
WEEKLY NEWS

✠ Vigil of the Nativity of Our Lord ✠

On Sundays

Low Mass is offered at 8 a.m. at Lady Altar after which silence is kept in S John's Chapel for

Centering Prayer. At 10 o'clock we pray the **Rosary.**

Confessions are heard in Church from 10.30-10.50. **Terce** is recited at 10.30 followed by

Solemn or Sung Mass at 11 and **Coffee Hour** just after Mass in the Parish Hall. When scheduled, the **Sunday Forum** is then held in the adjacent Yarnall Room.

Vespers is chanted in Latin at 3 p.m. in the church followed by the **Novena** to Our Lady of Clemency and **Benediction.**

Weekdays

Daily Mass is offered Monday through Friday at 12.10 p.m. (10 a.m. on Saturdays and holidays).

Vespers is recited in the Church at 5.30 p.m. Monday through Friday and at 3 p.m. on Saturdays followed by **Shrine Prayers** to Our Lady of Clemency. **Confessions** are heard regularly on Sundays at 10.30 a.m. or by appointment.

Service booklets for all services are published and available on the Usher's tables and at www.s-clements.org.

S JOSEPH, OUR PATIENT PROTECTOR

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

Because this year the Vigil of our Lord's Nativity lands on what would otherwise be the Fourth Sunday in Advent, we hear the Gospel story about an angel's reassuring appearance to S Joseph.

Behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.'

Joseph's duties did not end with the naming of Jesus. Just after the departure of the Magi, an angel of the Lord appears again to him in a dream saying,

"Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 'Out of Egypt have I called my son.'

In his Litany we invoke S Joseph as the Illustrious Son of David, Light of Patriarchs, Spouse of the Mother of God, Guardian of the Redeemer and the Virgin, Joseph most just, Joseph most chaste, Joseph most prudent, most brave, most obedient, most loyal, mirror of patience, lover of poverty, comfort of the sorrowing, patron of exiles, terror of demons, protector of the Church. In God's providential care and love, what S Joseph was for Jesus and Mary is precisely what he can be for us when we turn our hearts towards him in our prayers at Christmas or whenever we seek his help for the sick, the exiled, the poor, the dying.

Christmas will not shield us from the present horrors of war, especially the innocent suffering of thousands of children in Gaza,

About today's Mass

The liturgy of Christmas is redolent of holy joy and were it not for the violet vestments it would seem that the feast had already begun. The *Hodie scietis* ("This day you shall know") is a recurrent theme, repeated time and again, insistently, which expresses the Church's joy: the great event that she is making ready to celebrate took place in the past, but our Saviour's coming is always in the present by the redemption that it brings to mankind of all times.

"Son of David...Son of God.., in power according to the spirit of sanctification by the resurrection..." In these few words St. Paul reveals all that Christ means to us. His birth at Bethlehem led Him to His passion, His resurrection, to the communication to mankind of His grace and glory; His coming as Redeemer proclaims His return as judge and in triumph; He makes Himself one of us to bring us with Him one day to His kingdom.

The Christmas liturgy must be understood in this wide sense; taken as a whole it causes us to celebrate the work of redemption which Christ bears in His Person from the moment of His appearance in this world. The Mass of the Vigil is especially striking in this respect; in almost all the passages of Scripture found in it the same thought recurs. Notice, too, the Collect: on the welcome that we give to Christ as He comes to redeem us.

— Dom Gaspar Lefebvre, O. S. B.

homeless, orphaned, maimed girls and boys some smashed to death by the 2000 pound bombs manufactured here, deadly ordnance "deployed" in places where children were just beginning agonizing convalescences from hasty amputations, Gettysburg for kids on a grand, gruesome scale. Now many of these innocents are dead, hastily buried on hospital grounds. I fear something of our own souls and our shared humanity has perished with them.

With good and prayerful instincts and the help of ministering angels, S Joseph successfully guarded and protected Jesus and Mary facing head on a milieu of cruelty, violence, paranoia, selfishness and brutality just as dangerous as our own. What has changed is the scope and capacity of weaponry, a ghastly if predictable advance we must resist bravely as we serve under the banner of the Prince of Peace. To do this, to live this way, we desperately need all the qualities we admire in S Joseph; justice, prudence, bravery, obedience, loyalty, chastity, patience. These are virtues that equip us for acknowledging and welcoming that peace which passes all understanding, the peace of Christ we share in the Eucharist. the peace we celebrate and long for at Christmas.

The Lord's angel told S Joseph that he was to confer upon Mary's Son the holy name Jesus "for he shall save his people from their sins." Saint Joseph, minister of salvation, pray for us.

Yours faithfully,
Fr. Alton

P. S. There's an especially moving figure of S Joseph carved just over the Gospel (left) side of our Lady Altar, a lovely place to listen and pray.

