

*Celebrating  
the  
Christmas Season  
at Home*



DECEMBER 25, 2017 – JANUARY 7, 2018

# Saint Theresa Of Lisieux Parish

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## **SUNDAY EUCHARIST MISAS DOMINICALES**

*Saturday Vigil/Misa de Vigilia el sábado: 5:30pm (English)*

*Sunday/Domingo: 8:00am, 10:00am, 12noon (English) & 7:00pm (español)*

## **DAILY MASS/MISA DIARIA**

*Monday through Friday/Lunes a viernes: 8:00am & Wednesday & Friday/Miércoles y viernes: 8:00am & 12noon*

### **WELCOME HOME!**

There's an old saying that goes, "Once a Catholic, always a Catholic." Maybe you have been away from the Church for a little while or for quite some time, but now you feel a tug at your heart calling you back to the Catholic Church. Listen to that tug. It's your Heavenly Father reaching his arms out to you, the Holy Spirit whispering in your ear, hoping to draw you home.

We hope you accept this as your invitation to rediscover the truth, wonder and mystery of the Catholic faith. As your brothers and sisters in our worldwide Catholic family, we want you back. We've missed you, and our Church is not the same without you.

Regardless of why you left or got out of the habit of going to Mass, you can always come home and return to the practice of the sacraments and the fullness of relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church he founded. We are Catholic. Welcome home. <https://www.catholicscomehome.org>

### **EXCERPTS FROM POPE BENEDICT XVI'S SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS SERIES: "CHRISTMAS"**

#### **"Preparation"**

Christmas is a privileged opportunity to meditate on the meaning and value of our existence. The approach of this Solemnity helps us on the one hand to reflect on the drama of history in which people, injured by sin, are perennially in search of happiness and of a fulfilling sense of life and death; and on the other, it urges us to meditate on the merciful kindness of God who came to man to communicate to him directly the Truth that saves, and to enable him to partake in his friendship and his life. Therefore, let us prepare ourselves for Christmas with humility and simplicity, making ourselves ready to receive as a gift the light, joy and peace that shine from this mystery.

*—General Audience, December 17, 2008*

#### **"Sign"**

God's sign is his humility. God's sign is that he makes himself small; he becomes a child; he lets us touch him and he asks for our love. How we would prefer a different sign, an imposing, irresistible sign of God's power and greatness! But his sign summons us to faith and love, and thus it gives us hope: this is what God is like. He has power, he is Goodness itself. He invites us to become like him. Yes indeed, we become like God if we allow ourselves to be shaped by this sign; if we ourselves learn humility and hence true greatness; if we renounce violence and use only the weapons of truth and love.

*—Homily at Mass for the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord, December 24, 2009*

## "Changing"

Only if people change will the world change; and in order to change, people need the light that comes from God, the light which so unexpectedly [on the night of Christmas] entered into our night.

—Homily at Mass for the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord, December 25, 2008

## UNPREDICTABLE

**"In the beginning was the Word; the Word was in God's presence, and the Word was God." —John 1:1**

The Bible is the most unpredictable book ever written. The first words from God's Word for the Christmas Day Mass are: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him Who brings glad tidings, announcing peace, bearing good news, announcing salvation" (Is 52:7). When everyone else is thinking about gaudy extravagance, God is talking about beautiful feet. These feet are beautiful because they bring the good news of peace (Is 52:7). After centuries of chaos, we can finally have shalom-peace, perfect harmony through salvation from sin, death, slavery, and Satan. This is accomplished not by our mere human efforts but by the God-King (Is 52:7).

Amazingly and once again unpredictably, the God-King is also the Infant-King, Jesus. Jesus is our Peace (Eph 2:14) and our Savior. He has become a Son of Man so we may become sons and daughters of God and even "sharers of the divine nature" (2 Pt 1:4). All we have to do is accept Him on His terms as Savior, King, Lord, and God. "To His own He came, yet His own did not accept Him. Any who did accept Him He empowered to become children of God" (Jn 1:11-12). Now, Christmas Day, "is the acceptable time! Now is the day of salvation!" (2 Cor 6:2)

**Prayer:** Jesus, I give my life to You. I decide to do Your will and not mine, to live for You and not for myself.

**Promise:** "In times past, God spoke in fragmentary and varied ways to our fathers through the prophets; in this, the final age, He has spoken to us through His Son." —Heb 1:1-2

**Praise:** "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us" (Jn 1:14). Alleluia!

<http://www.presentationministries.com/obob/obob.asp?lang=en&d=12/25/2017>

## On Christmas

Christmas is one of the most important days of the Church year, second only to Easter itself. It is the feast of the incarnation, the feast of God becoming flesh (the Latin "in carne" means "enfleshment"). It is a uniquely Christian teaching, the Divine choosing to become one of us. Because of this belief, God is not only Transcendent, but also wholly Immanent, Emmanuel (God-with-us). While remaining Transcendent (meaning we must rise above our present condition to reach Him), He is at the same time Immanent (meaning He is with us as we rise toward Him). Every Eucharist is like Christmas where the bread and wine are transformed into His flesh, His Body and Blood, and, in a sense, He is born anew on the altar.

The liturgical season of Christmas begins with the vigil Masses on Christmas Eve and concludes on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. During this season, we celebrate the birth of Christ into our world and into our hearts, and reflect on the gift of salvation that is born with him...including the fact that he was born to die for us.

The Christmas tree and the Nativity scene are popular symbols of the season and a tradition in many Christian homes. It is also traditional to exchange Christmas gifts with family and friends as a way to honor God the Father's gift of his only son to the world. Having received the gift of Christ, we naturally want to pass that gift along to our loved ones.

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/christmas/index.cfm>

# BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS FOR THE Christmas SEASON

## CHRISTMAS DAILY PRAYER

Jesus Christ, Word of God,  
always be on my lips.  
*Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

Jesus Christ, Prince of peace,  
always guide my actions,  
*Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

Jesus Christ, Light from light,  
always illuminate my way,  
*Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

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## TABLE PRAYER FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

O come, let us adore him!  
*O come, let us adore him!*

May the meal shared at this table  
provide the strength to follow your way  
as we celebrate your glorious birth,  
O Christ.

*O come, let us adore him!*

May the blessing of food  
be nourishment to proclaim glad tidings  
as we hear the voice of the herald angels.

*O come, let us adore him!*

May these Christmas days of grace  
let your love shine forth in the world  
as we behold your humble birth.

*O come, let us adore him!*

Let us adore him, Christ the Lord!  
May every meal and every life be blessed  
during this joyful Christmas season. Amen.

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## EPIPHANY HOUSE BLESSING

*Items needed: chalk and a small bottle of holy water. Gather with family members, friends, and perhaps some neighbors at the front door.*

Leader: In the (+) name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

Let us pray: *Christus mansionem benedicat.* May Christ bless this house, Amen.

With chalk we sign this doorway, along with four crosses of the seasons and the numerals of the new year.

[20 + C + M + B + 18]

Leader (or other Reader):

A reading from the Letter to the Galatians.

So then, while there is time, let us do good for all people, especially those who are of the household of faith.

The Word of the Lord

*Each room is sprinkled with holy water.*

*Living room:*

Bring us to live with you one day in heaven.

Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

*Kitchen:*

You prepare for us a heavenly banquet.

Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

*Dining room:*

Feed us at your celestial feast.

Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

*Bedrooms:*

In you alone we rest peacefully.

Bless

*Bathroom:*

Cleanse us from all uncleanness.

Bless this room, O Lord. Amen.

*All return to the front door to pray together.*

Our Father . . .

*All are sprinkled with holy water.*

Bless this household through all days to come, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
forever and ever. Amen.

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## CELEBRATING SAINT STEPHEN

Tradition tells us that Saint Stephen's task in the early Church was organizing aid for the poor. Beginning sometime in the nineteenth century, British-influenced countries have observed Boxing Day on December 26th, Saint Stephen's feast. Families that were better off would offer Christmas boxes full of money, clothing, or food to servants, errand boys, and the poor.

This tradition offers us a chance to shift the focus of the day after Christmas. Instead of braving the malls, why not make this a day to take stock of possessions—to examine what things could be used to bless those who are less fortunate?

Here are some ideas:

**Closets:** Do you or your children have so many clothes that you have to box up out-of-season items? Did you receive new clothing or accessories for Christmas? Can they replace older items that are still in good enough shape to pass on to family members, friends, homeless or children's shelters, or even donation boxes like USAgain? If not, find a PlanetAid box, which recycles fabric and uses the proceeds to help the developing world.

**Storage:** Some people rent units to keep things they don't have room for in their homes. Is it time to give some of that away? Do you still have boxes of outgrown baby or kids' clothes that can bless a children's shelter or even the school nurse's office at a school in a low-income neighborhood?



**Kitchen:**

Do you have any non-perishables that could go to a food bank? Do you have a "junk drawer" full of kitchen gadgets you haven't used? Coffee mugs? Seasonal towels that are always forgotten? Pass them on.

**Toys:**

Do you have broken toys or partial sets that can be recycled? Are there simply too many toys in your home? Use this as an opportunity to teach your kids about sacrifice and charity. Have them choose a given number to donate.

**Mental clutter:**

Examine your ongoing commitments. Have you taken on so much that your mind is constantly buzzing? Is it time to leave some tasks to others?

The feast of Saint Stephen, the first martyr, is a chance to re-orient ourselves after the busyness of the commercial Christmas season. By clearing out the clutter in our own lives, we can make more room for Christ.

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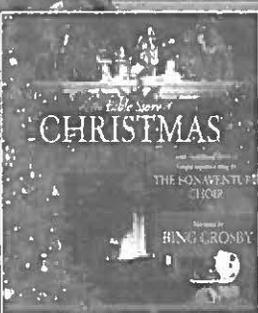
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