

ST. GERTRUDE THE GREAT ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

"Invenies Me in corde Gertrudis"

"You will find Me in the heart of Gertrude"

4900 Rialto Road, West Chester, Ohio 45069

TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS: Sundays 7:30 AM,
9:00 AM High, 11:30 AM, 5:45 PM

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Most Rev. Charles J. McGuire, Pastor
Rev. Stephen McKenna
Rev. Vili Lehtoranta
Rev. Thomas Simpson
Rev. Anthony Brueggemann



December 21, 2025
ADVENT IV



¶ ST. STEPHEN & THE INFANT OF PRAGUE

Our annual novena of nine Fridays in honor of the Divine Infant of Prague opens this **Friday**, feast of St. Stephen the first martyr, at 5:35 PM. Come with confidence to honor our loving little King.



¶ ST. JOHN

The High Mass of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist, is at 8:15 AM on **Saturday**, followed by the Blessing of Beverages and some refreshments.

¶ NEXT SUNDAY: THE HOLY INNOCENTS

Sunday within the Octave of Christmas and feast of the Holy Innocents. No Catechism Classes. The **Blessing of Children** in honor of the Holy Innocents follows the **High Mass**, and then Bishop McGuire will be hosting a little party for the children. All the children of the parish are invited. Bring your little ones to eat a donut, hear a story and receive a gift. Vespers with Benediction will be at 4:45 PM.

📖 **Set Your Missal:** Holy Innocents, second collect of the Octave of the Nativity, third Against Persecutors & Evildoers. Preface of the Nativity.

¶ UPCOMING EVENTS

Epiphany & Appreciation Dinner:
Tuesday, January 6, 5:30 PM
Candlemas: Tuesday, February 2
Ash Wednesday: February 18

¶ ADVENT IV

The Blessing of Expectant Mothers is available after all Masses today. Sunday Classes are at 10:40 AM. Vespers with Benediction are at 4:45 PM.

¶ CHRISTMAS DECORATING:

Tomorrow, beginning after the 11:25 AM Mass and continuing until finished.

¶ THIS WEEK

Tomorrow we keep the transferred feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, and the Apostle of America. A modern-day American Apostle, St. Frances Cabrini, is honored on **Tuesday**.

Collection Report

Monday, December 8th.....\$3,571.00
Sunday, December 14th.....\$5,669.00
Bake Sale.....\$763.00
Thank you for your generosity. Remember St. Gertrude the Great in your will.

¶ CHRISTMAS EVE

Wednesday is the Vigil of Christmas, a day of *fast and complete abstinence*. High Mass is at 8:00 AM. The Divine Office is chanted at 7:00 AM (Prime), 1:30 PM (Vespers), and 8:30 PM (Matins). Carols begin at 10:30 PM, and the Procession and Blessing of the Crib at 11:00. Midnight Mass is at 11:15 PM, followed by the Office of Lauds. After the Midnight Mass, please join us in Helfta Hall for a potluck supper. Bring a dish to share if you plan to come.

¶ CHRISTMAS DAY

9:00 AM Low Mass with string quartet, Benediction
11:00 AM Low Mass with carols
5:45 PM Christmas Vespers

¶ YOUR PRAYERS

Please pray for Kathy Verity and all of our sick and shut in.

The Christmas Tree

The Christmas tree is the universal symbol of Christmas. It is of Germanic origin. Tradition teaches that it was first used by St. Boniface who substituted the pine tree, branches pointing to heaven, for the sturdy oak sacred to the pagan tribes. First mentioned, as it is now known, at Alsace in 1521, the Christmas tree was widely accepted in Strausburg and its surroundings by 1605.

It was brought to England by Prince Albert of Saxony, the husband of Queen Victoria, who had a tree set up at Windsor Castle in 1841. The custom was brought to America by German immigrants and is now a beloved feature of the Christmas celebration.



The Blessing of the Tree

The blessing of the tree takes place in the home either on Christmas eve or in the morning. It is composed mainly of Psalm 95 and the Lesson from the prophet Ezekiel.

Psalm

Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle: sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Sing ye to the Lord and bless His Name: shew forth His salvation from day to day.

Declare His glory among the Gentiles: His wonders among all people.

For the Lord is great, and exceedingly to be praised: He is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the Gentiles are devils: but the Lord made the heavens.

Praise and beauty are before Him: holiness and majesty in His sanctuary.

Bring ye to the Lord, O ye kindreds of the Gentiles, bring ye to the Lord glory and honor:

Bring to the Lord glory unto His Name. Bring up sacrifices, and come into His courts:

Adore ye the Lord in his holy court. Let all the earth be moved at His presence.

Say ye among the Gentiles, the Lord hath reigned. For He hath corrected the world, which shall not be moved: He will judge the people with justice.

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, let the sea be moved, and the fulness thereof: The fields and all things that are in them

shall be joyful. Then shall all the trees of the woods rejoice

Before the Face of the Lord, because He cometh: because He cometh to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with justice, and the people with His truth. Glory be...

Father: Then shall all of the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord, for He is come.

Mother: (*Ezekiel 17: 22-24*) Thus saith the Lord God: I Myself will take of the marrow of the high cedar, and will set it: I will crop off a tender twig from the top of the branches thereof, and I will plant it on a mountain high and eminent. On the high mountains of Israel will I plant it, and it shall shoot forth into branches, and shall bear fruit, and it shall become a great cedar: and all birds shall dwell under it, and every fowl shall make its nest under the shadow of the branches thereof. And all the trees of the country shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, and exalted the low tree: and have dried up the green tree, and have caused the dry tree to flourish. I the Lord have spoken and have done it.

(Father sprinkles the tree with holy water)

All: Thanks be to God.

Father: And there shall come forth a shoot.

All: Out of the root of Jesse.

Father: In Him was life.

All: And the life was the light of men.

Father: O Lord, hear my prayer.

All: And let my cry come unto Thee.

Father: The Lord be with you.

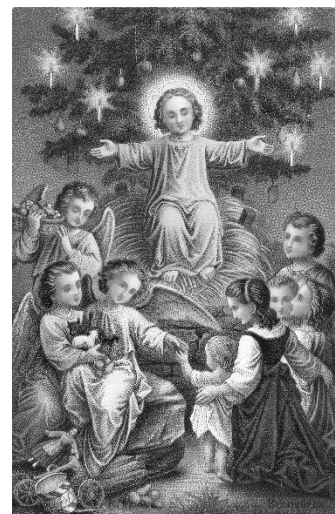
All: And with thy spirit.

Father: Let us pray: Holy Lord, Father Almighty, Eternal Jesus Christ, to be planted like a tree of life in Thy Church by being born of the most holy Virgin Mary, bless, we beseech Thee, this tree that all who see it may be filled with a holy desire to be engrafted as living branches into the same Lord Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

(Father sprinkles the tree with holy water)

All: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

— Sr. Mary Laetitia, R.S.M.



O CHILDREN OF THIS WORLD

Beware the children of light
That riff-raff crew.

They will pilfer your peace of mind
And your money, too.

Not as thieves in the night—
Deeper far their offense—
They make light of the things of this
world

By their innocence.
Toppling the sturdy house
To its basic sand,
Turning silver and gold
To dust in the hand.

On all your highroad journeys
Wrapped against wind and snow
You will find them arrived before you
Barefoot, by the low.

Your effect will be cause,
Your right their wrong,
Your wisdom a little thing
To be had for a song.

And your women, hard to please,
Cold to you as the sea,
They will pluck in passing
Like plums from a tree.

Beware the children of light,
They will turn you away
From all that goes by the clock—
'Now,' they will say

'Is then; here, there,
And the frost is warm,
Sun icy and only danger
Will keep you safe from harm.

Taste of the aloe's honey,
Give your breast to the thorn,
Let the stone bird pluck at
'The living fern.'

— P.L. Travers

Last Sunday came with about a half foot of snow and only about 25 souls came to the first Mass. However, when High Mass time came around we found a packed church. It was quite gratifying to see. Someone commented that the roads in Kentucky were better taken care of than those here in Ohio. Well, in any case, people braved the bad roads and made it to Mass. Now the snow is almost all melted away and the zero-degree weather has turned into mere sweater weather and snow has turned to rain and high winds. Bless the Lord, ye ice and snow, the Canticle says.

Fr. McKenna made it back from Milwaukee, stopping at Holy Face Mission in Illinois along the way. Sadly, they only had a handful of souls there for Sunday Mass. I am sure it is something to do with sickness and weather. Father arrived here later in the afternoon saying that he was stuck in traffic which resulted from a crash on the interstate. Both seminary and school began their break from classes last week. This has freed up **Fr. Lehtoranta** so that he could make his annual Christmas visit to St. Hugh's, where he will remain until Dec. 29th. **Fr. Simpson** is staying with us for a while...a rare treat for all of us! **Fr. Brueggemann** is in Dallas, but will be back in no time.

Christmas decorating begins tomorrow. It is always a busy day, but we have so many good helpers who know what they are doing. Thank you to Cora Arlinghaus for setting up the Nativity Scene, and to all of our other helpers, too!

The next eight days are filled with great feast days. I do hope that you will take advantage of them by coming to Mass. St. Thomas, America's Apostle, is honored on Monday, and America's first citizen-saint, Frances Xavier Cabrini, is venerated on Tuesday. Mother Cabrini is often portrayed as a feminist with a mind of her own, but she is anything but that. The world will look for anything to justify its own vices, feminism certainly being one of them. The Catholic Church, however, holds up Our Lady and the holy virgin saints as a means of combating the modern notion of what a woman should be. In any case, come to Mass this week and honor the saints. Most especially, do not forget to adore the Infant Savior who has come to save that which was lost! My sweetest Jesus, be not my judge but my Savior!



– Bishop McGuire



LIGHT OF THE WORLD

To celebrate Christmas and enjoy the full fruit of the Incarnation, we must, like Mary, become virgins and handmaids of the Lord. We must emulate her purity, her sinlessness, her freedom from pride and self love, her complete conformity to the will of God.

We must be prepared to sacrifice all that we have without asking what return will be made to us. We must not falter when we are misunderstood, when our actions are falsely construed, and when we are falsely accused by others.

“He that judgeth me is the Lord, (therefore) to me it is a very small thing to be judged by you or by man's day; but neither do I judge my own self.” For we are the handmaids of the Lord, “the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God” (Epistle). The Church sees in her ministers and her people, not merely fallen men, but men who are called by Christ to act in His Name and to offer to God the Holy Sacrifice and administer the sacraments.

– *Christ the Light of the World, Dom Benedict Baur*



SOMETHING YOU MIGHT TRY

St. Francis de Sales advises, “Be equal and just in your actions. Place yourself always in the position of your neighbor, and place him in yours, and thus you will judge well.... Examine your heart often, whether it has such regard for your neighbor as you would wish his to have for you if you were in his place; for here is the secret of true reason.” Thus, every time you're about to judge someone, take a moment to switch places mentally with him. Thinking about how you'd feel in the other person's position will help ensure that your judgements will be honest and charitable.

An effective way to avoid judging others harshly is simply to apply your own excuses for your faults and bad behavior to people you're tempted to judge. After all, if these excuses are good enough to get yourself off the hook, they should also work for others.

NOVENA PRAYER FOR ADVENT

Hail and blessed be the hour and the moment in which the Son of God was born of the Most Pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in piercing cold. At that hour, vouchsafe, O my God! to hear my prayer and grant my petitions through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ and of His Blessed Mother. Amen.

(Traditionally said 15 times a day from St. Andrew's Day until Christmas.)

✠ CALENDAR

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|---------------------|--|
| MON 12/22/25 | ST. THOMAS, AP |
| 8:00 AM | Low Mass Special Intention Deceased (<i>Jane Childers</i>) |
| 11:25 AM | Low Mass Ann Garrison (<i>Michael Rabjohns</i>) (rescheduled from 11/18) Church Decorating |
| TUE 12/23/25 | ST. FRANCES XAVIER CABRINI, V |
| 7:00 AM | Rorate Mass Alfonso T. Capetillo (<i>Nana & Grandpa</i>) |
| 8:00 AM | Low Mass Intentions for DeRienzo family – Thank you (<i>Kevin & Phyllis Kiernan</i>) |
| 5:00 PM | Low Mass Reparation to the Sacred Heart (<i>Smith Family</i>) |
| WED 12/24/25 | VIGIL OF CHRISTMAS <i>FAST & ABSTINENCE</i> |
| 7:00 AM | The Office of Prime |
| 8:00 AM | High Mass Anniversary of ordination for Fr. Lehtoranta (<i>Payne family</i>) |
| 1:30 PM | Vespers |
| 8:30 PM | The Office of Matins |
| 10:30 PM | Carols |
| 11:00 PM | Procession & Blessing of Crib |
| 11:15 PM | Midnight Mass Novena I followed by Lauds Potluck Supper in Helfta Hall |
| THU 12/25/25 | NATIVITY OF OUR LORD <i>HOLY DAY</i> |
| 9:00 AM | Low Mass with string quartet Aunt Gina & Uncle Kenny – Merry Christmas (<i>Lucia McConnell</i>) Benediction |
| 11:00 AM | Low Mass For the people of St. Gertrude the Great |
| 5:45 PM | Vespers of Christmas Day |
| FRI 12/26/25 | ST. STEPHEN, PROTOMARTYR |
| 8:00 AM | Low Mass For everyone who prayed for my recovery, thank you! (<i>Lucia Constantino</i>) (from 12/25) |
| 11:25 AM | Low Mass †Margaret Kinnett, 3 rd anniversary of death (<i>Albert D. Kinnett</i>) |
| 5:15 PM | Confessions & Rosary |
| 5:35 PM | Infant of Prague Novena I |
| 5:45 PM | High Mass Christmas Novena II |
| 6:45 PM | Sacred Heart Novena, Benediction |
| SAT 12/27/25 | ST. JOHN, APEV |
| 7:05 AM | Confessions |
| 7:30 AM | Low Mass Merry Christmas, Dad & Mom (<i>Cecilia Brueggemann</i>) |
| 8:05 AM | Alma, Sermon |
| 8:15 AM | High Mass Christmas Novena III Blessing of Beverages, Party |
| SUN 12/28/25 | THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MM |
| 7:05 AM | Rosary |
| 7:30 AM | Low Mass Merry Christmas, Dad & Mom (<i>Maria Brueggemann</i>) |
| 9:00 AM | High Mass Christmas Novena IV Holy Innocents Party |
| 11:05 AM | Rosary |
| 11:30 AM | Low Mass Special intention in honor of St. Philomena (<i>Dominic & Florence Swinney</i>) |
| 4:45 PM | Vespers & Benediction |
| 5:45 PM | Low Mass For the people of St. Gertrude the Great |



Die Christnacht (Christmas Eve) by Ludwig Reichter, depicting the angels bringing the Christ Child to earth

Ashers

Christmas Day, Thursday, Dec. 25, 2025

Midnight (arrive no later than 10:30): M. Lotarski, J. Brueggemann, P. Brueggemann, *Volunteer*

9:00 AM: S. Pepiot, P. Puglielli, P. McConnell, A. McConnell

11:00 AM: J. Seyfried, B. Uhlenbrock

Circumcision, Thursday, Jan. 1, 2026

7:30 AM: S. Pepiot, P. McConnell, A. McConnell, J. Brueggemann

9:00 AM: P. Arlinghaus, P. Brueggemann, *Volunteer, Volunteer*

11:30 AM: B. Uhlenbrock, P. Puglielli

Servers

WED 12/24: 8:00 AM HIGH: MCs: M. & D. Simpson TH: M. Caggese ACS: A. Constantino, F. Caggese TBS: Ma. Caggese, J. & I. Smith, B. Constantino
MIDNIGHT MASS (ARRIVE AT 10:30 PM): POSTED IN SACRISTY

THU 12/25: 9:00 AM LOW: Brueggemanns

BENEDICTION: D. Simpson, Brueggemanns

11:00 AM LOW: P. McClorey

5:45 PM VESPERS: TH: D. Simpson ACS: I. & J. Smith

FRI 12/26: 5:45 PM HIGH: MCs: M. Simpson, Seminarian TH: F. Caggese CROSS: D. Simpson ACS: A. Constantino, I. Smith TBS: T. Stanislawski, V. Siqueira, B. Constantino, J. Smith

SAT 12/27: 7:30 AM LOW: Rabjohns

8:15 AM HIGH: MCs: D. Simpson, N. Kolenich TH: A. McClorey CROSS: M. Caggese ACS: M. Kolenich, J. Stewart TBS: J. Kolenich, Ma. Caggese, J. & I. Smith

SUN 12/28: 7:30 AM LOW: M. Schneider, Brueggemann

9:00 AM HIGH: MCs: S. Richesson, A. McClorey TH: J. Rabjohns CROSS: F. Caggese ACS: T. England, L. Rabjohns TBS: V. Horton, V. Siqueira, B. & A. Constantino, F. Caggese, J. Stewart

11:30 AM LOW: Capetillos

4:45 PM VESPERS & BENEDICTION: TH: D. Simpson ACS: I. Smith, B. Constantino CROSS: A. Constantino

5:45 PM LOW: P. McClorey