



HOLY NAME OF JESUS PARISH

Polish National Catholic Church
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SUNDAY – DECEMBER 29, 2024

SOLEMNITY OF THE HUMBLE SHEPHERDS

9:00 am – Holy Mass of the Eucharist to be
celebrated in the Contemporary rite.

Please note: A special collection will be taken for the
Savonarola Theological Seminary in Scranton, PA. I
ask for your help in supporting our PNCC Seminary.

OPENING HYMN

TO THEE WE COME, O LORD, OUR GOD

To Thee we come, O Lord, our God,
Before Thine altar, Father
Thou knowest best our yearning hearts.
This supplication answer.
Lift up from want Thy people, Lord,
Bless us, O God; O Father, bless our toil.
Under Thy cross we stand prepared, To
serve Thee with devotion.
Be it with sweat of blood or tears, Or
humble resignation.
For we Thy people are, O Lord,
Save us, O God; O Father, bless our toil.

ENTRANCE HYMN

(Wisdom 18:14-15; Psalm 93:2)

V. For when peaceful stillness compassed everything
and the night in its swift course half spent, Your
all powerful Word from heaven’s royal throne
bounded a fierce warrior, into the doomed land.

R. Your throne stands firm from of old; You are
from everlasting, Lord.

V. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the
Holy Spirit,

R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall
be, world without end. Amen.

THE GLORIA

Glory to God in the Highest,
And peace to His people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
Almighty God, and Father
We worship You; we give You thanks
We praise you for Your glory
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father
Lord God, Lamb of God
You take away the sins of the world
Have mercy on us
You are seated at the right hand of the Father
Receive our prayer
For you alone are the Holy One
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ
With the Holy Spirit,
In the glory of God the Father. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

C. The Lord be with you.

R. And also with you.

C. Let us pray: God our Father, when Your Son
came into this world You chose humble
shepherds as the first witnesses of His
Incarnation. As we honor them, may we continue
to proclaim His presence among us. We ask this
through the same Jesus Christ, Who lives and
reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for
ever and ever.

R. Amen.



LITURGY OF THE WORD OF GOD

**A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE
PROPHET ISAIAH
(Isaiah 62:11-12)**

The LORD has proclaimed to the ends of the
earth: Say to daughter Zion, “See, your savior
comes! See, his reward is with him, his recompense

before him.” They shall be called “The Holy People,” “The Redeemed of the LORD.” And you shall be called “Cared For,” “A City Not Forsaken.”

C. This is the Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

(Psalm 45:2-3, 5-6, 11-12)

R. **A light will shine on us this day, the Lord is born for us.**

V. The LORD reigns; let the earth rejoice;
let the many coastlands be glad!

Clouds and thick darkness are round about Him;
Righteousness and Justice
are the foundation of His throne.

R. **A light will shine on us this day, the Lord is born for us.**

V. The mountains melt like wax before the LORD,
before the Lord of all the earth.

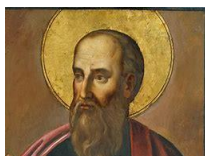
The heavens proclaim his righteousness;
and all the peoples behold his glory.

R. **A light will shine on us this day, the Lord is born for us.**

V. Light dawns for the righteous,
and joy for the upright in heart.

Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous,
and give thanks to his holy name!

R. **A light will shine on us this day, the Lord is born for us.**



A READING FROM THE LETTER OF SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS (Galatians 4:1-7)

Brothers and sisters: I mean that as long as the heir is not of age,* he is no different from a slave, although he is the owner of everything, but he is under the supervision of guardians and administrators until the date set by his father. In the same way we also, when we were not of age, were enslaved to the elemental powers of the world.* But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption. As proof that you

are children, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” So, you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

C. This is the Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

ALLELUIA VERSE

(Psalm 93:1)

C. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

V. The Lord is King, robed with majesty; the Lord is robed, girded with might.

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT LUKE (LUKE 2:15-20)

C. The Lord be with you.

R. And with you.

C. A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke.

R. Glory be to You, O Lord.

When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So, they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

C. The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise be to You, Lord Jesus Christ.



PROFESSION OF FAITH – THE NICENE CREED

I believe in One God, the Father, the Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth

Of all that is seen and unseen.
 I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
 The only Son of God,
 eternally begotten of the Father.
 God from God, Light from Light, True God
 from true God, begotten not made
 Of one being with the Father.
 Through Him all things were made
 For us and for our salvation.
 He came down from heaven:
 By the power of the Holy Spirit
 He was born of the Virgin Mary
AND BECAME MAN.
 For our sake, He was crucified
 under Pontius Pilate
 He suffered death and was buried.
 On the third day He rose again
 In fulfillment of the Scriptures.
 He ascended into heaven and
 Is seated at the right hand of the Father.
 He will come again in glory
 To judge the living and the dead
 And His kingdom will have no end.
 I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 The Lord and Giver of Life
 Who proceeds from the Father,
 With the Father and the Son
 He is worshipped and glorified.
 He has spoken through the prophets.
 I believe in One, Holy, Catholic
 and Apostolic Church
 I acknowledge one baptism
 for the forgiveness of sins.
 I look for the resurrection of the dead
 And the + life of the world to come. Amen.



OFFERTORY VERSE
 (Psalm 96:8)

V. Give to the Lord the glory due His Name! Bring gifts and enter His courts.

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

C. Heavenly Father, in Your mercy accept our gifts that we offer. By sharing in this Holy Eucharis

may we come to more fully live the love we profess. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.



ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

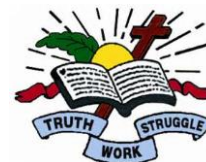
Let us Pray: Most loving Jesus, I adore You in the Most Blessed Sacrament, in which You are truly present. I love You above all things and I long for You in my soul. Since I cannot receive You sacramentally, I ask You to come spiritually into my heart and heal my soul. I embrace You and unite myself with You; may I never be separated from You. In flame my heart with the fire of Your love, my Lord and Savior. Amen.

COMMUNION VERSE
 (Psalm 9:19)

V. The needy will never be forgotten, nor will the hope of the afflicted ever fade.

CLOSING PRAYER

C. The Lord be with you.
 R. And also with you.
 C. Let us pray: Almighty and Eternal God, through this Holy Communion may Your steadfast love be with us. Before all others You called the humble shepherds to give praise, honor and glory to Your Son at the stable in Bethlehem. We thank You that the poor, the humble and the forgotten in the world are remembered by You. We ask this through the same Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
 R. Amen.



SOLEMNITY OF THE HUMBLE SHEPHERDS

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God.” - Matthew 5:3

The **Solemnity of the Humble Shepherds** was established by our First Bishop, Francis Hodur, at the Special Synod of the PNC Church held on August 21-23, 1906 in Scranton, PA, along with the **Feast of Brotherly Love**.

Isn't it interesting that our first Bishop Francis Hodur would use these first two solemnities to emphasize the great Christian foundations of "humility and love?" Some would find the phrase "poor in spirit" to be somewhat confusing, but I think when we substitute the word "humble" for "poor in spirit," this scripture passage takes on a clearer understanding.

The shepherds, whom we honor today, tended flocks of sheep for others and were among the poorest of all professions, less valuable than the sheep they tended. They dedicated themselves to watching over their flocks, at the peril of their own lives. They were "baby-sitters" 24/7 who took care of every need of their flocks. They would lead their sheep from a pen early in the morning to graze. They would lead them to quiet brooks for drink and rest. They would look for sheep who strayed from the flock.

Late at night, they would lead the sheep back to a pen and would count their sheep and examine each one for any injuries. They would keep watch over their flock at night, to protect them while they slept from predators such as wolves and hyenas. During the cold and inclement weather, they would guide them to protection in caves.

As previously noted, many of these sheep were special "unblemished lambs," who would be used in sacrifice at the temple and so these shepherds were important and valuable stewards who had many important responsibilities and were lower in status, to their sheep.

Even with all these responsibilities, shepherds needed to be "humbled in spirit." To truly be righteous unto God, a shepherd could not be "self-centered," arrogant or proud, because the very nature of their duties was humbling and so it was that God who first announced the birth of His son, through His messenger, to these humbled shepherds.

If we look at the Christmas story, God chose the humbled to usher the coming of the Messiah. He first chose Zachariah and Elizabeth, parents of John the

Baptist, who he himself was to lead a very simple and humble life. He chose a simple carpenter, Joseph, who would be the protector and provider for this "Son of God," and God would finally choose a young girl and virgin, Mary, who would bear in her womb the Word of God" made flesh.

In the Letter of Saint James 2:5 we read: "Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised to those who love Him."

Humility is defined as "having or showing a modest or low estimate of one's own importance."

There is an old Chinese proverb which says: "Be like bamboo; the higher you climb, the deeper you bow."

There are so many, sadly who miss the message of God's love and "divine presence" while during their short stay while here on earth because of their arrogance, self-centeredness and who are concerned only for the physical, while ignoring the needs of others.

Like the teaching of Jesus in the **Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican** as found in Luke 18:9-14, it speaks about the Pharisee who declared to God what he did and the Publican who in contrast, bowed before God and asked for forgiveness. This is humility.

If we could take today, the example of those humbled shepherds, who were chosen by God to be the witnesses and share a message given to them by an "Angel" of God, of "Peace on Earth, goodwill towards all men," that we who are also called to witness the birth of the Christ child within and around us, may like the shepherds, humble.

Imitating the "humility" of the Lord Jesus **(Philippians 2:1-8)**

"If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind."

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others."

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

TEACHINGS ON HUMILITY

The following is but a sample of the virtue of “humility” as found in the Holy Scriptures.

The humble have seen it and are glad; You who seek God, let your hearts revive.” - Proverbs 69:32

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.” - James 4:10

“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” - James 2:6

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ He called a child, whom He put among them, and said, ‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven and whoever welcomes one such child in My name welcomes Me.’” - Matthew 18:1



THE MAGI – GIFTS TO A KING

“On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary His mother; and they knelt down and paid Him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” - Matthew 2:11

The final piece of the story of Christmas is told in the Gospel of Saint Matthew 2:1-15, who in his account, tells of the story of Jesus, and the “Magi,” who were men from the East, and who have been referred to as: “priests, sages, philosophers and astrologers,” who were guided by a “star” to the house where they found the mother and the young child Jesus.

Although no one can definitely mark the day, when the Anointed, the “Christos” of God was born, whether it be December 25th or at an earlier time, but Christians around the world, believed it happened.

While no one can say definitely state when the Magi came to visit the child Jesus and offer gifts, Christians around the world, believed it happened. And for many in the “secular world,” the events that took place that first Christmas, may sound like a “good story,” but for Christians around the world, the Solemnity of the Epiphany of our Lord, did take place.

In the Polish tradition, on the Feast of Epiphany, January 6, the blessing of **chalk, charcoal, and incense** which takes place before the celebration of the Holy Mass of the Eucharist is remembered.

The blessed gifts are taken to the homes of the faithful. While these blessings, may seem mundane to some, these three elements represent the gifts given unto the Lord Jesus, and they have a special significance for those of “Polish” ethnicity.

The Chalk - which is blessed, is used to “mark” the doorpost of the homes of the faithful, following the **Feast of the Epiphany**, and in the spirit of the visitation of the Magi, each house that is blessed in this New Year will be marked with the following: “20 K + M + B 25,” denoting the traditionally accepted names of the three kings: “Kasper, Melchior and Baltazar.”

The prayers that are offered at this special blessing first recalls the day, when the “blood” of a lamb, was placed over the doorposts of the homes of the children of Israel for protection and deliverance. In the same way, prayers for health and protection are offered by the priest to all who enter these blessed homes.

The Charcoal - There is a basic understanding that without smoke there is no fire, and we learn that without charcoal, an agent of fire, incense cannot be offered as a “sweet smelling fragrance to God.”

The Incense - Do you know that incense from Somala, Egypt, and other regions of the African world, were considered more valuable than gold? The incense that was and is blessed on Epiphany is a combination of frankincense and myrrh.

The three gifts offered to the Christ child by the Magi truly represented the facets of the coming Messiah.

Gold – And as it is today, gold was a valued commodity in the ancient world and was one of the chief measures of wealth. One of three attributes of the “promised” Messiah, would be His “**kingship**.”

Frankincense – An aromatic resin used in worship. This gift was to denote the “**deity**” of the Christ child.

Myrrh – Another fragrant spice used in many applications, including an “anointing oil” prepared by the Jewish priests. We find in John 19:39 that the body of Jesus was anointed with a mixture of “myrrh and aloes.” It is said that this gift was to denote the “**humanity**” of Jesus.

As we celebrate the twelfth day of Christmas, and as the world enters a New Year, a new year of new hopes and promises, may we all ask ourselves, what can we give for the good of humanity? Christmas time is truly a time for gifts and giving and in John 3:16 we learn “that God so loved the world, He gave His Only Begotten Son.”



OUR PARISH CALENDAR

December 30th – January 4th

8:45 am Liturgy of the Hours

9:00 am Holy Mass of the Eucharist

- Mon. 12/30** Private Prayer & Meditation
Sabinus & Companions, Martyrs
Anysia, Martyr
Anysius of Thessalonica, Bishop
- Tue. 12/31** Mass for Health and Healing
Silvester I of Rome, Bishop
Columba of Sens, Virgin & Martyr
Melania the Younger, Widow
- Wed. 1/1** Solemnity – Circumcision of our Lord
Circumcision of Our Lord
Peter of Atroa, Abbot
Telemachus, Martyr

Thurs. 1/2 Solemnity – Holy Name of Jesus
Holy Name of Jesus
Macarius of Alexandria, Abbot & C.
Adelard of Corbie, Abbot

Fri. 1/3 Mass to the Holy Saints of God
Antherus of Rome, Bishop & Martyr
Genevieve of Paris, Virgin
Peter Balsam, Martyr

Sat. 1/4 Mass to the Holy Angels of God
Gregory of Langres, Bishop
Pharaildis, Virgin
Rigobert of Rheims, Bishop



NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2024

SOLEMNITY – HOLY FAMILY

9:00 am Holy Mass of the Eucharist to honor the Holy Family of Joseph, Mary and Jesus.

THIS WEEK IN THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2025

SOLEMNITY - CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD

In keeping with the Torah, Jesus was circumcised eight days after His birth. This decree of God, first appeared in Genesis 17:10 around the year 1879 BC, when God gave to Abraham this commandment: “This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised.”



THURSDAY, JANUARY 2, 2025

SOLEMNITY - HOLY NAME OF JESUS

On this day, we honor the Holy Name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Jesus or in Aramaic, “Yeshua,” is translated in Hebrew as “Yahweh saves” or “Yahweh is salvation. “Arising in “Apostolic” times,

this special observance became a feast day in the Catholic Church from the 15th century.

From the Letter of Paul to the Philippians (2:10-11) we read:

“So that at the name of Jesus' every knee shall bend in the heavens, on the earth and under the earth, and every tongue proclaim to the glory of God, that Jesus Christ is Lord.”



FRIDAY, JANUARY 3, 2025
Genevieve of Paris, Virgin
(422 – 500 A.D.)

St. Geneviève, is the patron saint of Paris, who allegedly saved the city from the Huns. At the age of seven, Genevieve dedicated herself to live a religious life. After the death of her parents, she moved to Paris, where is known for her charity to the poor. She is noted for her prophetic vision that the Huns would invade Paris. She asked the citizens of Paris to pray that this would not happen. Atila actually did invade the major city of Orleans, about 70 miles from Paris and was defeated. It is written that she had great influence over King Childeric I of the Salian Franks. She is also known to be influential with the building of a church over the tomb of Saint Denis, a patron saint of France. She died in 500 AD and was buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles, popularly known as the Church of Sainte-Geneviève. During the French Revolution in 1793, her body was burned on the Place de Grève; and later her relics were placed in the Church of Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, where they still attract pilgrims from around the world. She is often depicted with a loaf of bread to represent her generosity and ministry to the poor.



SATURDAY, JANUARY 4, 2025
Gregory of Langres, Bishop

St. Gregory of Langres was originally a Christian administrator whose government was well respected. After governing for about forty years, and after the

death of his wife, he resigned from his post and entered into the clergy, where he was later consecrated, as Bishop of Langres, France. He is well known for his asceticism and conversion of many unbelievers as well as for his example of piety and life of prayer. He went on to establish two monasteries where he served for thirty-three years. He died in 539 A.D.



NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2025
POLSKIE KOLEDY SING ALONG

Today. Our sister Parish, Saint Valentines PNCC in Northampton, MA will hold its Annual **Polskie Koledy Sing Along** in their Church proper at 2 pm. This annual event is sponsored by the Polish Heritage Committee. Refreshments will follow the Sing-Along.



ED MISSION & EVANGELISM COMMISSION
WEDNESDAYS AT NOON – CALL TO PRAYER

Every Wednesday, at 12:00 Noon, a call to prayer is requested by the members of the National Mission and Evangelism Commission of the PNCC.

As we begin the New Year and observe on January 2nd, the Solemnity of the Holy Name of Jesus, may we ever draw closer to the Bishop of our souls,

“For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

- 1 Peter 2:25 KJV

Let us Pray: O Lord, Jesus Christ, Who said: “Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you,” give, we ask You, the grace of Your most divine love, that with all our hearts, words and works we may love you and never cease to praise You. May we revere and love Your Holy Name for You will fail to govern those whom You establish in Your love. You live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

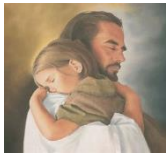
Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed by Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us of our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and led us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.



PRAYERS FOR HEALTH AND HEALING

In our prayers, please remember all our brothers and sisters, who seek the blessings of God for health and healing.

Let us pray. O Lord, God of mercies, in Your kindness stretch out Your hand and heal all our brothers and sisters who are in any way ailing. Make them worthy of health, deliver them from their present sicknesses and illnessness and grant them recovery in Jesus' holy name. We ask this through the same Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.



OUR PARISH OUTREACH PROGRAMS

“Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.” - Philippians 2:4

As Pastor, of Holy Name of Jesus PNCC, I am so proud that our Parish family, here in South Deerfield, has throughout this past year of 2024, supported and became deeply involved themselves into so many “outreach” programs in helping others: from donating non-perishable food items for our monthly “grocery giveaways,” to being involved in other ministries, such as “Adopt-A-Family,” the “Warm the Children” and “Socks for Vets” programs. I also want to thank all those who made monetary donations towards helping others. May God bless.

We continue to ask for assistance and donations, if possible, for non-perishable food items that may be left in our Parish Hall. We are currently collecting

toiletries for “survival kits,” for the Northampton Survival Center which may be left in the vestibule of our church. A flyer of these needs of personal toiletries, etc. may be found in the vestibule of the church.

For monetary donations, personal checks may be made out to **“Holy Name of Jesus PNCC.”** with the memo **“HNJ Mission Fund.”** May God bless all our endeavors as we strive to help others in need.



Our Food Ministry: “To Feed the Hungry”

“I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat.”
- Matthew 25: 35.

I am happy to announce that through donations made, we were able to provide ham dinners to 13 families and another 13 families who received groceries for the month of December.

The next date for providing help for those in need will be held on **Saturday, January 18th from 10 am till noon** or while supplies last.



Collecting plastic tops

One of our dear parishioners, Maryanna Foster, who works closely with veterans, has asked for our help in collecting white or clear plastic tops that will be donated to aid in the making of prosthetics for veterans in need. A collection container has been set up in the vestibule of our church. Please help donate your plastic tops in this new ministry.



Can Soda Tabs

As most of you know, we are also collecting tabs from soda cans that are then donated to aid the Shriners Hospitals for Crippled children. Please save your can soda tabs. There are containers that are located in our Parish vestibule for this purpose. Thank you and may God bless.