

Saint Miriam *focus*

WEEKLY BULLETIN OF
SAINT MIRIAM PARISH
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A Holy Time of Year...

A weekly reflection by Monsignor Jim +



This holy time of the year — filled with family togetherness, gift giving, and heartfelt sharing — is, in the deepest sense, a time of prayer and reflection. What we share together is a profound affirmation that the Christmas message is one that is vital and celebratory, timeless, and very much part of the day we share together as a family; a family who proclaim Christ as the center of our lives.

There are so many details that surround the celebration of Christmas that it is often easy to miss the real meaning. Christmas is not about the parties, the presents or the poinsettias. It's not about the food, the festivities, or even about family. It's not the greenery or the garland; not the Christmas cards, credit cards, or carols; not about tinsel or traditions. The fact is this: *Christmas is solely about God.* Christmas is about God fulfilling God's promises, saving God's people, coming to us — as one of us — in Jesus. The truth can be so easily missed: Christmas is nothing but Jesus. And if Jesus is not in Christmas, then Christmas is nothing at all.

The miracle of Christmas is that God chose to come be with us in Jesus Christ. While we may over-romanticize the stable where Jesus was born, we can know that this birthing place speaks volumes about God's infinite courtesy towards all people. Jesus was born in an earthy, raw, smelly

stable, not in a temple or royal palace. Being born in such a place is God's way of showing that Christ comes to us in all sorts of human conditions — earthy, smelly, broken and accomplished. No matter what we've done or haven't done, God comes to be with us in Jesus Christ where we are in life, and out of his great love for all humanity.

"And so, this is Christmas," in the musical words of John Lennon. This is a simple story that we have heard our whole lives. It is before us again. The mysterious pregnancy, the labored journey to Bethlehem, the star, the stable, the myriad angels in the blazing sky, the haste of the shepherds discovering the newborn, and the broad proclamation that from this inauspicious place everything in the whole world had changed. All because this event, ... more than any other event since the creation of the world, has made a place for you and me. Despite the immensity of the universe of stars, galaxies and planets in their courses ... the birth of God with us has shown that God is— *with us.*

Joy to the world! Merry Christmas, Charlie Brown!

And Merry Christmas to all of us!

M s g r .
Jim+



Our Mass Schedule

Sunday

SimpleMass—9:00 am
Mass and Choir—10:30 am

Thursday

Thursday Rosary — 6:30 pm
Thursday Mass — 7:00 pm

Church Events

Sunday, January 1st

Solemnity Mass—11:00 am
with Consecration of the Blessed
Mother statue,
a gift from the Heffernens
(No 9:00 Mass)

Sunday, January 15th

PREP Classes Resume

Ongoing Events

Sundays at 9:40 am—

Choir Practice

2nd Tuesdays at 7:00 pm—
The Women of Saint Miriam

Office & Library

Mon & Wed: Closed

Tues, Fri & Sat: 11am - 2 pm

Thur: 4:30 pm - 8 pm

For details visit MySaintMiriam.org

Mother's Corner... By Mother Phyllis+



Celebrating Together

When we come together to do liturgy, we cease being an "I" and become a "we," the Body of Christ united through baptism, and joined together to give thanks and praise to God in Christ's name. Americans are a particularly individualistic people, but our theology calls us to be counter-cultural, to be responsible to and for one another, to pray and sing together, not as individuals, but as a community.

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Scripture Readings for January 1st

Numbers 6:22-27
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:16-21

Who Is That Saint?



There definitely was a Roman martyr named **Eugenia** but the rest of her story is a romantic fictitious legend. According to it she was the daughter of Duke Philip of Alexandria, governor of Egypt during the reign of Emperor Valerian. She fled her father's house dressed in men's clothing and was baptized by Helenus, bishop of Heliopolis, who sent her to an abbey where she later became an abbot.

As the story goes, while she was an abbot and still pretending to be a man she cured a woman of an illness. When the woman made sexual advances, which she rebuffed, the woman accused her publicly of adultery. She was hailed before a judge to answer the charges where, still disguised, she faced her father as the judge. At the trial, her real female identity was revealed and she was exonerated. Her father converted to Christianity and became Bishop of Alexandria but the emperor had him executed for his faith. St. Eugenia and her remaining household moved to Rome where she converted many, including her mother, Claudia, but this did not prevent their martyrdom. Christ appeared to her in a dream and told her that she would die on the Feast of Nativity. She was beheaded on December 25, 258.

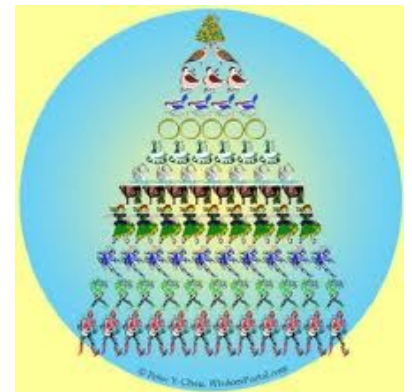
She has been recognized by the modern-day LGBT community as an example of a transgender saint, particularly as reflected in Lorae Parry's 1996 play Eugenia, discussing an Italian immigrant to New Zealand in the twentieth century, female by birth, who lives as a man. - By Alan Entwistle

The Twelve Days of Christmas

There is one Christmas Carol that has always baffled me. What in the world do leaping lords, French hens, swimming swans, and especially the partridge who won't come out of the pear tree have to do with Christmas? This week, I found out.

From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of their church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember.

- ◆ The partridge in a pear tree was Jesus Christ.
- ◆ Two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.
- ◆ Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love.
- ◆ The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke & John.
- ◆ The five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.
- ◆ The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.
- ◆ Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit--Prophesy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contri-



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LED Campaign—Help Us Finish!



We are trying to complete our LED lighting campaign before the year end and ask each parishioner to purchase one bulb, at a cost of \$50. Many have kindly participated already - **just look up to see what you did!** The new bulbs are installed. If you have not yet purchased a bulb please see Alan Entwistle this month. Remember, this campaign will reduce our lighting costs by up to 93% going forward.

New Year's Day Fellowship

Again for the third year in a row, our ministry and parish teams will host the Fellowship time! That's right! Monsignor Jim and all his associate staff and acolytes, etc. will be in charge to give the Hospitality Crew the day off! So, join us and see what goodies they bring this year! It all begins after the 11:00 am Solemnity on New Year's Day in honor of our Blessed Mother.



Monsignor Jim Away...



Monsignor will be away to attend an ordination from January 6th—8th in Washington, DC. In his absence as pastor, he always appoints a PIC (Priest in Charge). Father Joe Klemas will be in charge during this absence. Please contact Father Joe for any emergencies, or for urgent matters. Father Joe can be reached at Father.Joe@mySaintMiriam.org or 610-277-3344. Mother Phyllis and Father Joe will concelebrate for all Epiphany Masses. Thank you.

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bution, Leadership and Mercy.

- ◆ The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.
- ◆ Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit--Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control.
- ◆ The ten lords a-leaping were the ten commandments.
- ◆ The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.
- ◆ The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed.

So there is your history for today. This knowledge was shared with me and I found it interesting and enlightening and now I know how that strange song became a Christmas Carol... so pass it on if you wish.

Merry Christmas, Everyone!

Dorothy Klemas



December 25th

Mass & Sanctuary Lamp

In Honor of moving to this very special place.
May we always see how far we've come in such a short time.

By Joe and Susan D'Annunzio

January 1st

In Loving Memory of Carol Weaver

By Drs. Dorothy and Joe Klemas

In Loving Memory of Aidan Alexander Garcia

By Jean Puminka

Mass & Sanctuary Lamp

In Honor of A Blessed, Healthy, and Happy New Year
for Everyone at Saint Miriam
By Joe and Susan D'Annunzio

January 8th

In Honor of Francis Rineer

By Bridget Rineer

To make an intention, please visit our website and click "Support" and then "Mass Intentions."

Please pray for these current needs...

- ✝ Please pray for Susan Cipoletti. She is waiting for test results and interviewing for a new job this week.
- ✝ Please pray for Robert. He is in NYC at Sloan with cancer.
- ✝ Please pray for Celine's friend, Eileen. She was diagnosed with breast cancer. Also, pray for Denise who lost her mom this week.
- ✝ Please pray for Father Jim and for each other.

To join our prayer team, or to submit a prayer request, please email Pat Heffner at Pat.Heffner@mySaintMiriam.org.

Thanks to all who give the gift of prayer.



Simple Ways You Can Keep us Growing

Saint Miriam Giving Kiosk

Saint Miriam has added the extra convenience of the "Saint Miriam Giving Kiosk" in the Fellowship Hall. Now you can support your parish, even when you forget your check. Need a Mass Card? Done! Want to make a donation? Done! Maybe you would like to purchase a memorial or sponsor a Sanctuary chair? Done! Yes, with the Saint Miriam Giving Kiosk, making your gift is as easy as 1- 2 - 3. And, by using this new kiosk, we can also track your cash donations. This will help bring to you a larger refund from Uncle Sam. So, you give more, help support the parish more, and get more back...all with the swipe of a finger and entering a few credit card digits!



Adopt Your Own Sanctuary Chair

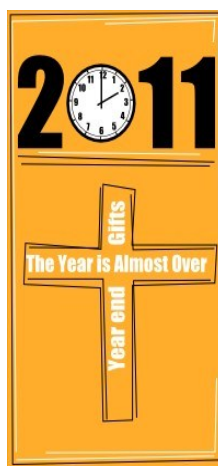
We will be sending in the next group of memorials in early January. Each chair will be afforded a commemorative plaque in honor or memory of you or someone you love. And that chair and plaque will be here for years to come to honor you. If you have not already done so, we are asking each member to adopt one, preferably two, chairs with a donation of \$50 per chair. Please let Alan Entwistle know what you would like on your plaque.

A Gift Today Means the Future is Yours!

There are many ways you can make a gift before the end of the year that will benefit you now, and in the future, and help build a community for God! These benefits include tax savings on this year's return, income for the future, and bypass of capital gains tax on the sale of your property.

A few of the options you might want to consider this year:

- An end-of-year cash gift to Saint Miriam
- Gift of Property, like CDs, stocks, or bonds
- A Gift of Real Estate Property to fund a charitable annuity
- Future Property Gift by bequest in your Will



These are just a few ways to help God's kingdom and minimize taxes you and your heirs will pay. Minimize Taxes and Maximize your Gift this year, make your gift today!



Are you Missing Something??

We have had a few people who told us that they are *not* receiving emails from the parish. We send out at least one email weekly that contains our weekly *Saint Miriam Focus*. If you are not getting that Sunday email with the *Focus*, you are also missing out on a other important news and events such as deaths and weather updates that affect our Mass schedule. Please update at information@mySaintMiriam.org if you need to be added or your email has changed.



The Saint Miriam Parishioner of The Year!

Every year on New Year's Day, Monsignor bestows the annual Ray Leight Award. This year the recipient is well known to all of us at Saint Miriam. Who is it? Come and see! New year's Day at 11:00 am!



Family Circles Outreach

Kardon Institute and Saint Miriam combine their talent to bring a program called, Family Circles, where specially-trained therapists will be on site at the parish to work with children in order to enhance their physical, social, and cognitive abilities! Our special program is

designed for children with autism, ages 3 to 5 and 6 to 10. Please stay tuned as we launch yet another outreach slated to begin for after the new year!

Remember To Turn in Your Assignments!

Remember the Bishop's Christmas homework?! Did you have one of those boxes under your tree this morning? You know, the ones holding what present we will give to Christ Jesus on this Christmas Day? If so please share those ideas with us and we will publish the best ideas shortly. Email your ideas please to info@mysaintmiriam.org.



Saint Miriam eNews...

Our monthly eNewsletter will be changing names soon! The next exciting issue is almost ready and will be going out a little early to accommodate the holiday schedule. Please watch your e-mailboxes! If you do not receive it, please email us at Info@mySaintMiriam.org

