

SAINTS FOR THE WEEK

Tuesday, December 26

Feast of Saint Stephen, first martyr

Wednesday, December 27

Feast of Saint John, Apostle and evangelist

Thursday, December 28

Feast of the Holy Innocents, martyrs

THE HOLY INNOCENTS

The Feast of the Holy Innocents is deeply rooted in the biblical narrative found in Matthew 2:16-18. This passage recounts the tragic events that unfolded as a result of King Herod's fear and insecurity. Upon hearing of the birth of a new king, Herod felt threatened and ordered the massacre of all male children under the age of two in Bethlehem and its surrounding regions. This ruthless act was a desperate attempt to eliminate any potential rival to his throne.

The biblical account highlights the cruelty and darkness of Herod's actions,

contrasting them with the light and hope brought into the world through the birth of Jesus. The story of the Holy Innocents serves as a stark reminder of the vulnerability of children and the need to protect and cherish them.

In Christian theology, the story of the Holy Innocents is often connected to the prophecy of Jeremiah, specifically the passage that speaks of Rachel weeping for her children. This connection emphasizes the broader theme of innocence within the Christian faith. The Holy Innocents, despite their unawareness, are considered martyrs because their lives were taken due to Christ's birth. Their innocence and purity serve as a powerful symbol of unwavering faith and devotion.

This feast day holds great spiritual significance as it calls believers to reflect on the value and sanctity of every human life. It serves as a reminder of the injustices that still exist in our world today and compels us to advocate for the protection of the vulnerable. Just as Rachel wept for her children, we are called to weep for those who suffer and to work towards a world where every child is safe and cherished.



<https://young-catholics.com/507/holy-innocents/>

Holy Cross Parish

DECEMBER 24, 2023

Fourth Sunday of Advent, B

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a,
16

Psalm 89

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1:26-38

The Lord is coming, always coming. When you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you will recognize him at any moment of your life. Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord.

—Henri J. M. Nouwen

DO YOU HEAR IT? If there is one message the world needs right now, in moments of high anxiety and seemingly unending wars, we find it in today's gospel. In the Annunciation, there is a second announcement, a reminder of something so transcendent and persistent, we might easily forget about it: The enduring announcement of hope at the end of the angel's proclamation. Gabriel, stands before a young girl whose life is being rewritten and redirected right before her eyes. He leaves her, and us, with this message: **"NOTHING WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD."** Surrender your doubts, your questions, your worries and misgivings. Believe the unbelievable, he says. Embrace the mystery. Miracles are possible. Hope is possible. Anything can—and will!—happen.

We know what comes next. This gospel, a prelude to Luke's Nativity account we hear at Christmas, offers us a kind of late-Advent gift, one we need to continue to unwrap day after day, in moments of shock or wonder or worry. When all else fails, we must hang on to these six words, the ones that likely sustained Mary not only for the months that followed, but for the next 30 years, through a flight into Egypt and agony on a hilltop: Nothing will be impossible for God.

Maybe we have forgotten and need to hear it, especially now. At this dark moment in time, what is being announced is LIGHT. Mary, we're told, was troubled

at what she heard. Who wouldn't be? But what follows is a message that defies any doubt. In our moments of confusion, when we are troubled by what God brings us, we have this to hold onto, the announcement of possibility and promise. Angels will speak, the Spirit will come, a virgin will conceive. The world will have a savior. And decades hence, the blind will see, the lost will be found, God will raise the dead. "How can this be?" Mary asks. It can because all things are possible; "impossible" is not part of God's vocabulary.

There's much we don't know about this episode from Luke's gospel. We don't know if Mary and Gabriel exchanged other words. We don't know what happened immediately after. What's a pregnant virgin to do? Did Mary share this news with anyone else before departing to visit her cousin Elizabeth? But all that overlooks the central meaning of this pivotal scene and the profound message it offers in these last hours before we celebrate Christ's coming into the world.

Our God is a God without limits, the God of possibility that can even bring about something as elusive and consoling as peace: In our world, in our country, in our hearts. Does it seem unlikely? When worried or troubled, filled with fear or doubt, maybe we need to ask, "What would Mary do?" Take a cue from the Annunciation. Hear the message within, the good news that defies logic and hold on to what is really being announced.

In times of distress, we need to shut out the anxious noise of the world and trust enough to listen to angels.

Deacon Greg Kandra

For Reflection

- ★ How can I better embody the spirit of Advent in my daily life, both in my personal faith journey and in my interactions with others?

from: <https://www.thebostonpilot.com/Opinion/article.asp?ID=196409>

Holy Cross Parish

96-98 Main Street
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Morris NY 13808
holycrosschurch@gmail.com

MISSION

To care for the poor, abandoned, and the marginalized.

SCHEDULE

Mass: Sunday, 8:30 a.m.

Liturgy of the Word: Tuesday, 10 a.m.

PARISH LEADERSHIP TEAM

Parish Leader

Matthew Tabone (360) 559-4098

Trustees

Michael Stensland (607) 783-2764
Richard Meyers (607) 263-5588

Parish Pastoral Council Chair

Kerry L. Mess (607) 386-1951

Parish Pastoral Council Members

Dana Mochovciak, Jenna Turner, Carol Tyson, Marguerite Webster

Liturgical Ministry

Marguerite Webster (607) 263-5478

Faith Formation

Daphne Thompson (607) 263-2410

Ministry to the Homebound

Matthew Tabone (360) 559-4098
Jenn Spivey (207) 539-5094



DECEMBER 24, 2023

Celebrant

Rev. Chris Welch

Deacon: Paul Cerosaletti

Lector: Daphne Thompson

Mass Intention

For all traveling during the holiday

If you would like to request an intention for a mass, simply call the office to schedule: (607) 263-5143.

Pray for

- ✠ the deceased members of our parish and their families and friends
- ✠ the sick, their caregivers, and all who have asked for our prayers, especially Sr. Theresa Ahern MSBT, Betty Ann Kempton, Amy O'Brien, John O'Brien, Jo Franklin, Aggi Huff, Louisa Joy, Lynn Joy, Michelle Lee, Teresa Meyers, Clara Murphy, Diane Neczesny, Joe and Carol Tyson, Lorraine Tyson, Fr. Chris Welch, John Zaleski
- ✠ all the men and women of our parish family serving in the military and all first responders and emergency personnel: Ryan Barry, Jim Barry, Meghan Barringer

WELCOME TO HOLY CROSS PARISH! CURIOUS? BEING CALLED?

RCIA is the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults into the Catholic faith. For more information, go to myrcia.org.
Holy Cross Parish RCIA Contact:
Maureen Joy (607) 263-5132

Pope Francis's intention for December: For people with disabilities to be at the center of attention in society and institutions to value their participation

Engage in Living Community

Keeping Our Community Warm One Brick At A Time

Catholic Charities is conducting a fundraising campaign to help with emergency assistance to individuals and families who need help with heat and utility costs. It is selling bricks for a fireplace, which will be displayed in the front windows of Catholic Charities on Main Street in Oneonta. As a community member, please consider sponsoring this fundraiser by purchasing a paper brick for the fireplace. Bricks are \$25.00 each. If you would like to purchase a brick, you can stop down to a Catholic Charities office, located in Cobleskill, Oneonta, or Sidney, Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 1:30–4:00 p.m. and Thursday, 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 1:30–6:30 p.m., or you can mail a check to the agency at: Catholic Charities, 176 Main Street, Oneonta, NY 13820. One hundred percent of the money raised will be used in your local community to help keep children, seniors and adults warm this winter.



Office for Discipleship Formation

invites you to join us for a presentation by

Fr. Richard Fragomeni

- a virtual reflection on

the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul:

Christ's Call to Paul and Us.

registration via QR
or call 518-453-6670

January 25, 2024

[3 - 4:30 pm via zoom webinar]



PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING US!

Anyone interested in helping decorate the church: We will work after mass, the fourth Sunday in Advent, December 24.

Upcoming Events

12/24: Christmas Carols, 3:30 p.m.
Christmas Eve mass, 4 p.m.,

6 p.m. & 8 p.m., St. Mary's Oneonta

12/25: Christmas mass, 10:30 a.m., St. Mary's Oneonta

12/26: **Liturgy of the Word, 10 a.m., in memory of Fr. John Burns**

01/01: Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, mass 10 a.m., St. Mary's Oneonta

01/02: **Liturgy of the Word, 10 a.m.**
Bible study, "Praying the Names of God" after mass

PRAYING THE NAMES OF GOD

Pope Francis designated 2024 a Year of Prayer to prepare for Jubilee 2025. Join Holy Cross in a year-long bible study praying the names of God Tuesdays after mass.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2023

Mass Attendance: 40

Collection: \$800.00