

Abiding Press

Abiding Presence Faith Community

*A PARISH OF THE REFORMED CATHOLIC CHURCH
AN INCLUSIVE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
MAKING GOD'S LOVE KNOWN IN CENTRAL FLORIDA*

*January 2025 VOLUME 4 #2
5330 Poinsetta Ave, Winter Park, FL 32792
321-594-4922
Office info@apfcwp.com*

*Vigil Mass is Celebrated at Saturday at 5:00 pm
The Sanctuary Building of the First United Church of Christ
4605 Curry Ford Rd, Orlando, Florida 32812*

Social Media

Web Site www.apfcwp.com

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1386619738179316/?ref=bookmarks>

YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCP9i133esG31IRPfgk-Jn4w>

Clergy Serving the People of God

Pastor: Most Rev. William R. Cavins pastor@apfcwp.com

Palm Coast FL Ministry: Rev. Mr. Christopher M. Larsen

Volunteer Staff Serving the Parish

Gene L. Thompson II - Technology TechSupport@apfcwp.onmicrosoft.com

Dennis Last - JMB Crock Pot Ministry

Klaus Stodtmann - Bread Baking kstodtmann@apfcwp.onmicrosoft.com

Mass Intentions & Prayer Requests

If you would like to have someone remembered during Mass or added to our Prayer Lists, please email your request to the pastor. We also invite you to support our community through your generous donations, which are greatly appreciated and can be made at your discretion.

Additionally, we offer Mass Cards that you can send to loved ones to let them know they are being remembered in our prayers.

Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

Upcoming Dates

- January 1 Divine Worship – Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God 12:30 PM
 Bishop’s Residence
 Intention: World Peace
- January 4 Divine Worship – Solemnity of the Epiphany 5:00 PM
 Communal Anointing of the Sick
 Intention: People of the Parish
- January 6 At Home with the Word on Zoom 7:00 PM
- January 7 Rebecca’s Oantry 9:30n to 11:30
- January 8 Joni’s Treasures Thrift Shop 10:00 – 1:00
 Formation Class - 7 PM Invitation Only
- January 11 Divine Worship – Solemnity Baptism of the Lord 5:00 PM
 Intention: RIP Lisa M. Last
Annual Meeting of the Parish after Mass
- January 13 At Home with the Word 7 PM
- January 14 Rebecca’s Oantry 9:30n to 11:30
- January 15 Joni’s Treasures Thrift Shop 10:00 – 1:00
 Formation Class – 7 PM Invitation Only
- January 18 Divine Worship – 2nd Sunday of the Christian Year 5:00 PM
 Intention: Available
 Parish Pot Luck Dr. Martin Luther King Saturday Sunday Supper 6-7 pm
- January 19 Martin Luther King Day – Volunteer in the Community
- January 20 Holy Hour 11 – 12 Noon – Bishop’s Residence
- January 21 Rebecca’s Oantry 9:30n to 11:30
- January 22 Joni’s Treasures Thrift Shop 10:00 – 1:00
 Formation Class - 7 PM Invitation Only
- January 25 Divine Worship – 3rd Sunday of the Christian Year 5:00 PM
 Intention: RIP Sayuri Abromitis
FOOD PANTRY SATURDAY

January 26 12th Anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Cavins
January 27 At Home With the Word on Zoom at 7:00 PM
January 28 Rebecca's Pantry 9:30 – 11:30
January 29 Joni's Treasures Thrift Shop 10:00 – 1:00
Formation Class - 7 PM Invitation Only

*SCAP = Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest

Financial Update as of 12/31/2024

Total Income Year to Date: \$ 13589.25. Total Expenditures Year to Date: **\$13917.51**.
Difference **-\$328.26**. Available Balance on hand: \$ 2099.69.

Tax Letters 2024

The tax deduction letters will be issued by the end of January 2025. If you do not receive yours by February 1, 2025, please contact us a bkpg@apfcwp.com.

Make a Difference with Your Donation

You can now easily make donations online through our website! For the most efficient processing of your donation, we recommend using Zelle. If you choose a different payment method, please ensure that your donation is sent as if to an individual.

Thank you for your generosity and support! **Our email address for all donation platforms is: bkpg@apfcwp.com**

Annual Meeting

Notice is hereby given of the Annual Meeting of the Parish on Saturday, January 11, 2025, after the 5 PM Mass. The Agenda will include the pastor's Annual Report, The financial Condition of the Parish, and the Election of the Board of Directors. To have an item placed on the agenda contact the pastor by January 4, 2025.

Keeping the Year Holy: A Guide to Spiritual Renewal

As we journey through the calendar year, many people seek ways to keep their lives infused with spiritual meaning and purpose. The concept of a "holy year" invites us to cultivate our inner lives and connect more deeply with our values and beliefs. Here are some thoughtful approaches to help maintain that sacred atmosphere throughout the year.



Creating daily or weekly rituals can help ground your spiritual practice. Whether it's morning meditation, evening prayers, or a weekly gathering with loved ones, these moments can serve as touchstones that remind you of your spiritual commitments. Rituals provide structure and intention, allowing you to reflect and reconnect with your inner self.

Nature has a profound ability to inspire and rejuvenate the spirit. Spending time outdoors—whether through hiking, gardening, or simply walking in a park—can deepen your appreciation for creation. Consider seasonal practices that honor the cycles of nature, such as planting in spring, harvesting in fall, or reflecting in winter.

Making gratitude a regular practice can transform your outlook and deepen your spiritual awareness. Start a gratitude journal, where you list daily or weekly things you appreciate. This simple act can help you cultivate a mindset of abundance and reverence for the blessings in your life.

Serving others is a powerful way to keep your heart open and your spirit connected to something greater than yourself. Volunteer at local organizations, participate in community clean-up days, or support those in need. Acts of kindness not only uplift others but also foster a sense of purpose and fulfillment in your own life.

Dedicate time to spiritual learning through reading, attending workshops, or engaging in discussions. Exploring different philosophies or traditions can enrich your understanding and deepen your spiritual practice. This continuous journey of learning can keep your mind and spirit engaged and evolving.

In our fast-paced world, it's easy to rush through life without truly engaging in the moment. Mindfulness practices, such as meditation or conscious breathing, can help you cultivate a sense of presence and awareness. This intentional focus can reveal the sacred in everyday experiences, allowing you to see life through a more spiritual lens.

Keeping the year holy is a deeply personal journey that invites us to reflect, connect, and grow. By integrating rituals, embracing nature, practicing gratitude, engaging in community service, seeking learning, and cultivating mindfulness, we can create a year rich in spiritual significance. In doing so, we not only nourish our own souls but also contribute to the greater tapestry of our communities and the world around us.

In Christ's Love

+*William*

Pastor

The Feast of Mary, Mother of God: A Celebration of Faith and Love

The Feast of Mary, Mother of God, celebrated on January 1st, holds a significant place in the Christian liturgical calendar. This feast invites believers to honor Mary's unique role in salvation history and reflect on her profound faith and motherhood. Here's an exploration of its origins, significance, and ways to celebrate this special day.

The title "Mother of God" (Theotokos in Greek) was officially affirmed at the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD, recognizing Mary as the mother of Jesus Christ, who is both fully divine and fully human. This declaration underscores the importance of Mary in Christian theology, emphasizing her vital role in the Incarnation. The feast itself has roots in the early church, gradually evolving into a significant celebration in both Eastern and Western Christian traditions.

Celebrating Mary as the Mother of God emphasizes her unique position as the bearer of Christ. This feast highlights the themes of motherhood, grace, and the human experience of divine love. It invites the faithful to reflect on the qualities that Mary embodies—faithfulness, humility, and strength—qualities that Christians are called to emulate in their own lives.

Attend Mass: The most meaningful way to celebrate this feast is by attending a special liturgy. Many parishes hold Masses that honor Mary, often incorporating hymns and prayers dedicated to her. Participating in the Eucharist allows believers to join in communal worship and reflect on the significance of Mary's role.

Prayer and Reflection: Devotional practices such as the Rosary or prayers dedicated to Mary can deepen one's connection to her. Meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, particularly those related to her life, can help the faithful appreciate her virtues and intercessory power.

Family Traditions: Incorporating traditions into the celebration can foster a sense of unity and spirituality. Families might share a special meal, light candles, or create an altar dedicated to Mary, providing a focal point for prayer and reflection.

Acts of Kindness: In the spirit of Mary's compassion, engaging in acts of service or kindness on this day can be a meaningful way to honor her. This could involve volunteering, supporting local charities, or reaching out to those in need.

Marian Hymns and Music: Singing hymns dedicated to Mary or playing music that celebrates her life can enhance the day's spirit. Many churches hold special concerts or communal singing events to honor her.

Study and Reflection: Delving into scripture passages that highlight Mary's life—such as the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38) and the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55)—can provide insights into her character and faith. Consider reading works by theologians or saints that reflect on her significance.

The Feast of Mary, Mother of God, is a rich opportunity for spiritual growth and reflection. By celebrating this day, believers honor not only Mary's role in the story of salvation but also her enduring influence in the lives of Christians today. Whether through prayer, community, or acts of service, this feast invites us to embrace the qualities of love and faith that Mary embodies, inspiring us to live out our own vocations with grace and devotion.

Dr. Martin Luther King Sunday Suppers on Saturdays

In honor of the enduring legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., we are excited to invite you to our Dr. Martin Luther King Sunday Supper potluck dinner on Saturday, January 18, 2025, from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM in the Narthex. This special event will not only celebrate the values of justice, equality, and community that Dr. King championed but will also offer an opportunity for reflection and discussion on important issues that affect both our church and the broader community.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s work was rooted in the belief that love, justice, and compassion should be at the center of all human interactions. As a community of faith, we are called to live out these principles in our lives and to engage thoughtfully with the pressing issues of our time. The Dr. Martin Luther King Sunday Supper provides a space to reflect on these themes while breaking bread together. It is a chance to come together not just as a congregation but as individuals seeking to better understand how we can embody Dr. King's message in our daily lives.

This year, we will focus our discussion on a timely and powerful question: "How do we respect others who disrespect us?" This is a question that challenges us to consider our response to conflict, to examine how we can practice patience and understanding, even when faced with disrespect or injustice. It is an issue Dr. King himself grappled with, as his philosophy of nonviolence required a deep commitment to respecting others, even in the face of adversity.

At its heart, this event is about fostering community and engaging in meaningful conversation. Respecting others, especially those who may treat us with disrespect, is not always easy. Yet, as followers of Christ, we are called to rise above the negative cycles of conflict and hatred. Dr. King's teachings on love and nonviolence provide a powerful framework for navigating these difficult interactions.

We believe that discussing this question together—how to show respect when it feels difficult—will help us grow as individuals and as a community. The Dr. Martin Luther King Sunday Supper offers a time for open and honest reflection, where we can share our thoughts, listen to one another, and explore how we can live out Dr. King's message of love and justice in our interactions with others.

We invite all parishioners and anyone in the community who wishes to participate to contribute to the potluck by bringing a dish to share. Whether it's a favorite family recipe, a comforting meal, or something that reflects the diversity of our congregation, we look forward to enjoying the meals and fellowship you bring. Please RSVP with the church office to let us know you'll be attending and what dish you'll bring.

As we gather, let us remember that this event is about more than just sharing a meal—it's an opportunity to reflect, connect, and grow together as we continue to follow the example set by Dr. King.

We look forward to a meaningful evening of food, fellowship, and discussion, and we hope you'll join us as we explore how we can more deeply embody respect, even in challenging times.

JMB Crockpot Ministry

Crockpot Donations and Volunteer Opportunities

We are currently low on crockpots and would greatly appreciate your support. If you can donate a crockpot or are interested in volunteering to lead a class, please reach out to Dennis Last at 321-388-1572.

Are you looking to become more involved in our parish?

We have a variety of opportunities for you to contribute and make a difference throughout the week. Here's how you can get involved:

- **Saturdays:** Join us in a range of roles including readers, technical support, musicians, singers, altar servers, and Eucharistic Ministers. Your participation enriches our worship experience.
- **Mondays and Tuesdays:** Help us with our Crock Pot Classes. If you're interested in presenting, please reach out to Dennis Last for more information.
- **Tuesdays:** Volunteer at Rebecca's Pantry in the morning. Your assistance can make a significant impact on those in need.
- **Wednesdays:** Contribute to our Thrift Shop. We need enthusiastic helpers to support this valuable outreach.
- **Ongoing:** We are also establishing a new ministry for Special Ministers to the Sick. This role is a wonderful opportunity to provide comfort and support to those who are ill.

So much to choose from! Reflect on how you might be called to serve and make a difference. What is God inviting you to do?

If you are interested in any of these opportunities or have questions, please contact [appropriate contact person/office] for more details. We look forward to your involvement and contributions to our parish community!

The Our Father

The "Our Father," also known as the "Lord's Prayer," holds a central place in the spiritual life of Catholics. As one of the most important prayers in Christianity, it is not only a model for prayer but also a direct link to the teachings of Jesus Christ. The prayer is found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, where Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray. For Catholics, the "Our Father" is a prayer that encapsulates the core of Christian belief, guiding their relationship with God and with one another.

First and foremost, the "Our Father" is a prayer of communion with God. When Jesus instructs his followers to address God as "Our Father," it invites a personal, familial relationship with the Creator. This address affirms God's role as a loving and attentive Father who is close to his children. For Catholics, this is a profound reminder that prayer is not a distant, formal ritual but an intimate conversation with God, who is both transcendent and immanent. The prayer expresses trust in God's goodness and his ability to provide, protect, and guide.

Moreover, the prayer emphasizes the importance of God's kingdom and will. The line "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" is a call for Catholics to align their lives with God's purpose. It acknowledges that God's plan is supreme and invites Catholics to actively participate in the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. This reflects the Catholic belief that faith is not just personal but should manifest in actions that contribute to the common good, justice, and peace. The prayer thus becomes a daily reminder of the Christian mission to live according to God's will, seeking justice and compassion for others.

The petition "Give us this day our daily bread" speaks to the importance of trust in God's provision. Catholics believe in the necessity of daily sustenance, not only in terms of physical nourishment but also spiritual. The "daily bread" can be understood to include the Eucharist, the central sacrament of the Catholic Church. Catholics believe that through the Eucharist, they receive the body and blood of Christ, which strengthens them to live out their faith. This connection between the "Our Father" and the Eucharist underscores the integral relationship between prayer and sacrament in Catholic life.

The prayer also emphasizes forgiveness, a key tenet of the Catholic faith. The lines "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us" are a powerful reminder of the necessity of reconciliation, both with God and with others. Catholics believe that God's forgiveness is infinite, but that they must also extend forgiveness to others in order to receive it themselves. This reciprocal act of mercy is central to the Catholic understanding of the Christian life, calling believers to overcome bitterness and resentment in favor of peace and love.

Lastly, the "Our Father" serves as a reminder of the community aspect of the faith. The use of the plural "Our" rather than "My" signifies that the prayer is not just an individual request but a prayer for the entire Church, the Body of Christ. It reflects the Catholic understanding of the Church as a community of believers, bound together by a shared faith and commitment to Christ's teachings.

The "Our Father" is much more than a prayer for Catholics—it is a profound expression of faith, trust, and love. It teaches believers how to relate to God, align their lives with His will, seek His provision, forgive others, and live in community with fellow Christians. This prayer is not only recited in times of worship but serves as a daily guide for living a Christ-centered life. Through the "Our Father," Catholics continue to draw closer to God, embody His love, and strive to build His kingdom on earth.

Prayer for Vocations

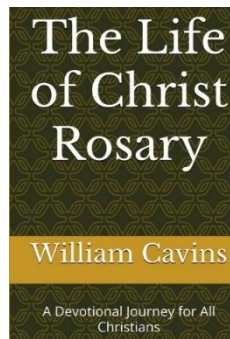
Gracious God, we give thanks for your call to both women and men to serve in Christ's Kingdom as priests, deacons, and consecrated persons. We ask that you send your Holy Spirit to inspire and guide others to respond with generosity and courage to your call. May our community of faith nurture and support vocations rooted in sacrificial love, especially among our youth and young adults. Through our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

A Prayer for Those in Formation

Lord, we lift up all those in formation, preparing to serve with hearts full of faith and dedication. Grant them wisdom, strength, and discernment as they grow in their journey. Guide their minds, strengthen their spirits, and fill them with your love. May they always walk in humility and grace, ready to serve others and follow the path you have set before them. We ask this in Your holy name. Amen.

Current candidates in formation include Zach Baker, Ken Gladding, Kody Hall, and Brian Ipock. All for the Diocese of St. John XXIII.

Bishop's New Books

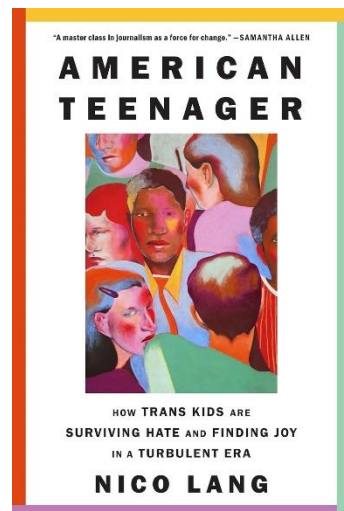


Two of Bishop Cavins' new books you might consider for the new year are: ***A Time for Prayer: A Family Prayer Book*** and ***The Life of Christ Rosary: A Devotional Journey for All Christians***. Both are available on Amazon in hardback or paperback. He also has a new book of reflections for Lent which we will profile next month.

New Transgender Book

My name is Nico Lang, and I'm the author of *American Teenager*, a book that recently debuted, offering a deeply personal look into the lives of seven families of trans youth across seven different states. These families, many of whom come from faith-based backgrounds, share their stories of resilience, love, and acceptance in the face of adversity.

The families featured in the book represent a wide range of religious traditions, including Evangelical, Baptist, Jewish, Muslim, and Episcopal. As a Buddhist raised Catholic who attended a Catholic college, I am incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to amplify these voices, especially as the stories of LGBTQ+ individuals in faith communities are often overshadowed by narratives of rejection and trauma. *American Teenager* shifts the focus to the stories of families who, while grappling with their own journeys, have found acceptance—sometimes on their own terms—and built supportive, loving environments for their trans children. These stories are diverse, but what unites them is hope.



As a longtime LGBTQ+ journalist who has contributed to outlets like Rolling Stone, HuffPost, and The Daily Beast, I feel that the timing of this book could not be more important. These intimate portraits offer readers a powerful message of acceptance, and they come at a time when LGBTQ+ individuals and their families continue to seek solace in places that honor their identities. For many, the church remains one of those safe spaces. My hope is that *American Teenager* can spark meaningful conversations and contribute to the continued growth of inclusive, welcoming communities within religious spaces. It is available on Amazon.

Family Faith Activities

Courtesy of LTP's [At Home with the Word 2024](#).

January 5, 2025

The Epiphany of the Lord

Activities

1. Borrow or buy a recording of Gian-Carlo Menotti's light opera *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and play it so it becomes familiar to you and your child. At bedtime, tell him the story of Amahl, the crippled boy who received a visit from the Three Kings and

decided to visit the Holy Child himself. You can learn the story from the script that accompanies the recording or look it up in a book or on the internet.

2. Teach your child the carol “We Three Kings” and sing it as a family, learning as many verses as you wish. Perhaps you can use it as a grace before dinner this week.
3. After dark one night, take your child outside to look at the stars. Imagine three men in a distant country seeing a very bright star and deciding to leave home and follow it, sensing its importance but not knowing where it would lead. What dangers and difficulties might they face? How would they overcome them? Encourage your child to invent details.

Questions

1. After Mass on Epiphany, ask your child, “If you could travel like the three Magi to see baby Jesus, what gift would you like to take?” Can a shepherd bring a gift? Can an animal? A child? Must a gift be a thing, or can it be a feeling, a wish or intention, or a prayer?
2. On a globe or map of the world, help your child to find his location. Then ask, “Who do you think Jesus came to save?” If the child says, “Me and you,” ask about others, relatives and friends. Then, using the map or globe, ask people who speak foreign languages in distant places. What about a classmate he or she doesn’t like? Even them?
3. Using the map or globe again, locate Bethlehem. Then choose a spot east of there, where the astrologers, or Magi, might have originated. Ask your child, “How do you think they got to Bethlehem? Did they ride on animals? How long did it take? Where did they stay on the way, and what did they eat? Were they tired when they got there? Scripture says they prostrated themselves. What does that mean?”

January 12, 2025

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

Questions

1. Tell or read your child the short description of Jesus’ baptism from today’s Gospel. Focus especially on the voice from heaven saying, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” Talk about the word “beloved”—what does it mean? Who is beloved to the child? Who is beloved to you, the parent? What does it feel like to be “beloved” and to feel that God is pleased with us?
2. Has your child ever seen a baby baptized? If not, describe what happens. If so, ask the child what happened. What was the baby wearing? Was water poured over the baby or was the baby dipped into the water? What did the priest (or deacon) say when the water touched the baby? Were there lighted candles? Why do you think people were so happy at the baptism?

3. Ask your child to think about all the ways she experiences water: drinking, bathing, swimming, when it is raining, and more. Can we live without water? Is there ever too much water? What does it feel like when you swim underwater and rise up for air? Have you ever seen grown-ups get baptized? That's the feeling of baptism with water and words: rising up to a new life with Jesus.

Activities

1. Before bedtime one evening, read some of the verses of today's responsorial psalm to your child (Psalm 104:1b-2, 3-4, 24-25, 27-28, 29-30). Talk about some of the poetic descriptions: "robed in light as with a cloak" or "you have spread out the heavens like a tent-cloth" or "you make the clouds your chariot." There are so many in this psalm! Wonder together about how God made our world and how much he loves it.
2. Using one of the child's dolls that can get wet, reenact a baptism with water and words: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Talk about how a baby who has been baptized is then a member of the worldwide Christian community who is welcomed and celebrated.
3. Again, read or tell the story of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. But this time go to your Bible and begin before today's reading begins to find more details about John. (Start with Mark 1:4.) Describe John's strange appearance (wearing camel skin) and diet (locusts and wild honey), his deference to Jesus, Jesus' insistence on being baptized, the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and the voice from heaven. Encourage the child to draw any part of the scene.

January 19, 2025

Second Sunday of the Christian Year

Questions

1. Ask your child, "How can you make God happy?" Wait for various answers, assuring him that there are many ways. One way is by singing a new song to the Lord, as today's responsorial psalm (95) urges us. Ask, "Have you ever made up your own song to God?" If not, encourage him to find a rhythm in these lines: "Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all you lands."
2. Ask your child, "What are you especially good at? What do you think I'm good at? Do you have a friend who is good at something else? What about your teacher? Your doctor?" Each person is good at some special thing, and these are gifts of the Spirit, like presents from God. God wants us to use these gifts to help each other.
3. Has your child ever been to a wedding? If not, perhaps an older child can describe one or you can tell about one that is memorable to you. What does it mean to get married? What does the couple promise? If you have wedding pictures, get them out. Why is everyone so happy? Do people dance? Eat special foods? Describe the

wedding at Cana. It was there that Jesus performed his first miracle, turning water into wine, and gave people a hint about who he really is.

Activities

1. Take the child's improvised song from the first question and pick it out on a piano or other instrument. If this is not possible, just add clapping and practice the tune. Add simple gestures. Perhaps use the song as a table grace this week.
2. Choose the child's favorite personal gift or ability and decide together how to develop or practice it this week. If she is a reader, spend some extra time reading together. If you are a swimmer, make a trip to the pool. If a knitter or sewer, help her learn a new stitch. Thank God for this gift and talk about how it could be used to help others.
3. Prepare some food with your child, letting him help as much as possible. This could be anything from peanut butter sandwiches or carrot sticks to baked brownies. Talk about how food comes from the earth and is harvested and prepared by human hands, in this case, yours. Homemade food tastes so good and expresses care and love. It's a little like water transformed into wine.

January 26, 2025

Third Sunday of the Christian Year

Activities

1. Play "Where's your nose?" with a small child. You ask the questions for each body part, and the child responds, not by pointing to the part, but by moving it in some way. You move the part in question too and see who comes up with the most interesting gesture. You can also play this with several children at once.
2. Watch liturgical dancer Betsey Beckman's dramatization of the passage in 1 Corinthians about the body's many parts and one spirit. A child will never forget this passage after seeing her humorous but reverent rendition. On YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=-sza670_i8c&feature=youtube.
3. Play "captive" with a younger child. Wrap the child up with her arms and yours, folding her into as small a package as possible. Then set the child free, encouraging her to dance for the joy of freedom in God's love. If you have children with several years between them, an older child can do this with a younger one.

Questions

1. Ask your child: "Can your ears see? Can your eyes hear? Can your hands talk?" Sometimes they can. "Can you walk with your elbows?" No, but some people can walk on their hands. Think of how perfectly the body is designed so that each part has its own job, just like the Church: many parts, one body. Perhaps the child can identify some of the parts of the Church, such as priest, lector, and Sunday school teacher or catechist.

2. Ask your child, "What is special about Sundays?" Perhaps the child will mention adults at home, no school, church, visits, or a meal. Each of these is a way of celebrating a day holy to God, a day of rest and rejoicing. Ask, "How would you like to celebrate this holy day?"
3. Reflecting on today's Gospel, in which Jesus says that he has come "to proclaim liberty to captives," invite an older child to read this question: "What do we mean when we say, 'God sets us free?'" Discuss captivity and freedom, literal situations and situations that feel like captivity and freedom. Encourage the older child to contribute items from current events and welcome contributions from the younger.

Jubilant January Saints

January is a month rich in saints' feast days in the Reformed Catholic Church, many of whom are celebrated for their holiness, devotion, and significant contributions to the faith. Here is a list of Catholic saints commemorated in January:

- **January 1: Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God:** This feast celebrates Mary as the mother of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is a holy day of obligation in many countries.
- **January 2: St. Basil the Great (329–379):** Bishop and Doctor of the Church, known for his theological writings and efforts to defend the faith. **St. Gregory Nazianzus (329–389):** Archbishop and Doctor of the Church, a key figure in early Christian theology and an important defender of the Nicene Creed.
- **January 3: The Most Holy Name of Jesus:** This feast honors the name of Jesus and the significance of the name that is above all names.
- **January 4: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774–1821):** The first native-born American to be canonized a saint, she founded the Sisters of Charity and was instrumental in the establishment of Catholic schools in the United States.
- **January 5: St. John Neumann (1811–1860):** Bishop of Philadelphia, known for his work in education and for establishing the first diocesan school system in the United States.
- **January 6: Epiphany:** The feast commemorates the visit of the Magi (Wise Men) to the infant Jesus and the revelation of Christ to the Gentiles. It is customary to transfer this feast to the nearest Sunday.
- **January 7: St. Raymond of Penyafort (1175–1275):** A Dominican friar, canon lawyer, and adviser to the Pope, known for his work on church law and for reforming the Dominican order.
- **January 9: St. Severin (died 482):** A 5th-century bishop of Cologne, who is known for spreading Christianity in what is now Germany.
- **January 10: St. William of Bourges (died 1209):** A French bishop who worked to reform the clergy and served as a peacemaker.
- **January 11: St. Hyginus (died 142):** The 9th Pope of the Catholic Church, who is believed to have been martyred for the faith.

- **January 12: St. Benet Biscop (628–689):** An English abbot who founded the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow and brought many manuscripts and relics back to England.
- **January 13: St. Hilary of Poitiers (c. 310–367):** A Doctor of the Church, known for his defense of Trinitarian doctrine against Arianism.
- **January 14: St. Felix of Nola (died c. 250):** A priest and martyr, known for his generosity and care of the poor during the persecutions of the early Church.
- **January 15: St. Paul the Hermit (c. 228–341):** Considered one of the first Christian hermits, he lived a life of solitude and prayer in the Egyptian desert.
- **January 16: St. Berard and Companions (died 1220):** The first Franciscan martyrs, who were killed while preaching the Gospel in Morocco.
- **January 17: St. Anthony the Great (c. 251–356):** An Egyptian monk and the father of Christian monasticism, known for his ascetic lifestyle and spiritual wisdom.
- **January 18: The Chair of St. Peter:** A feast commemorating the status of the Bishop of Rome as First Among Equals, symbolized by the chair (cathedra) of St. Peter, the first Pope.
- **January 20: St. Fabian (died 250):** Pope and martyr, known for his leadership of the Church during the persecution of Christians under the Roman emperor Decius.
- **January 21: St. Agnes (died c. 304):** A young Christian martyr, she is one of the most beloved virgin saints, often depicted with a lamb, symbolizing her purity.
- **January 24: St. Francis de Sales (1567–1622):** Bishop of Geneva and a Doctor of the Church, known for his writings on spiritual direction and his gentle approach to evangelization.
- **January 25: Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul:** Commemorating the dramatic conversion of St. Paul the Apostle on the road to Damascus, a pivotal moment in the spread of Christianity.
- **January 26: St. Timothy and St. Titus:** Both were companions and close associates of St. Paul, serving as bishops and leaders in the early Church. St. Timothy is known for his pastoral role in Ephesus, while St. Titus worked in Crete.
- **January 27: St. Angela Merici (1474–1540):** Founder of the Ursuline Sisters, she dedicated her life to the education and care of young girls, establishing the first religious teaching order for women.
- **January 28: St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274):** A Dominican friar and one of the Church's greatest theologians, his works, especially the *Summa Theologica*, have had a profound impact on Catholic philosophy and doctrine.
- **January 29: St. Gildas (c. 500–570):** A 6th-century Welsh monk and historian, known for his writings on the history and the moral state of Britain.
- **January 30: St. Bathildis (c. 626–680):** Queen of the Franks, who became a Benedictine nun after her husband's death and was known for her charity and support of monastic life.

- **January 31: St. John Bosco (1815–1888):** A priest and founder of the Salesians, dedicated to the education and care of poor youth, particularly through schools and vocational training.

These saints represent a wide array of vocations, from hermits and bishops to teachers and mystics, and their feast days invite the faithful to reflect on the diversity and beauty of the Church's history. The saints commemorated in January offer models of holiness, perseverance, and devotion to Christ, reminding us of the many ways God works in and through His people. Which saint is your favorite? Share your thoughts on our Facebook page!

January Recipes

This month's recipes are themed around Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s concept of a Sunday Supper in which folks gather to share food and discuss items of importance to the community. Consider participating in a Saturday Sunday Supper this year.

Southern Crockpot Collard Greens

Ingredients:

- 1 large Smoked Ham Hock
- 1 large Sweet Onion roughly chopped
- ½ teaspoon Red Pepper Flakes
- 1 teaspoon Kosher Salt
- 6 cups Water
- 3 lbs Collard Greens washed and roughly chopped
- ¼ cup Apple Cider Vinegar
- ¼ cup Brown Sugar or more if collards are super bitter
- Pepper Vinegar for serving

Directions:

1. Add ham hock, chopped onion, red pepper flakes, salt, collard greens, apple cider vinegar and brown sugar to your crockpot.
2. Stir it up then place the lid on it and turn the crockpot on high.
3. Cook for 4-6 hours or until tender.
4. Once the leaves are tender, carefully remove the ham hock and place in a small bowl. Pull the meat off of the bone and add the pork back to the crockpot --throwing the bones in the trash.
5. Season with salt, pepper and more sugar if needed before serving. I also recommend adding a few splashes of pepper vinegar before serving.

Crock Pot Ham with Brown Sugar Glaze

Ingredients:

- 3 8 lb spiral cut ham
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup pure maple syrup do not use artificially flavored pancake syrup
- 1 cup pineapple juice
- Cooking Spray
- fresh herbs for garnish

Directions:

1. Coat a large 7-8-quart crock pot with cooking spray.
2. Place the ham cut side down in the crock pot.
3. Rub the brown sugar all over the ham, then pour the maple syrup and pineapple juice over the top.
4. Cook for 3-4 hours on low heat, or until a thermometer registers 140 degrees F when inserted into the thickest part of the ham.
5. Transfer the ham to a serving platter.
6. Pour the liquid from the bottom of the crock pot into a medium sized pan.
7. Place the pan over medium-high heat and bring the liquid to a simmer.
8. Cook for 6-8 minutes or until just thickened,
9. Pour the sauce over the ham. Decorate the serving platter with fresh herbs if desired, then serve.

Crockpot Sweet Potatoes

Ingredients:

- 1 to 8 medium sweet potatoes about 8 ounces each
- Salt black pepper, butter, brown sugar – optional, for serving

Directions:

1. Rinse your sweet potatoes and shake off any excess water (no need to dry them; the moisture will help them steam).
2. Place the sweet potatoes in a 6-quart or larger slow cooker. If cooking only 1 or 2 potatoes, place them in the center. If you have more sweet potatoes than will fit in a single layer, create a second layer on top. No need to poke holes in the sweet potatoes or wrap the sweet potatoes in foil.
3. Cook on LOW for 6 to 8 hours or HIGH for 3 to 4 hours, until the potatoes are tender when pierced with a fork. The amount of time you need will vary based on your slow cooker and the size of your sweet potatoes (for reference, I've slow cooked sweet potatoes as large as 1 1/2 pounds each and had them finish in about 4 hours 15 minutes on high).

- Carefully remove the sweet potatoes from the slow cooker. Once they are cool enough to handle, cut a slit down the middle, then push the two ends together to open the potato. Top and enjoy as desired. You also can scoop out the flesh and use it for any recipe that calls for cooked sweet potatoes.

Crock Pot Pecan Pie

Ingredients:

- 1 refrigerated pie crust
- 4 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 ⅓ cups light corn syrup
- 1 cup sugar
- ⅓ cup salted butter melted
- ⅛ teaspoon cinnamon (optional)
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 cups of pecan halves, divided use

Directions:

1. Line a 6-quart oval slow cooker with parchment paper (12.5 inch x 16 inch). Press the paper down into the slow cooker to create an outline of the bottom of the slow cooker.
2. Remove parchment paper and place unrolled pie crust onto the parchment paper (lining it up with the creases from the outline in the parchment paper). Gently roll up the edges of the pie crust and make small indentations to help the crust stick to the parchment paper and to keep in the filling better.
3. Place parchment paper/pie crust into slow cooker (pastry should extend 2 to 3 inches up the sides). Bend and fold the pastry as needed to get it to fit properly.
4. In a bowl combine the eggs, corn syrup, sugar, melted butter, cinnamon and vanilla. Whisk until smooth. Stir in 1 cup of the pecans.
5. Gently pour batter into crust in the slow cooker. Then top with remaining cup of pecans. Placing them evenly in a pattern to make a nice presentation.
6. Place a layer of paper towels on top of the slow cooker then cover with the lid. Cook on high for 3 to 3 1/2 hours or until filling is puffed and set. Turn off slow cooker. Let stand, uncovered, 1 hour.
7. Cut and serve straight from the slow cooker. Or gently lift the parchment paper out of the slow cooker, then slice and serve.

Slow Cooker Smothered Steak

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds sirloin steak
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon steak seasoning
- 4 tablespoons of butter
- 1 sliced onion
- 1 green bell-pepper sliced
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 envelopes brown gravy mix 1 ounce
- 2 cups of water

Directions:

1. Season both sides of your steaks with paprika, onion powder, and steak seasoning.
2. 2 pounds sirloin steak, 1 teaspoon smoked paprika, 1 teaspoon onion powder, 1 teaspoon steak seasoning
3. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat and sear the steaks quickly on both sides. You want to get a little color, not cook them.
4. Remove the steaks from the pan and place them at the bottom of your slow cooker.
5. Add butter, onion, and pepper to the skillet.
6. 4 tablespoons of butter, 1 onion, 1 green bell pepper
7. Stir this around until the butter melts and the peppers and onion pick up the steak bits from the bottom of the pan.
8. Toss in your garlic and flour and stir everything together for 1 minute.
9. 2 cloves of garlic, 2 tablespoons flour
10. Add this pepper-onion mixture to the slow cooker.
11. Next, in a small bowl, combine one brown gravy mix, water, Worcestershire sauce, and brown sugar. Whisk to combine.
12. 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce, 2 envelopes brown gravy mix, 2 cups water, 1 tablespoon brown sugar
13. Pour this over the steak in the slow cooker.
14. Cover and cook on low 6 hours or high 4 hours or until the meat is tender.
15. Remove the steak from the slow cooker.
16. Whisk in the second envelope of brown gravy mix.
17. Add the steak back to the gravy.
18. Serve over rice or mashed potatoes