



OUR LADY OF AFRICA

PARISH BULLETIN

Sunday, December 25, 2022



Served by the Society of the Divine Word



THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

She wrapped him in
swaddling clothes and laid
him in a manger, because
there was no room for them
in the inn. - Lk 2:7

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD, ©LPI

Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 4:00 p.m.
Sunday: 9:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. (Livestream)
1:30 p.m.—Ghanaian Community (*1st and 2nd
Sunday each month*)
2:30 p.m.—Igbo Community (*3rd and 4th
Sunday each month*)
6:00 p.m.—French speaking Community (*1st
Sunday each month*)

Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)

By appointment—(773) 624-5375
Saturday 3:00 - 3:45 p.m.

Pastor

Father Bob Kelly, SVD

Contact Us

Phone: 773-624-5375

Email: ourladyofafricachicago@gmail.com

Church Address

615 East Oakwood Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60653

Office Hours

Monday - Friday: 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Parish Administrator: Ms. Shirley McKinney



This Week at OLA

During the Holidays, most events
are postponed until the New Year.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!

Parish Holiday Office Hours

THE PARISH OFFICE IS CLOSED
THE FOLLOWING DATES:

MONDAY - DECEMBER 26, 2022

FRIDAY - DECEMBER 30, 2022

MONDAY - JANUARY 2, 2023

Normal hours (9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.) will resume
on January 3, 2023.

Thanks for your understanding!

Scriptures for the Week

Sunday, December 25

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD S Day: Is 52: 7-10/ Ps
98: 1. 2-3. 3-4. 5-6 (3c)/ Heb 1: 1-6/ Jn 1: 1-18

Monday, December 26

St Stephen, protomartyr F Acts 6: 8-10; 7: 54-59/
Ps 31: 3cd-4. 6 and 8ab. 16bc and 17/ Mt 10: 17-
22

Tuesday, December 27

St John, ap, ev F 1 Jn 1: 1-4/ Ps 97: 1-2. 5-6. 11-
12/ Jn 20: 1a and 2-8

Wednesday, December 28

Holy Innocents, mts F 1 Jn 1: 5 2: 2/ Ps 124: 2-3. 4-
5. 7b-8/ Mt 2: 13-18

Thursday, December 29

Christmas Weekday/ St. Thomas Becket, bp, mt
1 Jn 2: 3-11/ Ps 96: 1-2a. 2b-3. 5b-6/ Lk 2: 22-35

Friday, December 30

HOLY FAMILY F Sir 3: 2-6. 12-14 or Col 3: 12-21/ Ps
128: 1-2. 3. 4-5/ Mt 2: 13-15. 19-23

Saturday, December 31

Christmas Weekday/ Sylvester I, pp 1 Jn 2: 18-
21/ Ps 96: 1-2. 11-12. 13/ Jn 1: 1-18

Ministry List for Next Weekend

Saturday Vigil Mass 4 p.m. - December 31

- Lectors: Theresa Rhea
Silmon Reed

Sunday 10 a.m. - January 1, 2023

- Lectors: Christine Davis Stewart
Edith Lane

Mass Intentions

Saturday, December 31

- 4 p.m. Vigil Mass
+Ivy Kuenyefu
Requested by her daughter
Saraa Kuenyefu Searcy

Sunday, January 1, 2023

- 10 a.m. Mass
+Denise Jones (perished in a fire in Texas)
Requested by Christine Brown

Requesting Mass Intentions

For those who would like to remember a loved one
(living or deceased), a special occasion or a
specific concern, Masses can be offered for those
intentions. Please submit a Mass Intention request
by calling the Parish Office.

Please keep in your Prayers

Jeff Moore, the brother of **Shirley McKinney** from our
Parish Office

Marcia Berry and **Alice Thompson**

Charles Herbert who is seriously ill in a Hospital in
Carbondale, IL. He is the son of Florine Brown of our
Parish.

Floyd Bates, the brother of **James Brown**.

Michelle Farrar of our Parish who is at home now
recovering from her injuries.

Conference Calls for OLA

For our Tuesday Night Bible Study and Angels on Air Prayer Line on Thursday, please call our Conference
Call Phone Number: **(267) 807-9601**. The code to enter the group session is **340-355-967**.

Pastor's Message - A Christmas Reflection for All of Us...



Father Bob Kelly, SVD
Pastor

Dear Parishioners,

"In the hustle and bustle that leads up to our celebration of Christmas, many of us find ourselves asking, "What's it all about?" We sometimes wonder in the rush, the stress and the hurry, whether we have somehow missed the real meaning of it all.

Christmas is, first and foremost, about Love, God's Love. How much does God love us? God loves us so much that God gave us the most precious gift imaginable, Jesus, God's own Son. That's the heart of Christmas.

This great and wonderful love calls us to love one another. We share love in and through our human relationships. Love is a commitment and a decision to stick by others, come what may, through thick and thin, when the going is easy and when the going gets tough. The love that we share in our human relationships is a reflection of the love of God, calling us to give of ourselves for others.

At Christmas, we remember that Jesus was born in poverty, in a stable among the poorest people and the farm animals. What does this mean for us today? You and I are called to look for the face of Christ in the poor, those at our own door and in places far from here. Love can look like a cup of coffee offered, a hand held, a smile shared, and a story heard. I believe that, in the end, we will be judged by how we especially care for the poor and each other."

May all of us remember the real meaning of Christmas. A very Blessed Christmas to all of you!

Fr. Bob Kelly SVD, Fr. Carl Gales, SVD, Bro. Aloysius Aisi, SVD, Fr. Tracy O'Sullivan, O.Carm., Deacon & Mrs. Michael Foggie, Deacon Manie Manuel, SVD, Deacon Ivan Lazcano, Senior Deacon Mervin Johnson, Frater Zachary Smith, SVD, Frater Friday Onoja, SVD

Donations

Your continued donations to support Our Lady of Africa Parish can be given by going to the following links:

<https://donate.holyangelschicago.com/give>

Or Scan this QR Code



Or mail to: **Our Lady of Africa Parish**
615 E Oakwood Blvd
Chicago, IL 60653

Parish Directory

Baptisms

Tina Carter
tinalcarter71@gmail.com

Blessed Sacrament Society

Linda Broadnax - President

Confirmation

Tina Carter, Stephanie Gado
Theresa Rhea

Clergy

Fr. Bob Kelly, SVD - Pastor
bkellysvd@gmail.com
Fr. Carl Gales, SVD - Associate
galesce0422@gmail.com
Fr. Tracy O'Sullivan, O.Carm.
Dcn. Michael Foggie
Dcn. Ivan Lazcano
Dcn. Merv Johnson
Dcn. Manie Manuel, SVD

Events Committee

Keisha Chavers - Chairperson

First Communion

Barbara Edwards-Hill
Lisa Littleton

Food Pantry

Ladell Johnson

Funerals

Katie Jordan
kwcluwpresident@gmail.com

Knights of Peter Claver

Thomas Rich - Grand Knight

Knights of Peter Claver Lady's Auxiliary

Lena Young - Grand Lady

Maintenance

Bobby Malone
Tyrone Smith

Men's Coalition

Michael Morman - President

Music Ministry

Tyrone Pittman

Parish Administrator

Shirley McKinney
773-624-5375

Religious Missionary

Brother Alu Aisi, SVD

School and Church Liaison

LaTanya Berry-Johnson

Seminarian

Frater Zachary Smith, SVD

Sunday School

Eileen Foggie

Tolton Heritage Center

Regina Cook
773-268-1518

Ushers and Greeters

Jackson Lucas

Youth Ministry

Taleah Cage
Simlon Reed



New Years Mass Schedule

- **NEW YEAR'S EVE - Saturday, December 31, 2022**
4:00 p.m. Vigil Mass
Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
- **NEW YEAR'S DAY - Sunday, January 1, 2023**
10:00 a.m. - Solemnity of Mary,
Mother of God

Ghanaian Community Mass - January 1
1:30 p.m. - Solemnity of Mary,
Mother of God

French Speaking Community Mass
6:00 p.m. - Solemnity of Mary,
Mother of God

Pictures from the 7th Annual Breakfast with Santa Grab and Go



December Birthdays

12/06 Alfrances Sharpe
12/08 Tiffany Swann-Covington
12/09 Vicki A. Cooper
12/09 Denise Jackson-Wilson
12/10 Regina Cook
12/10 Marjorie Heard
12/12 Tylie McShan

12/13 Thomas Calicott
12/21 +David Flippen Carpenter
12/22 Eileen Foggie
12/26 Lena Young
12/28 Gloria Dean

Please sign the calendar located in the Narthex with your Name and Birthday (please: no birth years). We can then recognize everyone's birthday as it comes. Thank you so much for your attention and understanding.



Putting Christ back into Christmas is surely the desire of most Christians. The intensity of the "Black Fridays" and "Cyber Mondays" seems to never let up. It is truly difficult to break through the message to "shop till you drop." On a personal level, a great number of people try to balance the gross commercialism and the spiritual significance of the feast. A serious reading of the Scriptures makes us aware of how far we must go. The truly radical message in Luke and Matthew of the birth of Christ has a minimum connection to the superficial slogan, "Put Christ back into Christmas". We are caught in a conundrum of the incredible cultural pressure of the commercial conquest of Christmas and the simple overwhelming act of love that is the Word made flesh.

We have created a sentimental and flowery description of the birth in Bethlehem that distorts Luke's story. The commonly accepted version hides the uprooting, poverty and deep bewilderment of Mary and Joseph. How could God allow his Son to enter the world in such destitution?

Our "Silent Night" interpretation of the event leaves little room for the true message of Luke and practically no room for Matthew's description of the story. Both evangelists are inviting us into the deepest and truest dimension of our reality, a graciousness that is always calling us out of the darkness into the light. The evangelists' harsh and challenging description of the birth offers a suitable backdrop for God's ultimate conversation with a broken humanity in the person of Jesus Christ.

An important point to remember is that both Matthew and Luke describe the birth of Jesus as part of the entire gospel message. The child in the manger is the beginning of a journey that leads to the Messiah on the Cross. God speaks to

us in both events that are of the one reality: God's saving love for us. A few cultures capture this profound truth by using the wood of the creche for the wood of the cross for their Good Friday celebration. Matthew's story emphasizes the connection of Jesus' birth to the Jewish longing for the Messiah as the Son of David. This Messiah in Matthew is Emmanuel, God with us. The reaction to the birth, seen in the dealings of the Wise Men and Herod, prefigures all the intrigue and violence that will happen in the journey to Golgotha.

While Luke has a strong element of song and joy, the somber note in Matthew continues in the exile into Egypt and the killing of the Innocents. Mary's infant avoids the slaughter by divine intervention only to face the Father's will in the Garden.

Matthew's version of the conflict of good and evil features the Holy Family and Herod. It looks back at Moses and the Pharaoh and looks forward to the saving death that concludes in the resurrection. The world Matthew is portraying in Jesus' birth is a portrait of our world today with our unwelcome migrants and sexual slavery, gangs and abuse in families, grossly unjust distribution of wealth and vast investment in arms, the ever-present curse of racism all crystallized in Putin's war.

From the moment of her call to be the Mother, Mary faced the irony of utter joy and wonder in her heart against the continual disorientation, confusion and total displacing of her plans and events in her daily life.

Both Matthew and Luke are addressing the question that pervades all the Gospels: What kind of Messiah will Jesus be?

Continued on the following page...



Father Tracy's Reflection on Christmas Continued

Our cultural and commercial celebration of Christmas is filled with an answer that Jesus challenged in all his life, ministry and teachings and especially in his death and resurrection. He will not be a Messiah isolated from the poor and marginalized. He will not be draped in wealth and power. He will be a Messiah of sacrifice and service wrapped in swaddling clothes. The salvation Jesus offers as a suffering Messiah is not one of the easy fix. It is a salvation that calls for our purification and self-giving leading to a personal transformation.

Luke's message of hope and joy is more wonderous in the context of this full gospel message.

At Christmas time, just a few months before his death, Archbishop Romero captured the spiritual depth of Christmas. He said, **"Today, we recall God's reign is now in this world, and that Christ has inaugurated the fulness of time. Christ's birth attests that God is now marching with us in history – that we are not alone, and that our aspiration for peace, for justice, for a reign of divine law, for something holy is far from earth's realities. Nevertheless, we can hope for all these things, not because we human beings are able to construct that realm of holiness which God's holy words proclaim but because the builder of a reign of justice, of love and peace is already in the midst of us."**

I had these words on the Christmas, a message of hope, become very real for me recently. I was at a police station filing a report on my stolen phone. As I went to sit down to wait for the document, a young mother and her six-month-old son sat next to me. I shared how crazy it was to lose your phone. She responded, "If you want to know about crazy, you need to have a violent and abusive husband." In our conversation I learned she was an immigrant from a Moslem country only here two and a half years. Even though they both still live in the same building, the situation between her and her husband is so bad, they must exchange the child at the police station. This happens four days of the week when she goes to school. She is pursuing a Doctor's degree in clinical psychology.

What struck me about this scene was how hopeful she was despite being an abused woman, a Moslem immigrant and the mother of a young child in a failed marriage.

It was obvious to me that the message of hope and the grace of the Infant of Bethlehem is for all people and at all times even if they do not have the label Christian. The Word made flesh has exposed a reality pregnant with life and love for all people at all times even in the midst of our daily cross of the pandemic.

OLA Book Club



SAVE THE DATE!!!!

Our Book Club's First Meeting will take place on **January 22, 2023!**

If you still want to join the book club, please contact the Parish Office. We have purchased books for those that signed up. We ask now that you purchase your copy wherever you can.

Looking forward to sharing a meal and discussing your thoughts!



Good Day Blessed People,

The Virtus compliance officers are preparing for another grueling audit at this time of year. We need your help! Please check your Virtus account monthly. In addition to completing the monthly newsletter readings, it is important that you help us stay on top of your records. Whenever you see a red box in your Virtus account, it is important that you address it. We have included information about common forms and training that are asked about.

- **Protecting God's Children** is the initial training everyone must have. This training is offered online and in person. At the conclusion of the training, you will receive a certificate of completion.
- **Mandated Reporter Training** <https://mr.dcfstraining.org/> must be completed every 3 years. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services offers this online training. It usually takes 2 to 3 hours to complete, and you will receive a certificate at the end of the training. The compliance officer will need a copy of the certificate for our records.
- **Keeping the Promise Alive** is an online training that must be completed every 3 years. Virtus offers this training and once it appears in your account, you have two weeks to complete it.
- **A Criminal Background Check** is prompted once you create a Virtus account and it usually takes 5 minutes to complete. This is done every 3 years.
- **CANTS 689** forms expire on June 30th of the year. They must be completed annually. These forms are sent to the Illinois Department of Children and Families. If you send them directly to the email address on the form, please send a copy of the form to the compliance officer so we can update your record.
- **CANTS 22** forms are an acknowledgment form that you had Mandated Reporter training and that you are a Mandated Reporter. You will have to get a copy of this form from the compliance officer.
- **The Archdiocese Standard of Behavior forms** expires on June 30th of the year. They must be completed annually. This form is triggered by Virtus and appears on your records when they expire.

This training is recommended for any ministry leaders or members that have the potential for kids or youth to join their ministries. **If you already work with children or vulnerable adults as a volunteer or employee, you must have this training!** It is a requirement of the Archdiocese of Chicago! As a condition of employment, this training is also required.

In the coming weeks, you may receive an email stating that your record needs to be updated. Please don't ignore it. If you are no longer in active ministry or in a ministry that works with children and have a Virtus account and want to deactivate it, please let us know. If you have any additional questions, please contact:

Tina Carter at tinalcarter71@gmail.com, Regina Cook at cmamacook2@gmail.com or Lena Young lenayoung85@gmail.com

Thank you for your kind attention and have a blessed day.



Please Remember Those on Our Sick and Shut-In List in your Prayers

Ophelia Adams
Curtis Albright
Dorla Allen
Patrice Anderson
Jessie Andrews
James Barker
Donald Barner
Louise Bates
Myra Baugh
David Berry
Mary Berry
Helen Brooms
Christine Brown
Barbara McGee-Berry
Arthur Brooks
Patricia Brown
Roscoe Burns
Michael Burt
Dean Brazier
James Brazier
Marilyn Campbell
Esperanza Carr
Russell Carter
Lillian Cherry
Michael A. Clark
Lydia Clark
Willie B. Clay
Catherine Crosby
Mary Crawford
Sr. Eleanor Doidge
Cecelia Douglas
Irene Dove
Judith Easter
Elsie Freeman
Wanda Finney
Ola Mae Forde
Nazaree Fuller
Tyrone Fuller
Rosemary Gardner
Frederick Gibson
Florence Glenn
Andre D. Golden

Mable Gray
Bettie Green
Eleanor Griffin
Barbara Golden
Anna Marie Hampton
Exie Haralson
Catherine Harper
Marjorie Heard
Lorraine Henderson
Justine Henderson
Jim Henkel
Kelly Robin Hill
Rita Holland
Sandra Houston
Doris Humphries
Nolan Humphries
George James
Janet James
Leslie Jackson
Mildred Jackson
Majorbelle James
Therese Jessie
Cindy Jirsa
Jan Johnson
Pamela Jones
Susan Larry McKeever
Denise Lawson
Annette Lee
Gloria Leonard
Lugenia Lewis
John Littleton
Betty Lumpkins
Lenda Mason
Gail McGruder
McShan Family
Bernadine McNeal
Carolyn McQuarter
Anastacia Mebane
Judy Michaelis
Deborah Mitchell
Argentry Mitchell
Geraldine Moore

Jeff Moore
Michael Moore
Euphrasia Mutinda
Maria Jossey Owen
Gregory Papesch
Minnette Penman
Allen Peoples
Sr. Jamie Phelps, O.P.
Marionette Phelps
Jean Porter
Louise Ray
Clara Reiser
Tyna Rule
Phyllis Shackelford
Alfrances Sharpe
Beverly Sims
Shirley Simmons
Emma Stewart
Margaret Stewart
Alonzo Studstill
Janice Taylor
Alice Thompson
Cynthia Thompson
Renee Trotter
Audrey Tuggle
Joanne Wallace
Joyce Wallace
Tandra Watson
Rachel Watson
Cassiette West-Williams
Doris Whitaker
Eryn Whitaker
Rita White
Yvonne Whitenier
Arlene G. Williams
Dorothy Williams
Evelyn Williams
Naiya Williams
Michael Williams
Patricia Williams
Sheila Williams
Sunnette Varnado Smith

