6 pm in the Fr. Moroney room.

**Gabriel Project:** Outreach program to pregnant mothers and their families, offering support so that all babies may be welcomed. Please contact Claudia Beigel, 635-8399. Location of meetings have been changed to the Fr. McKeon Rm in the parish office, 2nd Sundays of the month @ 10am.

**Respect for Life:** Respect life means to honor Life as sacred from the moment of conception until natural death. If you are interested in becoming part of this vital ministry in prayer or an active member for: (Family Movie Night) (Annual-40 Days for Life in Sacramento), or (Annual-Walk for Life in San Francisco).. *Please Contact Chris Bailey*, Respect Life Coordinator @ (916) 361-1340

**Loaves and Fishes:** Feeds the hungry & shelters the homeless. *Volunteers needed.* Please contact Chiyoko at 635-3928.

**Martha and Mary Ministry:** Martha and Mary Ministry meets every first Friday of the month after 8 am Mass and Sacred Heart adoration in the Father Moroney room. To volunteer call Connie- 635-3865.

**Go to** the parish website **@ sjvparish.com** for more information about parish events and parish registration.

**Adoración al Santísimo:** Premier viernes del mes, de 9pm-12am.

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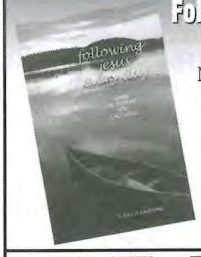


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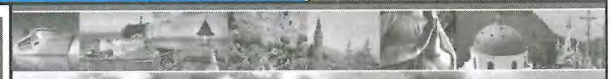

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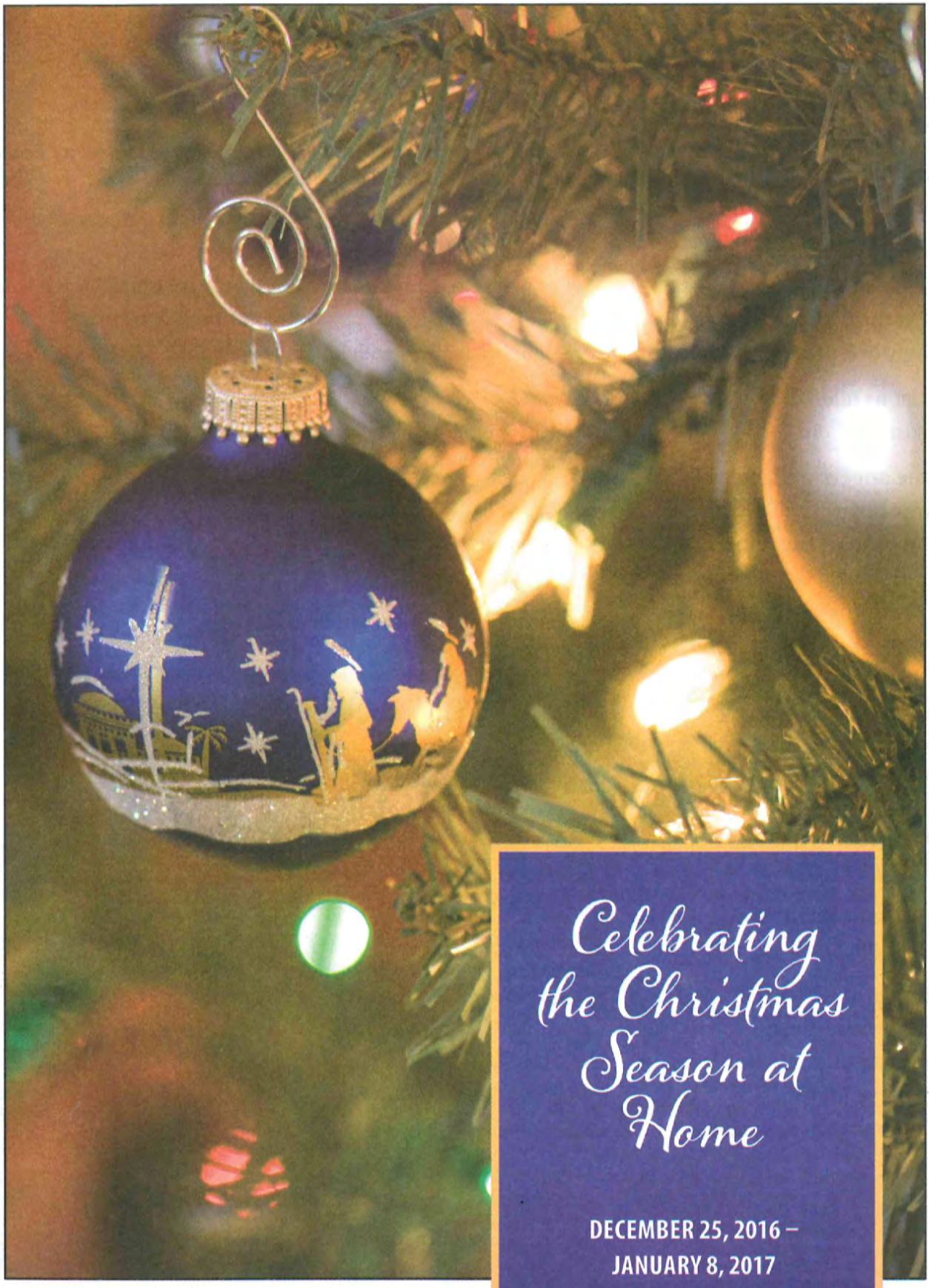

# Celebrating the Christmas Season at Home

DECEMBER 25, 2016 –
JANUARY 8, 2017

## HOUSEHOLD TABLE PRAYER FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

*Come, let us adore him,*
*Christ the Lord.*

We glory in your light,
O Christ.
May this meal strengthen us
to be light for others.

*Come, let us adore him,*
*Christ the Lord.*

With the angels we sing of
your birth.
May the food of this table
nourish us
to proclaim the good news.

*Come, let us adore him,*
*Christ the Lord.*

In your lowly manger we see
God's love.
May this be a time of grace,
so others will see your love
in us.

*Come, let us adore him,*
*Christ the Lord.*

We adore you, O Christ,
Word-made-flesh.
Bless this meal, bless our lives
during these joyful
Christmas days. Amen.

*In accordance with c. 827, permission to publish is granted on September 15, 2016, by the Very Rev. Ronald A. Hicks, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Permission to publish is an official declaration of ecclesiastical authority that the material is free from doctrinal and moral error. No legal responsibility is assumed by the grant of this permission.*

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## EPIPHANY HOUSE BLESSING

*Materials: A piece of chalk and a small container of holy water. Gather with family, friends, and neighbors at the front door.*

Leader: In the (+) name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray: *Christus mansionem benedicat.* May Christ bless this house!
ALL: Amen.

We sign this doorway with four crosses and the numerals of the new year.

[20 + C + M + B + 17]

Leader (or other Reader):
A reading from the Second Letter of Peter.
We look forward to the new heavens and the new earth God has promised, a dwelling place of righteousness.
The Word of the Lord

ALL: Thanks be to God!

*Each room of the house is sprinkled with holy water.*
*Living room:*
You are present where two or three are gathered.
Bless this room, O Lord. ALL: Amen!

*Kitchen:*
Give us this day our daily bread.
Bless this room, O Lord. ALL: Amen!

*Dining room:*
May we be seated at the heavenly banquet.
Bless this room, O Lord. ALL: Amen!

*Bedrooms:*
Protect us, stay with us through the night.
Bless this room, O Lord. ALL: Amen!

*Bathroom:*
You cleanse us always from sin.
Bless this room, O Lord. ALL: Amen!

*All return to the front door to pray together.*

Leader: Let us pray as Jesus taught us:
Our Father . . .

*The leader sprinkles all present with holy water and concludes:*

Bless this household through all days to come, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, forever and ever.
ALL: Amen!

# Gifts THAT KEEP ON GIVING

We've just wrapped up a season focused on the accumulation of presents under a tree. Chances are, you found at least one person on your list impossible to shop for—they already have everything! As you contemplate gift giving in the coming year, consider rethinking the whole proposition. What if giving gifts could be an expression of our love for Christ present in others? Here are a few ideas:

**Donate to microfinancing organizations in honor of a loved one.** Organizations such as Kiva and Opportunity International allow people to fund a portion of a loan for a person or nonprofit in the developing world—or even for people in need within the United States. These loans are used by the recipients to help create an income-sustaining business. When the loans are repaid, the funds can be returned to the investor or reinvested in another loan.

**Purchase "fair trade."** In many cases, the low prices we enjoy for goods are achieved at the expense of living wage and safe working conditions for workers in factories overseas. Businesses that offer fair trade goods are guaranteeing that the items, whether food, clothing, or skin care or household items, were made while offering the workers just compensation. Often, they facilitate better living, working, and social conditions for the artisans. Some local stores carry fair trade items, or look online at sites such as Fair Trade USA or Servv.org.

**Homemade "acts of service" coupon books.** This is an especially good idea for children, who have limited funds but unlimited love, but it's a great way for adults in a household to refocus on the primary relationship in the family, too. Coupons can be for help around the house, a hug, a promise to stop fighting with a sibling, and so on. Adults can include items as simple as an electronics-free evening of chatting on the deck. If you need inspiration, Pinterest offers many ideas both for physical format and for content, but this doesn't need to be complicated or fancy. The thought—and the follow-through—is what counts.

Donate to a charity in the name of a loved one.

Give the gift of child care for a date night or weekend away for friends or family members.

Wrap up a sheaf of blank paper for an elderly family member. This serves as a promise to write one letter every week or month for the coming year.

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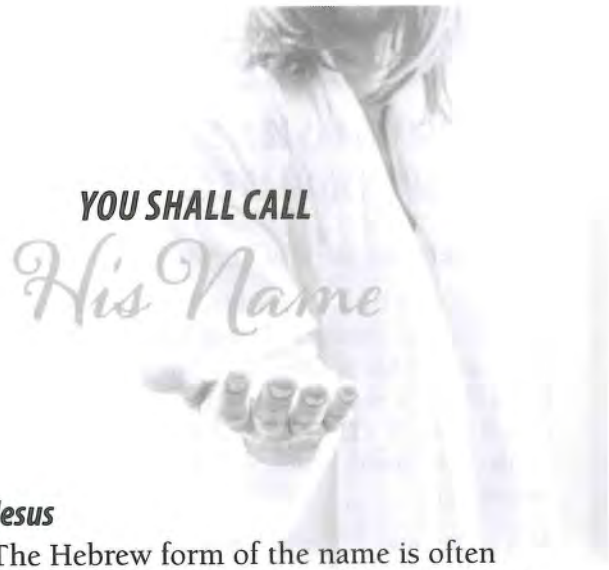


### *Jesus*

The Hebrew form of the name is often translated as "Joshua" or "Yeshua," which itself comes from Hebrew words meaning "Yaweh saves."

### *Emmanuel*

This name means "God with us;" it originated in Isaiah 7:14, and was used in Matthew 1:23 to show the fulfillment of that prophecy.

### *Christ*

A Greek translation of the Hebrew word for "Messiah," meaning "anointed;" this is why when Peter first uses this word (Matthew 16:16), it is preceded by "the."

### *King of the Jews*

In Matthew 2:2, the magi spoke of Jesus this way; it was also inscribed on the cross.

### *Rabbi*

A title of respect for a spiritual teacher, used by the apostles, by Mary Magdalene, and by Bartimaeus, but also used by Judas Iscariot in the midst of his betrayal of Jesus.

### *Lord*

A translation of the Greek *Kyrios*, signifying Jesus' divinity and power over the world.

### *Logos*

The first chapter of John's Gospel focuses on the Word of God become incarnate, or enfleshed, emphasizing that Jesus has existed alongside the Father since the dawn of time.

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## A CHRISTMAS LETTER FROM SAINT THOMAS BECKET

My brothers and sisters in Christ,

When I think back on my life, I am reminded of our Lord standing before Herod at the beginning of his passion: the King of heaven, his presence a challenge to the authority of an earthly king. If Christ himself was sent to his death, how could I—Christ's servant—expect otherwise?

As a young man, I worked in the household of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who eventually recommended me to his majesty, Henry II of England, for the post of chancellor. The king and I became fast friends, but when the archbishop died, Henry asked me to take over the highest position in the Church in England.

We clashed over taxes, over the authority to try and punish clerics, and over the king's insistence that priests must have permission to leave England. He charged me with dishonesty in financial transactions dating back to my time as chancellor. The conflict between my former friend and me went on for years, and although we tried to reconcile, eventually the king—whether he meant it or not—gave his followers to understand that my existence was a threat to his authority. And so a group of knights came to Canterbury Cathedral, and within its walls gave me the crown of martyrdom.

I was far from a perfect follower of our Lord, but perhaps my story demonstrates that each of us will, at some point in our lives, be called upon to choose between the authority of rulers and country, or that of heaven.

Be strong in the service of Christ.

Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury

*Born around 1118 in London, Thomas Becket was a shrewd businessman and politician before being ordained. But he took his responsibility to the Church seriously, and his sensational murder in Canterbury Cathedral just after Christmas in the year 1170 made him a model for all who work with earthly authorities. His feast day is December 29.*

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