

WEEKLY NEWS

✠ Sunday within the Octave 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.

VISITS TO THE CRÈCHE

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

While we have every reason to rejoice in the significant uptick of persons joining us on YouTube for this year's Midnight Mass of Christmas (1,868 views as of this writing), I have been moved to see frequent live visits to the Crèche throughout this week. We are blessed to have such beautiful figures carefully arranged between Our Lady's Chapel and her Shrine of Clemency, with fourteen candles and several re-focused spotlights lighting the way to the Light of Lights. Of course the figure of Our Lord, the *Bambino* was safely hidden away throughout the Feast of the Holy Innocents when the sacristy becomes Egypt for a day. It's fun to track those star-led Magi making their journey through the sanctuary. This year they began their progress on the Gospel side of the High Altar, rested atop the organ console and are now traversing the north aisle. By First Vespers of the Epiphany they will have arrived at the Crèche in time for us to sing about them in Peter Conte's striking arrangement of the popular hymn *We three Kings*.

I'm not surprised about people discovering S Clement's and following our liturgies online. Underlying the reverence, precision and generosity of singers, servers, organists, sacristans, celebrants, ushers, vestry and videographers, is a courteous love inspiring our generation as it has all *those whose rest is won*, our resolute forebears in the catholic faith lived and learned here on Appletree Street.

Visits to the Crèche can be so intimate, great aids for our praying as they display the vast measure of God's love made manifest in this achingly beautiful season. Here is a humble birthplace with an infant to care for. Here is a family soon forced to flee to a foreign land, a holy family led and guided by S Joseph who justly doubted, but not anymore. Here is a welcome destination for shepherds long-accustomed to ridicule and hostility. Here are beasts, often overlooked or worse, sharing their stalls with God, *O magnum mysterium!* And here is the Blessed

About today's Mass

In this continuation of the Christmas festival the Mass of this Sunday continues to remind us of the mystery of the Incarnation and its effects in our lives. Two verses from the Book of Wisdom provide its wonderful Introit; while all things were in complete silence the Word, the living Word of the Father, came forth in the quietness of the night.

A sign of wonder and of contradiction, the corner stone and support of some, the stumbling block of others, Christ, by His mere presence, implies a choice. It is for us to welcome into our lives Him whom each one, for his salvation or eternal perdition, must receive or reject.

— Dom Gaspar Lefebvre, O. S. B.

Virgin Mary, Theotokos, Mother of God, Queen of Peace, Queen of the Rosary, Our Lady of Clemency, doing then what she's doing now — treasuring things in her Immaculate Heart, the sounds of her infant son, his first words, his last words. As Mother of the Church, she also treasures the sounds and silences of our prayers, mothering each of us according to a most providential and divine plan for our flourishing, *setting our feet in a large room* as sings the psalmist.

My heart is full of gratitude to God for allowing me to belong to a community so strong in faith, among people so willing to live in hope, helping so many people in this world we live in, this city in which we pray. Happy Christmas.

Yours faithfully,

Fr. Alton

P. S. Next Sunday we're beginning a new "Re-Reading" series of talks in the Sunday Forum based on some of my re-reading of the great orthodox theologian, the protopresbyter Fr. Alexander Schmemmann. I hope these will make the New Year happy for those able to attend.

