

# WEEKLY PARISH BULLETIN

Parish Mission Statement: *To love God and our neighbor through worship in our Catholic tradition, committed witness, and good works.*

## St. Joseph's Catholic Church

Fifth & W. Waldrip, Elma, Washington

|            |           |           |
|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Confession | Sunday    | 8:15 a.m. |
| Mass       | Sunday    | 9 a.m.    |
| Mass       | Wednesday | 6 p.m.    |
| Mass       | Friday    | Noon      |

## St. John's Catholic Church

414 E. Broadway St., Montesano, Washington

|            |             |                 |
|------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Confession | Saturday    | 4:15 p.m.       |
| Mass       | Saturday    | 5 p.m.          |
| Mass       | Sunday      | 11 a.m.         |
| Mass       | Tuesday     | 6 p.m.          |
| Mass       | Thursday    | Noon            |
| Adoration  | Wed. & Fri. | 10 a.m. to Noon |



### Holiday Mass Schedule

#### Christmas Vigil (12/24)

- 7 p.m. St. Joseph
- 9 p.m. St. John

#### Christmas Day (12/25)

- 9 a.m. St. Joseph
- 11 a.m. St. John

#### Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (1/1/2021)

- 10 a.m. St. Joseph
- Noon St. John

#### Confession Schedule

12/18 - 6-7 p.m. St. Joseph  
12/19 - 4-5 p.m. St. John

**Priest Administrator:** Father Arulanandu David

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**Office Hours:**  
Tuesday through Friday

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



Download the Online Giving app on your mobile device to make it easy to support your parish:  
<https://www.osvonline.com/2942>



The Knights of Columbus meet on the 4th Tuesday of every month.

Visit us online at [www.twosaints.us](http://www.twosaints.us)

## Fourth Sunday of Advent - December 20, 2020

### The Date of Christmas

BY FR. LARRY RICE

If you ask nearly anyone in the Western world the date of Christmas, chances are you'll be told its December 25. And if you ask them what Christmas celebrates, chances are you'll be told it's the com-memoration of Christ's birth. But the question remains, was Jesus born on December 25? Well, the most diplomatic answer would be, "experts differ."

Given the popularity of Christmas in today's world, it's hard to imagine that Christmas wasn't always seen as particularly important. The earliest records we have of the Church observing the feast of Christ's birth date from the fourth century. By the time St. John Chrysostom was bishop of Constantinople in 398, most of the Christian world observed Christmas on December 25. The Church in Armenia was at that time marking Christmas on January 6; today much of the Orthodox Church follows this tradition.

But why was December 25 chosen? Many believe that the date was chosen to counter the Roman feast of Saturnalia. Certainly, in the history of the Church, and the history of Christmas in particular, there are plenty of examples of Christians shifting local pagan observances to Christian ones, effectively "baptizing" their culture and customs. This doesn't mean that Christmas is some kind of disguised pagan festival, it simply reflects the very understandable human need to integrate our faith and culture and to allow our faith to trans-form every part of our lives.

Regarding the actual year of Christ's birth, we don't find much more clarity. Since the calendar is traditionally divided into epochs "before" and "after" Christ, one might presume that Jesus was born in the year one, or perhaps the year zero. Well, there was no year zero. And tradition has it that a sixth century monk names Dionysis Exiguus fixed the date at the year 1, but errors in his calculations have led scholars to believe that the actual year may be between 4 and 6 BC. Historical evidence, based on references from Luke's Gospel, might lead us to concur. Astronomical research by Dr. William Bidelman at Case Western University makes a strong case for April or March of the year 2 BC.

Ultimately, for Christian believers, the precise date and year isn't of primary importance. For us, most important is the underlying fact, which we celebrate at Christmas: that God loved us enough to become human, to share our human experience, and achieve our redemption. Whenever we celebrate Christmas, we remember that Christ's Incarnation has changed our world—and our lives—forever.

*Fr. Rice is the former Vocations Director for the Paulist Fathers. He is the Director of the University Catholic Center at the University of Texas in Austin TX.*

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### Thy Kingdom Come

Thy Kingdom Come is a prayer booklet developed by the Archdiocese of Seattle, which features an excellent collection of prayers rooted in our Catholic faith tradition. It includes many of the most well-known and loved devotions of our faith as well as some lesser-known treasures, such as the *Prayer for Complete Trust in God* (St. Francis de Sales) and *A Seed of Love* (St. Teresa of Ávila).

Access a free pdf of the book to find prayers to strengthen your family's faith at <https://marriagefamilylife.seattlearchdiocese.org/documents/2020/3/ThyKingdomComePrayerBook.pdf>

### Baptism, Marriage, Other Services, Scheduling Appointments with Father David:

Know someone who is no longer attending Mass? Do you need home Communion?

Call the office at 360-482-3190 to schedule a time.

#### Anointing of the Sick

Call parish office  
360-482-3190  
Or call Fr. David at  
307-723-0004

#### Special Intention Mass

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered for your special intention. Contact the parish office to schedule a weekday Mass intention.

Deadline for items placed in  
the bulletin  
Wednesday noon  
pjm.twosaints@gmail.com



# The Humble Majesty of Us

**T**he celebration of Christmas and the coming New Year are perfect times to reconnect with loved ones and reconsider our priorities. Amidst the festive spirit and celebrations, we build some powerful and beautiful memories during the holidays—such as the beautiful moments spent with a younger child relative, or a conversation with an elderly family member talking of times long past. We turn away from ordinary, everyday routines—the daily grind—and experience special moments that enrich and refresh us.

At Christmas we recall how God, who is so powerful and kingly, decided to make himself present among us by coming as a vulnerable baby, born in poverty. This humble arrival, so gentle and hopeful, only makes it easier for us to see the very tender aspect of God—for who can fear a baby? He enters the world precisely as a baby to draw us closer to him. God, in a sense, “stoops” to humanity by becoming one of us, and in the process, he elevates all of humanity.

If God draws us to himself with love, and not through guilt or compulsion, how important it is that we, too, should witness to our faith in the same manner. How important this is in building up a culture of life! As many of us approach the New Year with resolutions, this seems an appropriate time to consider our pro-life witness in the light of charity.



Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus are depicted in a wooden creche at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Rochester, N.Y., in this Nov. 24 photo. (CNS photo/Mike Crupi, Catholic Courier)

One aspect of contributing to a culture of life is to cultivate a pro-life attitude. In addition to important efforts like ministry outside of abortion facilities, writing Congress to express our views on legislation, and prayer activities on behalf of life, it is so very important to cultivate an internal perspective which animates all these other efforts. What do I mean by cultivating a “pro-life attitude”? I am referring to a disposition which actively and consciously seeks to reaffirm the dignity of every person we encounter.

It means making an effort to see people as God sees them. To help someone realize the good he has when he can't see it himself. To take time to acknowledge another person's presence and worth in a competitive, utilitarian, and electronically-saturated society. To engage an opponent peacefully and with courtesy. By affirming the same nobility in others that Christ affirms in us, through his humble and majestic presence in this world, we can help to change the culture.

What better time than Christmas and the New Year to renew our pro-life convictions and to look forward to our efforts with renewed hope! As the Christ-child wins hearts and touches souls with the greatest simplicity, let us resolve to give a pro-life witness which conveys reverence and respect for others. The sacredness of human life should be recognized from the moment of conception to natural death, and in every human face, beginning with the faces we encounter every day.

*This article was written by Kimberly Baker, a former staff assistant for the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. For more information on the bishops' pro-life activities, please visit [www.usccb.org/prolife](http://www.usccb.org/prolife).*





# Good News of Great Joy

AS WE CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD, THE INTRODUCTION FROM POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II'S ENCYCLICAL *EVANGELIUM VITAE* PROVIDES A RICH SOURCE OF REFLECTION ON GOD'S LOVE FOR HUMAN LIFE, WHICH HE CREATED IN HIS IMAGE AND LIKENESS:

"At the dawn of salvation, it is the birth of a child which is proclaimed as joyful news: 'I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord' (Lk. 2:10-11). The source of this 'great joy' is the birth of the Savior; but Christmas also reveals the full meaning of every human birth, and the joy which accompanies the birth of the Messiah is thus seen to be the foundation and fulfillment of joy at every child born into the world (cf. Jn. 16:21)."

It is amazing to contemplate that the eternal Son of God became man and experienced every stage and aspect of the human condition, except sin. He was conceived in the Virgin Mary and took the form of a human being, beginning life like every human being—as a single-celled embryo.

According to Scripture, after the Incarnation of our Lord, Mary went in haste to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was six months pregnant with John the Baptist. Given that it would have taken two to three days for Mary to reach Elizabeth, it's possible that Jesus had not yet implanted in Mary's womb (implantation occurs 5-7 days after conception) when His presence caused John to stir in Elizabeth's womb: "For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy." (Luke 1:44).

C. S. Lewis provides another source of reflection on the sanctity of *all* human life in *The Weight of Glory*: "The dullest and most

uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship. ... There are no *ordinary* people. ... Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses."

With these thoughts in mind, I cannot imagine a better way to celebrate the birth of our Lord in a humble stable in Bethlehem, and to celebrate the gift of every human life, than to support a local pregnancy help center or maternity home. These centers do extraordinary work and truly represent the heart of the pro-life movement's goal of making abortion unthinkable.

Another way to make a difference is through our prayers and sacrifices. Taking place in January, *9 Days for Life* ([www.9daysforlife.com](http://www.9daysforlife.com)) is an annual period of prayer and action for life. Each day of the novena provides a different intercession, reflection, information item and suggested action. The novena is available in English and Spanish, and can be received in four ways: a free mobile app, text message, email, or social media.

May the good news of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ bring great joy to all—comforting the afflicted, deepening respect for all human life, and strengthening us to share the Gospel of Life.

Greg Schleppebach is Associate Director at the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. For more information about the bishops' pro-life activities, visit: [www.usccb.org/prolife](http://www.usccb.org/prolife).





**The Washington State Catholic Conference, Catholic Charities and Catholic Health Care  
Support COVID-19 Vaccinations  
December 12, 2020**

The Washington State Catholic Conference (WSCC) affirms that the recently announced COVID-19 vaccines are morally permissible. The US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) confirms the moral permissibility of the vaccines in this [memorandum](#) dated November 20, 2020 from the USCCB Committee on Doctrine. **Together with the Catholic Health Care organizations and Catholic Charities of Washington state, we recommend the faithful get the COVID-19 vaccine to protect themselves, loved ones, and the community.**

Washington state was the first in the country to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the outset of this health emergency, Catholic dioceses, Catholic Charities and Catholic Health Care organizations around the state focused on working together to faithfully carry out our Catholic spiritual, social and health care ministries. To further this effort, the Catholic Bishops of the WSCC commit to:

- Promoting and encouraging COVID-19 vaccinations in collaboration with state and local governments and other entities.
- Advocating on behalf of vulnerable populations to ensure that they have access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines; and,
- Providing regular and accurate information to parishioners and the community in support of morally acceptable, safe, and effective COVID-19 vaccines.

Some people have concerns about the safety of these vaccines due to the speed of their development and FDA approval. There is also concern about the risk of side effects. It is not uncommon to experience minor side effects from being vaccinated. People may feel temporarily uncomfortable, but the benefits from the vaccine exceed the burden. In addition, the speed at which vaccines have been developed may be due to some degree, on utilizing past scientific advances against coronaviruses.

The Washington Catholic dioceses, Catholic Charities and Catholic health systems will also continue to work with the Governor's Office, the State Department of Health, and county and local public health agencies. Our collaboration commits to strong outreach to vulnerable populations such as farmworkers, frail and elderly, undocumented individuals and low-wage earners who seek guidance and assistance from our ministries.

Finally, we offer a special thanks to the health care professionals who continue to care for the sick; to essential workers that enable society to continue functioning; for scientists and researchers who brought us to this moment; to teachers and parents struggling to educate children; to workers in ministries finding innovative ways to bring spiritual and corporal resources to congregations; and to everyone who has helped carry the burden of others during this pandemic. We pray for them as we pray for the world.

We still have much work to do, but we now have hope and a path forward rooted in the healing ministry of Jesus Christ. We place our trust and confidence in the providence of God.

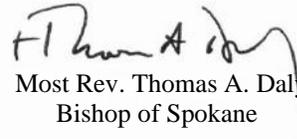
In the heart of Christ,



Most Rev. Paul D. Etienne  
Archbishop of Seattle



Most Rev. Joseph J. Tyson  
Bishop of Yakima



Most Rev. Thomas A. Daly  
Bishop of Spokane



Most Rev. Eusebio Elizondo, M.Sp.S.  
Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle



Most Rev. Daniel H. Mueggenborg  
Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle

Contact: Adrienne Joyce: 253-229-4987