



## St. Gertrude Chicago

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### Christmas 2021 & The Feast of the Holy Family

#### From Fr. Rich

##### Christmas

Merry Christmas to you and all those near and dear to you!

Christmas is all about what God is doing and how we respond! This extraordinary match-up

brings forth so much from so many believers. It is the wonderful sounds of the music we are singing and playing at this time of year. It is in the true spirit of Christmas that so many share not only from their abundance but also from their necessities in order to help others.

The great challenge of Christmas is to bring what is the best of the December 25th celebrations into other days and months and years. Hope is not a one-day festival, it is a lifetime event. There is nothing we do on Christmas we cannot do any day of the year. And if we decide to repeat some of these activities on those other days, we might be surprised at the joy which becomes present in and through and with us. May the joy and the hope and the love of Christmas be with you and all those dear to you every day of the year!

It is a time of possibilities presented and often responded to -- opportunities for finding our way to reconciliation with someone long estranged, opportunities to speak words of kindness and care, and love for those who feel alone or forgotten or devalued. It is the time when we are able to push back the curtain and see that there are no strangers - only sisters and brothers we have not yet met. We are all God's children because God's Son has been born as one of us!

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##### New Year

Next week, we celebrate New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, the Feast of Mary, Mother of God, and the World Day of Prayer for Peace. That's a lot in two days! And it often confuses Catholics trying to figure out what the Holy Day is every January 1st!

The church Feast is Mary, Mother of God. This feast celebrates the Christian understanding that because Jesus was fully human and also fully divine, so his Mother, Mary, is not only the mother of the human baby Jesus, she is equally the Mother of God's Son. This feast captures the extraordinary dignity God has placed in humankind. Through Mary and her Son, God dwells within all of us. We are all sisters and brothers of Jesus, the Christ. It gives us a great sense with which to close out the old year and usher in the new year! This is a powerful reminder of who we are because of God's love for us!



There are two blessings you might consider as we enter into the New Year. The first blessing is what God dictated to Moses to speak to Aaron and his sons, from the First Reading for the Mass of January 1st from the Book of Numbers, "The Lord bless you and keep you! The Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!"

Especially with this last line, we are connected to the additional celebration of January 1st as the World Day of Prayer for Peace.

The second blessing comes from the tradition of house blessings on the Feast of the Epiphany, Sunday, January 2. Using chalk on the top lintel of a doorway, you combine the date of the new year and the initials of the three magi who sought out the new-born King of the Jews.

So, in chalk -- it looks like this: 2-B-0-K-2-M-2. The year - 2022 - and the first initial in the names of the 3 Magi: Balthasar, Kaspar (sometimes spelled Caspar), and Melchior. The blessing is that all those who enter and all those who leave through that door may be blessed by our loving God and all they encounter, just as they may be a blessing to those they encounter.



**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and Your Loved Ones!**

*~ Father Rich and the St. Gertrude parish staff*

### **A Christmas Blessing**

God grant you the light of Christmas,  
which is faith;  
the warmth of Christmas,  
which is purity;  
the righteousness of Christmas,  
which is justice;  
the belief in Christmas,  
which is truth;  
the all of Christmas,  
which is Christ.

*~ Wilda English*

## Christmas Letter from Cardinal Cupich

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We joyfully celebrate the birth of the Lord. As we do so, we are also very much aware the challenges that we face—moving beyond the pandemic, building social peace in our society, and finding economic stability in uncertain times. In all of this, we

reaffirm our faith that Jesus truly is Emmanuel, God-with-us. He accompanies us and walks with us. And that gives us great confidence and sure hope.

This year, Pope Francis has called the entire Church to reflect on synodality, a word that means “being on the road together,” as we make our life journey. We believe that Jesus is on the road with us. And our faith also leads us to commit ourselves to be on the road with each other. In this season, we take inspiration from the Christmas gospel stories of Mary and Joseph journeying on the road together to Bethlehem and the Magi on the road together to find Jesus.

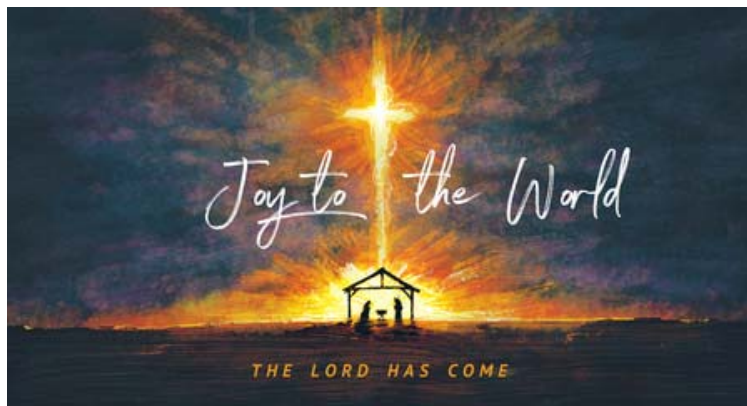
I pray that, accompanied by the Lord, we may learn to be sources of encouragement for each other on the journey.

During this holy season, I will bring you, your loved ones, and your special intentions to the altar. As I pray for you, I also ask you to pray for me, so that together all of us may find renewal in the Lord.

God bless you and keep you,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

~ Cardinal Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago



## Heavenly Horns Performance

St. Gertrude's very own “Heavenly Horns” performed for parishioners on Sunday, December 19 after the 10:30 am Mass. Selections included *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*, *Good King Wenceslas*, *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*, and *We Three Kings*.

We appreciate all who attended and especially the talented team that performed - Jim Szmurlo, Tona Palomino, Peter Buttitta, Fran Guenette, and Nicholas Bussey.

**Breaking Bread 2022 eMissal Available for Android and iOS Smartphones and Tablets:** The USCCB-approved Breaking Bread 2022 eMissal is available for Android and iOS smartphones and tablets either in the App Store or Google Play for \$4.99. The app can be downloaded for instant access to songs, readings, and the Order of Mass.



A message from the Cardinal



## Cardinal Cupich: Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine is a Moral Imperative

There is good news about how Catholics view the COVID-19 vaccines. According to new polling data from the Public Religion Research Institute, the acceptance rate by white Catholics went from 68% in March to 82% currently, and among Hispanic Catholics, it jumped from 56% to 90% over the same period. This is remarkable, and something to celebrate.

Just as promising is the news that 60% of Americans agree with the statement, “Because getting vaccinated against COVID-19 helps protect everyone, it is a way to live out the religious principle of loving my neighbors.”

Pope Francis has often advocated for vaccinations using similar language. “Being vaccinated with vaccines authorized by the competent authorities is an act of love. And contributing to ensure the majority of people are vaccinated is an act of love — love for oneself, love for one’s family and friends, love for all people,” he said in a public service announcement released Aug. 18.

In other words, deciding whether to get vaccinated is not only a choice about one’s own health. The unvaccinated who contract the virus, whether or not they experience symptoms, commonly spread the disease, and every person who catches it and infects others adds to the likelihood of the virus mutating in more dangerous ways.

While it is true that there are breakthrough cases among the vaccinated, studies have shown that such people tend to experience lower viral loads than the unvaccinated, and thus do not spread the COVID-19 virus at the same levels. What’s more, the disease experienced by those with breakthrough infections tends to be dramatically less severe than that of the unvaccinated who catch the virus — they sadly have much higher rate of hospitalization and death.

Moreover, as the virus continues to spread, with the resulting rise in hospitalizations among the unvaccinated, our health care system is being terribly overwhelmed. The medical community and the wider public are paying the price.

A Nov. 19 report from the Centers for Disease Control notes that “surges in COVID-19 cases have stressed hospital systems, negatively affected health care and public health infrastructures, and degraded national critical functions.” In other words, as resources are diverted to care for those contracting COVID-19, normal preventive and elective procedures are being suspended, putting at risk those who could benefit from treatment of serious illnesses, such as heart attacks, strokes and diabetic emergencies.

For example, in Minnesota, which is experiencing one of the worst COVID surges in the nation, CEOs of health-care systems took out full-page ads across the state last week raising alarms over the threat the pandemic is posing to their ability to provide care not only to the infected — but to anyone at all.

“Our emergency departments are overfilled, and we have patients in every bed in our

hospitals," the ad reads. "This pandemic has strained our operations and demoralized many people on our teams. Care in our hospitals is safe but our ability to provide it is threatened."

What's equally chilling is that if intensive care unit bed use nationwide reaches 75% capacity, "an estimated 12,000 additional excess deaths would occur nationally over the next two weeks," according to that CDC report. "As hospitals exceed 100% ICU bed capacity, 80,000 excess deaths would be expected in the following two weeks."

In other words, if our hospitals fill, many thousands of people will die who could have otherwise lived — in addition to the nearly 800,000 Americans who have already died from COVID-19. That's more than the number of Americans who lost their lives in the Civil War (750,000), the 1918 flu pandemic (675,000), and World War II (405,399).

Controlling the growth of the contagion is critical, making universal vaccination a moral imperative. Receiving the full series of vaccination injections, as well as considering boosters that could augment our protection against the latest variant, is not just about protecting oneself from this scourge. It is also about protecting others from the virus. It is about each of us doing our part to stop helping the virus mutate, and to ensure that this disease will not paralyze our health care systems.

The virus has taken the lives of so many of our brothers and sisters. It has driven the rest of us first into isolation and now into a strange two-step of normalcy and abnormalcy. In that way, it has attacked our very nature as human beings, which is to be social, to be with one another. So let us hold fast to that essential aspect of humanity, and pull together, all of us, to finally defeat this disease.



**WHY GET  
VACCINATED**  
IT ALL STARTS WITH YOU

Building defenses against COVID-19 is a team effort. And you are a key part of that defense.

Protect yourself, your coworkers, your patients, your family, and your community.

Help end the global pandemic. COVID-19 vaccination will help reduce spread.

## Next Week's Mass Schedule & Rectory Office Closures

### Monday, December 27

- Mass is at 7:30 am.
- The Rectory is closed.

### Tuesday, December 28-Wednesday, December 29

- Mass is at 7:30 am.
- The Rectory is closed.

### Thursday, December 30

- Mass is at 7:30 am.
- The Rectory is closed. (*Updated info.*)

### New Year's Eve, Friday, December 31

- Mass is at 7:30 am & 5:00 pm.
- The Rectory is closed.

### Solemnity of Mary/New Year's Day, Saturday, January 1

- Mass is at 10:00 am (live-streamed) & 5:00 pm.
- There is no 7:30 am Mass.
- The Rectory is closed.

### Feast of the Epiphany, Sunday, January 2

- Mass is at 8:00 am & 10:30 am (live-streamed) Masses.
- There is a Gym Mass. (*Updated info.*)
- The Rectory is open.

### Monday, January 3

- Mass is at 7:30 am.
- The Rectory is closed.

## Growing in Faith

*Father Bill Kenneally, St. Gertrude's longtime pastor, died at the end of October. To remember him and enjoy once again his bright wisdom, here are some of his words from the homily he gave at the Christmas Mass in 2002.*

Every child should feel like Jesus at its birth. Everything is in place, everything is synchronized. The planets, the earth, the moon and the sun are spinning around — all of it spinning, waiting for the arrival.

There are all these wonderful mysteries of the heavens, and they all work in such a marvelous way so that we have the dreams of night and the beauty of day. And it just continues to keep revolving so that we have dreams and beauty to fill our lives. And each of the children that come into the world have the same.

This wonderful symmetry in our nature, the nature of the planet. Trees out there making oxygen for us. We couldn't do without it. When did we ever thank God for air? It's what we need most.

I think we can say to Jesus, "Welcome to your spinning world. It is your world, and it does spin. Welcome to the green earth. It is this planet that we have special regard for. And we think you have special regard for." And we say, as they say to every newborn, "We are so glad you've come." That's our Christmas Story that Jesus, I'm sure, listened to quite attentively. He's such a good child. And I'm glad we're able to share it today at this Christmas Mass. Merry Christmas.

~ Pat Reardon



## Teens in Middle & High School - Join our Parish Youth Group

All teens in middle and high school are invited to consider joining the parish youth group for fun and activities, including a mission trip this summer! Upcoming meetings and events will be shared in the bulletin and at <https://stgertrudechicago.org>.

Email [eescamilla@stgertrudechicago.org](mailto:eescamilla@stgertrudechicago.org) for more information. (Pictured: November outing.)

**Year-End Giving to St. Gertrude:** As you consider your year-end charitable donations, please think about making an additional contribution to St. Gertrude. Your generosity has helped support us during the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope that you will continue to support us now and into the coming year as we carry out our service and our ministries to our parish and our community.

Thank you so much for all you have done and are doing!

*Together, we are St. Gertrude!*

## Thank You for Donating to the St. Gertrude's Giving Tree!

We are so grateful to the many people that donated to St. Gertrude Parish's Giving Tree. More than \$2,000 in gift cards were donated to Care for Real, who planned to give to their clients with children. Additional gift cards were given to the families assisted by our parish's Refugee & Immigrant Ministry for gift items, household needs, and groceries.



We truly appreciate your generosity!

## This Weekend's Cantors, Musicians, Ministers of the Word, and Eucharistic Ministers

### Ministers of the Word:

- Friday, December 24 at 5:00 pm - Debra Novak
- Friday, December 24 at 7:00 pm - Bob Backis
- Saturday, December 25 at 8:00 am - Marty McDermott
- Saturday, December 25 at 10:30 am in church - Jen Kiedaisch
- Sunday, December 26 at 8:00 am - Pat Reardon
- Sunday, December 26 at 10:30 am in church - Bob Backis

### Eucharistic Ministers:

- Friday, December 24 at 5:00 pm - Tim Harrington
- Friday, December 24 at 7:00 pm - Victoria Healy; Farah Healy
- Saturday, December 25 at 8:00 am - Rob Sierzega, Hallie Burhoe, Marty McDermott
- Saturday, December 25 at 10:30 am in church - Carlos Barragan, Kathy Wall,
- Sunday, December 26 at 8:00 am - Marty McDermott
- Sunday, December 26 at 10:30 am in church - Debra Novak, Bob Backis, Rafael Melendez

### Cantors and Musicians:

- Friday, December 24 at 5:00 pm - Cantor: Michael Callahan, trumpet: Scott Baker, trombone: Amir Ghazaleh
- Friday, December 24 at 7:00 pm - Cantor: Kate Hibbs Davis, trumpets: Scott Baker and Jim Szmurlo, vocal ensemble: Monina Cruz-soprano, Justine Aten-alto, Fran Guenette-bass
- Saturday, December 25 at 8:00 am - Cantor: Cindy Lawson, trombone: Amir Ghazaleh
- Saturday, December 25 at 10:30 am in church - Cantor: Jennifer Anglin, trumpet: Scott Baker, trombone: James Duros, vocal ensemble: Siobhan O'Neill Meluso-soprano, Therese Schreiner-alto, Beth Nelson-tenor
- Sunday, December 26 at 8:00 am - pianist - Zosia Holden, cantor - Paula Dempsey
- Sunday, December 26 at 10:30 am in church - pianist - Zosia Holden; cantor - Cindy Lawson

## Mass Intentions

- Monday, December 27: 7:30 am - Frank Gordon+ *+ indicates the person is deceased*
- Tuesday, December 28: 7:30 am - Gusmanos Family
- Wednesday, December 29: 7:30 am - Grace Cabrera+
- Thursday, December 30: 7:30 am - Grace Cabrera+ (Communion Service)
- New Year's Eve, Friday, December 31: 7:30 am - Geraldine Clennon+; 5:00 pm - Parishioners of St. Gertrude Parish
- Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God/New Year's Day, Saturday, January 1: 10:00 am - Parishioners of St. Gertrude Parish; 5:00 pm - Jenny & Austin Wyman +
- Feast of the Epiphany, Sunday, January 2: 8:00 am - Kathleen Naughton +; 10:30 am - Donald Elster+; 10:30 am Gym Mass - Parishioners of St. Gertrude

### New Parishioners

- Dominico R. and Maria T. Fregoso-Ferri

### Baptisms

- Ignatius James Hermes, son of Karl Putz and Rachel Hermes

## Please Pray for our Parishioners and Friends

- |                           |                          |                        |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| • Pamela Sherrod Anderson | • Barb Daly              | • Karey Myers          |
| • Helen Banta             | • Caloy Desembrana       | • Massielle Ojeda      |
| • Jean Bautista           | • Ann Collins Dole       | • Tina Piemonte        |
| • Zara Bradley            | • Christine Frisoni      | • Charley Scantlebury  |
| • Sharon Brown            | • Shirley Marie Gonzales | • Richard Seitz        |
| • Connie Bueck            | • Gina Heidkamp          | • Peggy Stoffel        |
| • Lilly Buie              | • Maria Hertl            | • The Sullivan family  |
| • Claire Bushey           | • Daniel Hidalgo         | • Elinora E. Tolentino |
| • Maggie Callaway         | • Bernice Kiedysz        | • Manuel & Norma Viray |
| • Aida Calvopina          | • Dean Mattoni           | • Valerie Williams     |
| • Connie Cool             | • Molly Morris           | • Ken & Vyes Yoza      |

### Donate to our Parish

Parishioners can donate to St. Gertrude:

- Text the word *Donate* to 1.773.741.9505.
- PayPal link - visit our parish website at [www.stgertrudechicago.org](http://www.stgertrudechicago.org)
- GiveCentral: [www.givecentral.org/location/8/allevants](http://www.givecentral.org/location/8/allevants)

Email [esoto@stgertrudechicago.org](mailto:esoto@stgertrudechicago.org) for additional information.

*Contact our Heart to Heart office at 773.973.5464. The office will be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, their normal operating hours, during the Christmas season.*

### Parish Staff

Rev. Richard J. Prendergast, Pastor  
Rev. Michael Gabriel, Associate Pastor  
Rev. Michael Bradley, Resident Priest  
Mary Clare Barker, Minister of Music  
Jane Callahan-Moore, Director, Heart to Heart  
Kevin Cheers, Pastoral Associate  
Eloy Escamilla, Pastoral Associate for Religious Education and Youth Ministry  
Maria Garcia, Rectory Office Manager  
Laurie Hasbrook, Heart to Heart Lending Closet Manager  
Samantha Lilly, Rectory Office  
Andy Mueller, Parish Buildings Engineer  
Tracy Shields, Communications  
Eduardo Soto, Director of Parish Management