

MASS INTENTIONS

THIS WEEK

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| Saturday | 5:00 | Csapos, Riordan & Madden Families |
| Sunday | 8:00 | Jim Piersall, Jack Carroll Hanratty Fr. Bob Kemmery, Parish Family |
| | 10:00 | Norie Leonard |
| Monday | 8:00 | Mark Dundas, & Loius DiGiovanni |
| | 4:00 | Clayton Ingham Jr. |
| | 7:00 | Moreau, Berube, Fregeau, Kemp & Hendrickson Families |
| Tuesday | 8:00 | Al Schubert |
| | 10:00 | John Hull |
| Wednesday | 8:00 | Michael Merchant |
| Thursday | 8:00 | Communion Service |
| Friday | 8:00 | Norie Leonard |

NEXT WEEKEND

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| Saturday | 5:00 | Leo Miller |
| Sunday | 8:00 | Carol Barker, Michel Irwin, Fr. Bob Kemmery, Parish Family |
| | 10:00 | Mary Cacciola |

PRAY FOR THE ILL OF THE PARISH

Martin Coughlin, Loretta Stephens, Regina Zanis, Harry Marcoux, John Keane, Tris Windle, David Cousins, Lynne Scalia, Alex Podeszwa, Eileen Metterville, Thomas Stone, Nick Bartick, Pam Hedlund, Len Hedlund, Greg Morongell, Nora Gould, Edan Pearl, Anne Caruso, John M. Pollard, Peter Cruickshank, Bill Hannon, Ivy Davis, Maddy Hayes, Clare Stevenson, Joseph Nosari, Vincent Lencvewski, Jeffrey Wolfgang, Louise Francke, Joan Ouellette, Bev Sarazin, Tyler Bencoter, Agnes Wolfgang, Fr. Paul Smith, Marilyn Drewes, John L. Sullivan, Kameron Hardaker, Ray Castriotta, Julianne Sullivan, Robert Grudzina, Brenda Kowalski, Marge LaGrassa, Jim Lewis, Joyce Loechner, Frank Salomone, Paul Chamberlain, Pauline Laberge, Chad Larivee, Patrick McNulty, Dick Wentworth, Nuvia Downs, Karen Mary McNulty, Olivia Hart, Alex Haas, Patrick Devine, Gerry Csapos, Peggy Carson, Ed Daly, Addie Priess, Tim McEnaney, Frank McCarthy, Andree Yager, Loretta Reiter, Paul Kascsak, Lolita Previd, Joe Conlan, Patty Camarra, James Manley, Betty Babcock, Thomas Murphy, Tom & Deb O'Connor, Chris Frazier, Melissa K., Jayne Boyle, Vittoria Hillis, Baby Lillian Thoman, Jessica O., Fran McDonagh, Paul Hendrickson, Donna Hibbert, Margaret Royce, Beth Nixon, Maureen Hall, Anne O'Brien, Ben McMahon, Gerry Moynihan, Martha Moynihan, Richard Paskiewicz, Peg Parker, Mary Rodrigues, Emily Sparks, Bob Flaherty, Martha Byron, Stephen Moreau

PRAY FOR LOVED ONES IN THE MID-EAST

Brandy Nelson, Timothy Horigan, Scott Doucette, Michael Wilson, David Lucas, Sean Lucas, Peter Civita Shayne, Peter Cabral, Gregory DeLuca, Joshua Schmitt, Joseph Long, Brad Howard, Thomas Scudder, Jeffrey Stebbins, Phillip McDonough, David Wilcox, John Amick, David McDonald, Lt. Edward J. Maloney, Andrew Kelley, William James Miller, David Orloski, Stephen Tammaro, Michael L. Hamilton, Thomas Crawford, Aaron Charette, Nicholas McGahey, Edward Pruffer, Christian Goodman, John Reuland

PRAY FOR OUR DECEASED Marie McCarthy

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11)

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

This being my first Christmas with you, I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm that I consider it a privilege and an honor to serve as your Pastor. Thank you for the very warm welcome that you have shown me as well as your many kindnesses, support, encouragement and prayers.

I am very grateful for your response to this year's Parish Annual Appeal Letter. As people of faith, we know that we are called to share the blessings we have received, serve Christ in one another and worship in memory of Him. Your generosity to St. Joan of Arc Parish throughout the year helps to support our parish ministries, outreach and activities as well as maintain the parish buildings and grounds. The Annual Appeal is an opportunity, for those who can, to make an additional sacrificial offering to our Parish.

I am profoundly grateful to the St. Joan of Arc Parish Women's Guild for the generous donation they recently made to our parish. This donation was able to be made because of the success of the Parish Thrift Shop, this year. The Thrift Shop, overseen by the Women's Guild, fulfills its mission to the community through the dedication and devotion of the many volunteers and managers. Thank you all.

Each year, the Advent Season is the time when we prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ, the newborn King. Our Advent observances enable us to more perfectly proclaim that Jesus Christ, the child of Mary and Joseph at Bethlehem, in fact, reigns in our hearts. This Christmas is the time to look back to the day when heaven came down to earth in the person of Jesus Christ. As those sayings remind us, we remember that "*Jesus* is the reason for the season" and we "keep *Christ* in Christmas".

Let us all give thanks to God for the blessings He has bestowed upon us throughout this past year. Let us pray for His continued blessings in the New Year ahead, 2019. May the blessed Seasons of Advent and Christmas fill your hearts with the peace, joy and love that only Christ can give. May the Lord abundantly bless you and the parish we all love. St. Joan or Arc, pray for us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father William M. Rodrigues

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Christmas Masses

Monday, December 24th

4:00pm "Family Mass" & 7:00pm

Tuesday, December 25th

8:00am & 10:00am

New Year's Masses

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

Monday, December 31st

5:00pm

Tuesday, January 1st

10:00am

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

RCIA

The next RCIA meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 27, at 4:00pm in the Chapel. It is not too late to join us if you are interested in becoming Catholic or if you are already Catholic and simply want to reconnect with the church. You can contact Judy Burt Walker in the Faith Formation Office or Father Bill at the rectory for more information.

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS

We wish all our students and their families, volunteers and catechists a most blessed and festive Christmas. May the gentleness of the season bring you peace and joy as we celebrate the birth of Christ within our hearts.

FAITH FORMATION CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

We wish to thank all our Faith Formation students for the wonderful performance of our Christmas Story. It truly brought the spirit of Christ's birth to all who attended. We also wish to thank all our catechists and volunteers for making this evening a "true Christmas miracle". We couldn't have done it without all of you. A round of applause for our baby Jesus, Colt Viprino, and his parents, Emily and Christopher, for sharing their bright star with us. And a big thank you to all the families, friends and parishioners who came to witness this special evening production.

CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY MASS

All are invited to our Family Mass at 4 p.m. Christmas Eve to celebrate the Birth of Christ at this special liturgy. Students will be participating in many ways: lectors, altar servers, offertory collectors, bearers of the crèche figures to the manger, and signing *Silent Night* after Communion.

VISITATIONS

Every Monday morning for 16 weeks, they leave their house before dawn for their 8:45 appointment at the hospital. For the four hours of chemotherapy, Mom is right there at her 12-year-old daughter's side playing games, watching videos, talking. These Monday mornings are anxious times – but precious. For this mother and daughter, the difficult gives birth to a deepening bond of love.

Every Tuesday afternoon, after a full day of her own classes, Kristen, a high school senior, heads to the community center. For two hours, she tutors kids from city elementary schools in the mysteries of math and the secrets of English grammar. In Kristen's patient explanations and words of encouragement, God's compassion is revealed to kids at risk – a little more love and mercy are born into the world.

The brothers have not spoken in years. They've been estranged over a family matter, the details of which are long forgotten but still the hurt and mistrust linger. Now for the good of the family, they seek to repair their broken relationship. In every awkward word they exchange, in every attempt to move on; in every admission of hurt and anger – love blossoms – and God is born anew.

In today's Gospel, Mary travels to be with her older cousin, Elizabeth. Even though Luke does not come right out and say why she goes, we can imagine that in the difficult circumstances surrounding both women's pregnancies, Mary wanted to support the older woman – and yearned to be supported in a way that perhaps her neighbors could not provide. The joy of intimate sharing and the deep bond of companionship were instantly apparent in their greeting of one another.

In what might be seen as an *ordinary* visit of two pregnant women, the *extraordinary* love of God is visibly experienced by both – love literally leaps for joy and binds them together in a unique and life-giving relationship. In Mary and Elizabeth's visit, as well as in our own "visitations", the Spirit of God becomes present in the forgiveness we offer; the kindness we extend; the generosity that provides a space of listening, encouragement, and welcome.

As we draw near to Christmas, may we be Christ-bearers – giving birth to love and peace to one another. Together may our hearts "*leap for joy*" in the presence of the Holy One. May Love be born anew in the love we share with each other



Diocese of Fall River
Office of the Bishop
Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.

Bishop da Cunha's 2018 Christmas Message

Dear friends in Christ,

This year that is coming to a close, has been a year full of challenges for our world, our country, our diocese and for the Universal Church. We have seen natural disasters: fires destroying homes, lives and entire communities in California; we have seen powerful hurricanes affecting the lives of millions of people; we have seen violence in our country and around the world; we have seen racial tensions and migrants suffering from displacement. We have seen scandals ripping through the heart of the Church and affecting the faith and trust of God's people in the Church and her leaders. We have seen the face of sin and evil all around us.

In our own diocese, four churches closed: Saint Bernadette, Holy Rosary, Holy Cross and Saint Anne. As Bishop of Fall River, these were difficult decisions to make, knowing that closing these beloved places of worship would cause tremendous sadness for the faithful parishioners of these parishes.

On the other hand, we have also seen commitment of so many good people to remain faithful and connected to God and the Church. We have seen the solid faith of so many who are not abandoning God or the Church. We have seen people fighting the evil of racism, working to eradicate the sin of sexual abuse, and dedicating their talents to protect life and to protect this planet, our common home. It is because of the generosity and commitment of so many good people, and because we know that God will never abandon us, that hope is kept alive. God's grace and our faith continue to help us remain committed to making this world a better place.

As we celebrate Christmas, let us remember that when Jesus came, He did not find a peaceful, loving world; He found a world filled with discrimination, division, violence and war. Jesus Himself was a victim of these evils, but He faced these evils head-on because He is the Prince of Peace.

Jesus comes to us again this Christmas, in the midst of all the evil in the world, to bring peace. He asks us to embrace with Him the mission of transforming the world by eliminating what is evil in ourselves first. "Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye" (Mt. 7:5). Christmas is the perfect time for us to pause and reflect on how we each contribute to what is not going well in the world and how we can contribute to make the necessary changes. The message of peace and Salvation that Jesus brought us 2,000 years ago will only be realized when we accept our responsibility to make a difference through our faith and with our talents.

This Christmas, as we gather with family and friends, let us remember that Christmas is much more than just a holiday or feast; it is a Sacred moment celebrating the coming of Christ to save us and our world and entrusting us with the task of continuing His mission of saving and Sanctifying the world. Let us pass on to our children and young people the values we received from our ancestors and rekindle the real Spirit of Christmas in our hearts, our homes, our families and throughout the world.

Merry Christmas! Feliz Natal! Feliz Navidad! Joyeux Noel!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V.
Bishop of Fall River