

## ST. FRANCIS POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace! — St. Francis*

1752 Harton Avenue • East Meadow, NY • (516) 794-5189

Father Andrew Koterba, Pastor

## CHRISTMAS EVE

Shepherd's Mass (Vigil Mass Readings)

Saturday, December 24, 2011

9:00 PM - Celebration of the Eucharist

Niech Bedze pochwalony Jezus Chrystus.

R/. Na wieki, wiekow Amen.

Praised be the Lord, Jesus Christ.

R/. Now and forever. Amen.

ENTRANCE HYMN - "Silent Night"

CONTEMPORARY RITE - Mass Book pg. 63

GLORIA - "Angels We Have Heard On High"

READING I - Is 62:1-5

For Zion's sake I will not be silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her vindication shines forth like the dawn and her victory like a burning torch.

Nations shall behold your vindication, and all the kings your glory; you shall be called by a new name pronounced by the mouth of the LORD. You shall be a glorious crown in the hand of the LORD, a royal diadem held by your God. No more shall people call you "Forsaken," or your land "Desolate," but you shall be called "My Delight," and your land "Espoused." For the LORD delights in you and makes your land his spouse. As a young man marries a virgin, your Builder shall marry you; and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so shall your God rejoice in you.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29

**R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant: Forever will I confirm your posterity and establish your throne for all generations.

**R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

Blessed the people who know the joyful shout; in the light of your countenance, O LORD, they walk. At your name they rejoice all the day, and through your justice they are exalted.

**R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

He shall say of me, "You are my father, my God, the rock, my savior." Forever I will maintain my kindness toward him,

and my covenant with him stands firm.

**R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

READING II - Acts 13:16-17, 22-25

When Paul reached Antioch in Pisidia and entered the synagogue, he stood up, motioned with his hand, and said, "Fellow Israelites and you others who are God-fearing, listen. The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors and exalted the people during their sojourn in the land of Egypt. With uplifted arm he led them out of it. Then he removed Saul and raised up David as king; of him he testi-



fied, 'I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will carry out my every wish.' From this man's descendants God, according to his promise, has brought to Israel a savior, Jesus. John heralded his coming by proclaiming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel; and as John was completing his course, he would say,

'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. Behold, one is coming after me; I am not worthy to unfasten the sandals of his feet.'

GOSPEL - Mathew 1:18-25

A reading from the holy gospel according to St. Mathew

R./ Glory be to you, O Lord.

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about.

When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus. This is the gospel of the Lord. R/: Praise be to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS -

RESPONSE - Lord Hear Our Prayer!

OFFERTORY HYMN - "Silent Night"

OUR FATHER - page 95

COMMUNION HYMN - "The First Noel"

RECESSIONAL HYMN - "Joy to the World"



## St. Francis Weekly "Kompositions"

### REJOICE! REJOICE! THE LORD IS BORN TODAY! CHRISTMAS...2011

#### **LUKE 2:8-14**

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were so afraid. And the angel said unto them, "Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying; "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

#### **BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY...Henri Nouwen HOLDING ON TO THE CHRIST**

Life is unpredictable. We can be happy one day and sad the next, healthy one day and sick the next, rich one day and poor the next, alive one day and dead the next. So who is there to hold on to? Who is there to feel secure with? Who is there to trust at all times?

Only Jesus, the Christ. He is our Lord, our shepherd, our rock, our stronghold, our refuge, our brother, our guide, and our friend. He came from God to be with us. He died for us, he was raised from the dead to open for us the way to God, and he is seated at God's right hand to welcome us home. with Paul, we must be certain that "neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nothing already in existence and nothing still to come, nor any power, nor the heights nor the depths, nor any created thing whatever, will be able to come between us and the love of God, known to us in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

#### **WHAT DOES THE "CRECHE" SYMBOLIZE?**

Francis called it a "creche," the French word for cradle. Francis created the first creche using real people, a real manger, a real ox and ass and real shepherds.

The Incarnation - Christmas - was a key component in the spirituality of Francis. He wanted to celebrate the Incarnation in a special way. He wanted to do something that would help people remember the Christ Child and how He was born in Bethlehem. Francis wanted people to see and experience how He lay in a manger with an ox and ass standing by - how He lay upon the hay where He had been placed.

It was Christmas Eve in the year 1223, at the appointed time, Franciscan Brothers came to the new Bethlehem. Men, women, and children from the area also came to celebrate. The torches they carried lit the night to come to adore Him. All were filled with great joy over the mystery of the Incarnation. And a great tradition was begun.

As you look upon your Nativity set, may you remember and celebrate again God's love for His creation. To show His abundant love, mercy, and forgiveness, He became a person like us. This is what the creche symbolizes!

-From the Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano

#### **AND SPEAKING OF TRADITIONS...**

We are starting a NEW tradition at St. Francis Parish. On Sunday, January 1, 2012, as we celebrate the Epiphany, bring in your baby Jesus from your Creche, and Fr. Andrew will have a special blessing of your Jesus.

#### **THE BEAUTY OF CHRISTMAS, "KEEP THE MESSAGE!"**

In a world where nature and our environment are threatened, let us make our Christmas tree and manger scene reminders of the beauty and sacredness of nature. How closely at his coming did Jesus bind himself to the animals of the field, as well as to the earth and the open sky!

Remembering the poor shepherds and the circumstances of Christ's birth, so marked by poverty, let us make them reminders of the forgotten poor of our world.

Let the Child and Joseph and Mary teach us the dignity and importance of children and families in a society so neglectful of them.

The Christmas season's rich traditions come from people throughout the world, from Spain, South America, Eastern Europe, and so many others. Let them remind us of the unity of all people as children of God.

Let us... "Keep the Message!"

#### **ST. FRANCIS NOTES ..**

"May your Christmas be a joyous celebration of praise for our glorious Savior and King."

A Merry and Blessed Christmas to All! Please join us after Mass in the Parish Hall, for our traditional Christmas celebration meal. Share with us in the breaking of the Christmas wafer (Oplatek), sometimes referred to as the "angel bread." This traditional Polish and seemingly ever popular growing tradition, is shared with all, friends and family in an exchange of good wishes with all present as a sign of love, forgiveness and reconciliation!

A hearty, sincere 'Thank You' to Thomas Kompa for writing our factual and interesting bulletin every week and for setting up his beautiful Polish Nativity for all to see!

